

INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE-I

BA [English]

BENG-101(E)



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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Introducing English Literature-I

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| Unit – B: Poetry Robert Burns – A Red, Red Rose George Herbert’s – The Pulley Andrew Marvell’s – To His coy Mistress Shelley-from Prometheus Unbound | |
| Unit – C: Poetry Alfred Lord Tennyson – Break, Break, Break Thomas Hardy’s – The Darkling Trush Louis MacNeice- Prayer Before Birth Mathew Arnold – Longing | Unit 2: Poetry-II (Pages 39-65) |
| Unit – D: Short Stories Guy de Maupassant – The Necklace Anton Chekov’s –The Bet Graham Greene – The End of the Party | Unit 3: <i>The Necklace</i>: Guy De Maupassant (Pages 67-90); Unit 4: <i>The Bet</i>: Anton Chekow (Pages 91-100); Unit 5: <i>The end of the Party</i>: Graham Greene (Pages 101-117) |
| Unit – E: Literary Terms Simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, personification, hyperbole, epithet, transferred epithet, epigram, synecdoche, irony, antithesis, imagery, oxymoron, onomatopoeia, paradox, metonymy, pun. | Unit 6: Literary Terms (Pages 119-135) |

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INTRODUCTION

Literature symbolizes people, culture and tradition. It guides us towards a world full of experience and helps us evolve ourselves through its literary journey. It speaks to us in its various forms such as short story, poetry, drama, prose, fiction and so forth.

William Wordsworth has defined poetry 'as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'. The most prominent era of English poetry and prose was the Victorian era. During this period, poets and novelists wrote some of the most enduring literature. Alfred Lord Tennyson is the most representative poet of the Victorian age. This period marked the beginning of English poetry, which continued through the Romantic period and reached an all-time high in the eighteenth century. The Romantic period in English poetry was shaped by a multitude of political, social and economic changes. Some of the prominent poets of this period were Coleridge, John Keats and P. B. Shelley.

Short stories owe their popularity to their brevity. These stories can be read without breaks, in a single sitting. A short story can be read even on a short journey because it does not require too much time. No matter how busy you are, you would always have the time to read a short story. In fact, a short story, even with its limited length, is able to achieve what a novel does. This is the very reason why it is more challenging to write a short story than a novel. The author cannot afford to devote pages and pages introducing the main theme or the main characters. He has to make the story interesting, without sounding abrupt and achieve a lot more using fewer words. In addition, short stories are easier to understand and assimilate.

This book, *Introducing English Literature-I*, familiarizes the students with poems written by Robert Burns, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Shelley, Tennyson, Thomas Hardy, Louis MacNeice and Mathew Arnold. In addition, students will also read short stories written by Maupassant, Anton Chekov and Graham Greene; along with an introduction to the significant literary terms generally found in English literature. This book has been written in the self-instructional mode (SIM) wherein each unit begins with an 'Introduction' to the topic followed by an outline of the 'Unit Objectives'. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and an organized manner, interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the understanding of the students. A 'Summary' along with a list of 'Key Terms' and a set of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation.

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UNIT 1 POETRY-I

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Robert Burns: An Introduction
 - 1.2.1 *A Red, Red Rose*: Text and Explanation
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NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Robert Burns is widely regarded as the pioneer of Romantic movement and after his death became a cultural icon not only in Scotland but around the world. His works cover a wide range of topics, including love, social commentary and satirical attacks on the Church and establishment. *A Red, Red Rose* is a love song which reveals the poet's highs and lows in his emotional affairs. A deeper reading of the poem brings forth a number of other themes that run through the poem.

George Herbert is generally reckoned as one of the greatest metaphysical poets. He uses language in an open, unassertive way, while simultaneously achieving concentration of meaning in poetry. Herbert's writing inspired Vaughan and Crashaw in writing poetry. In *The Pulley*, Herbert creates a fable about God's creation of the world.

Andrew Marvell is a famous poet of the seventeenth century. He is famous for writing political satire and lyrical verse. *To His Coy Mistress* is his most celebrated poem which exhibits the distinct traits of metaphysical poetry.

P. B. Shelley was a foremost romantic and lyric poet of the nineteenth century. Shelley's four-act lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* was first published in 1820 which portrayed the suffering of the Greek mythological character Prometheus. It was Zeus who made him suffer due to the punishment to which he was sentenced to for eternity. In this unit, you will study the poems written by Robert Burns, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell and P. B. Shelley.

NOTES

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess the effect of the French Revolution on Burns' writings
- Describe *A Red, Red Rose* as a love song written by Robert Burns
- Discuss George Herbert and Andrew Marvell as metaphysical poets
- Describe analyse *Prometheus Unbound* as a lyrical drama written by P. B. Shelley

1.2 ROBERT BURNS: AN INTRODUCTION

Robert Burns (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796) is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland. He was a poet and lyricist best known for poems written in English and a light Scots dialect, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland. A lot of his poetry comprises original compositions, but he also collected folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them. Thus, his work is also a repository of the folk heritage of Scotland. *A Red, Red Rose* is a famous poem. His works reveal the emotional highs and lows he felt and have consequently led to the belief that he had bipolar disorder. In fact, the poet himself said that he suffered from 'blue devilism'.

His poetry is a political and civil commentary on the events of the times. In many ways, he is a pioneer of the Romantic movement since his concerns with oppression, freedom and the impact of changes on the rural landscape are reflected in the works of other poets. He is also seen as a source of inspiration to the founders of both liberalism and socialism. He is a proto Romantic poet who influenced Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley greatly. He also influenced Scottish poets like Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. It is interesting to note that there was a conscious attempt by the Edinburgh literati to project Burns as a poet of the lower classes, as a 'heaven-taught ploughman'. In fact, a conscious attempt was made to dismiss his education and its impact on his work and style. It was only later that poets like Hugh MacDiarmid tried to dismantle this sentimental cult with respect to Burns, especially in Scottish literature. His style is direct and is marked by spontaneity and sincerity. The tone is tender, humorous as in *Tom O'Shanter* and sometimes even satirical, for example, in *The Holy Fair*. Some of his poems like *Love and Liberty* are in English as well as Scottish dialect. His poetry reflects his knowledge of classical literature as well as his knowledge of the Bible and English literary traditions. He is the creator of the first modern vernacular style in British poetry.

Burns lived during the period of the French Revolution and this influenced his poetry. The theme of republicanism in his work can be attributed to this influence. His poetry is also very radical and a poem like *Scots Wha Hae* is proof of this aspect. Other themes like Scottish patriotism, anticlericalism, class inequalities, gender roles, commentary on the Church of Scotland (Scottish Kirk) of his time, Scottish cultural identity, poverty, sexuality, and the beneficial aspects of popular socializing (carousing, Scotch whisky and folk songs) are also found in his poetry.

During the final years of his life he worked for James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803) project to preserve traditional Scottish songs for the future. In

this endeavour he recorded nearly 300 songs, *Auld Lang Syne*, being the most famous. He also collaborated on a similar endeavour with George Thomson for his anthology *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice*, but they often disagreed on the type of songs that ought to be included in the volumes. He wrote to a friend, 'What to me appears to be the simple and the wild, to him, and I suspect to you likewise, will be looked on as the ludicrous and the absurd.'

The same seems to have been the case with *A Red, Red Rose*. In his book Pierro Urbani claims that Burns gave him the words for the poem. He was struck by the words when he heard a country girl sing it. He copied it down and wanted Urbani to set it to a Scottish tune.

Urbani published the song to an original tune that he wrote. He later included the poem in his book *Scots Song*. In fact, Burns also refers to the poem as 'a simple old Scots song which I had picked up in the country.' The song first appeared in Johnson's Museum in 1797 to the tune of Niel Gow's *Major Graham*. This was the tune that Burns himself had wanted his song to be sung to. The song appeared in Thomson's *Scottish Airs* in 1799 where it was set to William Marshall's Wishaw's lyric *And fare thee weel awhile*. The song became extremely popular when it was paired with *Low Down in the Broom* by Robert Archibald Smith in his *Scottish Minstrel Book* in 1821. This form is the most popular arrangement even today.



Fig 1.1 Robert Burns

1.2.1 *A Red, Red Rose*: Text and Explanation

*O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.*

*As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

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Check Your Progress

1. When and where was Robert Burns born?
2. Which revolution affected Burn's writings?

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*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
 And I will luve thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.
 And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve!
 And fare-thee-weel, a while!
 And I will come again, my Luve,
 Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!*

Explanation

Literary critic David describes Burns as ‘the greatest songwriter Britain has produced’ and calls the poem a ‘combination of tenderness and swagger’. According to him, Burns’ work facilitated in refurbishing and improving traditional Scots songs.

While the similes and metaphors on love are not unique it is their cumulative effect that makes this poem effective. As the song progresses, the metaphors to describe love and its depth become more detailed and reflect the growing love. The fact that this is done through the use of relatively simple images only serves to give freshness to the poem. The poem is indicative of true depth of feeling of love and the effect on the speaker. As this emotion grows it only draws the listener/reader into the emotional world of the song. In the poem, the speaker compares his love to a rose. In the beginning of the poem, the rose is newly sprung, tiny and fragile. However, as the poem progresses we see a change. This transformation reflects the various stages of love – in the beginning it is fresh and vulnerable. This is indicative of the beauty and excitement of the first stages of tender love blossoming. The tiny rose is reflective of the blossoming emotion of new love.

In other words, just as nature blossoms in June similarly, the beginning of the poem refers to the first spark when love begins in the heart. Just as a newly sprung rose is fragile similarly, the speaker’s emotions are fragile since he is not sure what the beloved feels or whether it will survive. However, the tone is optimistic, after all it is springtime and all is fresh and glowing. The word ‘newly’ suggests an intimacy of emotion. The feelings of love are fresh and perhaps the speaker has not had time to come to terms with them and recognize and accept them for what they are. The speaker then goes on to compare his love with melody. A melody is played on an instrument and so can be accessed again and again. In other words, there is a degree of permanence in the emotion the speaker feels and he cherishes it. The melody is also self-reflective and calls attention to the fact that the emotion is expressed in a song about love. This self-reflective mess of the poem further heightens the emotion the speaker feels and makes it truer and more immediate. Again a tune survives only if it is played and listened to, in other words, it requires a player and an audience. Similarly, love survives only if there is an object of affection and somebody to shower that affection. In this way, the beloved becomes a living presence in the song. And the emotion instead of being a fragile entity that needs to be protected becomes a flourishing emotion that is given and received willingly.

In the second stanza, the beloved makes an appearance in the song. ‘My bonnie lass’ is, in fact, the listener of the song. At this point of the poem, the speaker addresses

the vanity of the beloved by suggesting that his love is as pure as the beloved is fair. At this point in the poem even though the love is not as fragile as a tiny rose, the speaker is still not confident of the beloved's emotions and feels the need to flatter her. At the same time, the personal tone here is suggestive of the fact that this love has formed an intimate bond between the two of them. The tone of the next two lines is markedly different. Here, the speaker suggests that he loves the beloved not because she is beautiful but due to the facts that she is the centre of his existence. This idea is suggested by the fact that the tone becomes serious and he says that his love will transcend time and change. The speaker says that he will continue loving the beloved even when the seas are dry of water. In other words, his feelings for her are strong and will withstand the changes time will wreck on her visage. He will still love her when the bloom of youth ends and she is a dry old crone. This takes us back to the image of the rose and the fragility of the rose gains significance.

In the beginning, it suggested transience and hinted at an emotion about which the speaker is not sure. This is no longer the case and now the fragility of the rose is transformed into an emotion which is strong and eternal. This fragility becomes strength. In other words, love, while a fragile emotion, gives strength and paradoxically is strength. The fact that the nature of the love the speaker feels has changed is highlighted by the fact that the line 'Till a' the seas gang dry.' Here, the idea is that the love will survive till the seas go dry but also beyond a time when the rocks exposed by the drying sea melt in the heat of the relentless sun. In other words, this love will never die but will keep on growing. Again one must note the increasing strength of the love the speaker feels for the beloved. The last lines of the third verse are illustrative. Here, the speaker abandons the hyperbole of the earlier lines and the poem looks back at itself. The speaker suggests that his feelings will not change as long as he lives and no matter what life throws at him. This is a deeper expression of his emotions than the earlier similes because it acknowledges that the path of love is not always easy. Here, the speaker acknowledges that life throws challenges but even these will not deter or alter his emotions. And this is the truest expression of the poet.

The final verse is the tender farewell scene and puts the poem in perspective. This is not an ordinary love song sung to woo the beloved. Instead it is a song sung at the time of parting to convince both the speaker and the beloved of the truth of emotions that the speaker feels. The last few lines prior to these now acquire greater depth. The speaker is suggesting that even though he is leaving at this point of time, his feelings will remain unchanged.

1.3 GEORGE HERBERT: AN INTRODUCTION

George Herbert was born on 3 April 1593. He was the fifth son in a famous Welsh family. Herbert's mother, Magdalen Newport, is known to be a patron of the eminent literary writer John Donne. It is believed that Donne dedicated his *Holy Sonnets* to her.

George Herbert could not enjoy his father's company for long. His father died when George was only three-years old. As a result, Magdalen was entrusted with the responsibility to raise ten children, all on her own. She was confident that she will be able to educate and provide a healthy upbringing to her children. At the age of ten, Herbert

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. Who described Burns as the greatest songwriter of Britain?
4. In the poem, *A Red, Red Rose*, how does the speaker refer to his beloved?

NOTES

went to study at Westminster School. Later on, he won scholarships at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Herbert received his graduation degree in 1613 and completed his post-graduation in 1616. Later on, he was elected as a major fellow of Trinity. Almost immediately after graduating from college, Herbert was appointed as reader in Rhetoric at Cambridge. By 1620, he was elected a public orator. This was a post which gave Herbert the chance to represent Cambridge at public gatherings and platforms. For two successive years, 1624 and 1625, Herbert was elected as representative to the Parliament. In 1627, Herbert resigned from his role as an orator. In 1629, he tied the knot with Jane Danvers. By 1630, Herbert 'took holy orders in the Church of England'. Henceforth, until his death, Herbert spent his life discharging the role of rector in Bemerton near Salisbury. In Bemerton, apart from preaching, he spent a considerable time writing poetry and helping the community by rebuilding the church from his own funds. Herbert had composed a practical manual during his stay in Bemerton, known as *A Priest to the Temple*.

In 1633, Herbert died of consumption. He was only forty. *A Priest to the Temple* came out in print in 1633. Scholars have highlighted the popularity of book by pointing out that the book had been reprinted as many as twenty times since the year 1680.

George Herbert's poems will always be remembered for the deep religious devotion they reflect, for their linguistic accuracy and fluidity in rhyme. The great Romantic poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge had written: 'Nothing can be more pure, manly, or unaffected,' in the context of Herbert's use of language in his poetry.



Fig 1.2 George Herbert

Conceit and metaphysical conceit

The word 'conceit' means 'a concept or an image'. In simpler terms, it is a figure of speech that brings out interesting or striking comparison between two different things, or situations or ideas to create a new concept. The course of development that one comes across in English poetry, suggests that there are two kinds of conceit (a) the Petrarchan

conceit and (b) the metaphysical conceit. We will more or less focus on metaphysical conceit that was mainly employed by the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century like John Donne, Andrew Marvell and George Herbert.

Metaphysical poetry was in vogue during the seventeenth century. It was popularized by John Donne. Later on, many of his literary successors like Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, and Richard Crashaw carried on the tradition.

The metaphysical poets 'shared a philosophical point of view and strongly opposed the mode of the idealized human nature and of physical love which was a tradition in Elizabethan poetry'. Initially, the 'metaphysical' school of poetry was looked down upon by the earlier writers. For instance, Ben Jonson had remarked, 'Donne deserved hanging because he had run roughshod over the conventional rhythm and imagery and smoothness of the Elizabethan poetry.'

Distinct characteristics of metaphysical poetry include extreme use of puns, allegories and conceits which are incorporated into the ordinary speech. Metaphysical poetry is marked by 'its exaltation of wit' that indicated 'nimbleness of thought' during the seventeenth century. The phrases and terms incorporated by these poets in their writing were inspired from various fields of knowledge. The metaphysical poets were extremely well read. Their writing reflected their high education as well as the vastness of the knowledge. Their poems exposed their deep faith in matters of life and religion. Whereas, if we consider the love poems, then we see that the neo-platonic concept of ideal love is glorified and sensuousness, along with physical beauty, receives a backseat. They highlighted the tension arousing in matters of love by incorporating realism in their poetry.

Speaking about the metaphysical writers in his essay, T.S.Eliot opines that the metaphysical poets used the conceit as a prominent tool to challenge the existing imagery used in the contemporary writings 'in order to stimulate both emotions and intellects'. It is also believed that they tried to express their highly sensitive mind and thought process through their poems. They invariably tried to bring together the human body to understand the notion of completion in their poetry.

Scholars suggest that the metaphysical conceit is a process by which a logical argument is presented in a poetic manner. Critic Baldick suggests that metaphysical poetry '... is an unusual or elaborate metaphor or simile presenting a surprisingly apt parallel between two apparently dissimilar things or feelings'.

Metaphysical poetry flourished at an age that coincided with the development of age of reason. It is argued by many that metaphysical poetry was the end product of the various movements that were taking place as a consequence of social, political, economic, and religious conditions that were prevalent in that age.

NOTES

Major literary works

The well-known literary works of George Herbert are the following:

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| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>A Dialogue-Anthem</i> | | |
| <i>A True Hymn</i> | | |
| <i>A Wreath</i> | | |
| <i>Aaron</i> | | |
| <i>Affliction (I)</i> | <i>Heaven</i> | <i>The British Church</i> |
| <i>Affliction (II)</i> | <i>Jordan (I)</i> | <i>The Call</i> |
| <i>Affliction (III)</i> | <i>Jordan (II)</i> | <i>The Church-floor</i> |
| <i>Affliction (IV)</i> | <i>Joseph's Coat</i> | <i>The Collar</i> |
| <i>Antiphon (I)</i> | <i>Life</i> | <i>The Dawning</i> |
| <i>Christmas</i> | <i>Love (I)</i> | <i>The Elixir</i> |
| <i>Church-music</i> | <i>Love (II)</i> | <i>The Foil</i> |
| <i>Colossians 3.3</i> | <i>Love (III)</i> | <i>The Glance</i> |
| <i>Death</i> | <i>Love-Joy</i> | <i>The Holdfast</i> |
| <i>Dialogue</i> | <i>Man</i> | <i>The Holy Scriptures I</i> |
| <i>Discipline</i> | <i>Mary Magdalen</i> | <i>The Holy Scriptures II</i> |
| <i>Dullness</i> | <i>Mortification</i> | <i>The Pearl</i> |
| <i>Easter</i> | <i>Peace</i> | <i>The Pilgrimage</i> |
| <i>Easter Wings</i> | <i>Prayer (I)</i> | <i>The Pulley</i> |
| <i>Even-song</i> | <i>Prayer (II)</i> | <i>The Quiddity</i> |
| <i>Faith</i> | <i>Redemption</i> | <i>The Quip</i> |
| <i>Grief</i> | <i>Sepulchre</i> | <i>The Search</i> |
| <i>H. Baptisme (I)</i> | <i>Sinne (I)</i> | <i>The Sinner</i> |
| <i>H. Baptisme (II)</i> | <i>Sinne (II)</i> | <i>The Son</i> |
| | <i>Vanity (I)</i> | <i>The Storm</i> |
| | <i>Virtue</i> | <i>The Temper (I)</i> |
| | <i>The Agony</i> | <i>The Temper (II)</i> |
| | <i>The Answer</i> | <i>The Windows</i> |

1.3.1 *The Pulley*: Text and Explanation

The poem, *The Pulley*, centres on the theme of relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man. God, the ultimate father-figure to mankind, uses his special pulley to draw man back to him, once man's scheduled quota is over on this planet earth. He (God) does it for the good of mankind. *The Pulley* portrays the life of a man as he grows up experiencing certain aspects of life and in the process developing a relationship with God through this pulley.

*When God at first made man,
 Having a glass of blessings standing by,
 'Let us,' said he, 'pour on him all we can.
 Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
 Contract into a span.'
 So strength first made a way;
 Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
 When almost all was out, God made a stay,
 Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
 Rest in the bottom lay.*

Check Your Progress

5. What are the salient features of George Herbert's poetry.
6. Name the major poems written by George Herbert.

*For if I should,' said he,
 'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
 He would adore my gifts instead of me,
 And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
 So both should losers be.*

*Yet let him keep the rest,
 But keep them with repining restlessness;
 Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
 If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
 May toss him to my breast.'*

Explanation

In this famous poem by George Herbert, an analogy is drawn between a pulley and Pandora's box. As the Pandora's box keeps all the evils of the world, anyone who opens it only takes the risk of spreading all the evil contained in the box and this process cannot be undone. Whereas in the poem *The Pulley*, Herbert suggests that God controls everyone through a metaphorical pulley so that God can keep man under control and pull on a man to come to his salvation; hence, denying him the temptation not to undo the Pandora's box. The very initial lines of the poem, state that:

*When God at first made man,
 Having a glass of blessing standing by,
 Let us (he said) pour all on him we can.*

These lines points to the reader that when God created man, he gave the best of everything he had in his possession to him. God almost poured his own image in man. He has blessed man with prosperity and has endowed him with all the riches because God realizes that man deserve these privileges. God has done this out of the goodness he stores in his heart for the mankind.

The reader must understand that after God blessed man by creating him, next he filled man with gifts such as, wisdom, honour and pleasure; rare yet incomprehensibly precious. After this, God gave man everything he could give to make man different of all the species:

*When almost all was out, God made a stay,
 Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
 Rest in the bottom lay.*

After blessing man with so much good, God decided to take rest. Thus, suggesting that God is beyond comparison in his ability to be so generous. He parted with whatever he had and decided not to keep anything for himself. The word 'rest' creates a pun because it means both physical rest and the notion of being left behind.

Moving on, Herbert says that God has showered all his gifts on man but man is foolish to worship the gifts while ignoring God. And since this happens, Herbert suggest, 'And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature: / So both should be losers.'

To elaborate further, if the man worships the gifts and not God, then both man and God are unsuccessful in their intentions. Man did not realize that God is the ultimate being and creator and he should not forget God while lingering after the gifts that God has given him. Moreover, God too failed because he did not give that wisdom to man to

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understand as to what he should worship. Thus, man chooses a different path and moves further away from God. Each of them are definitely unsuccessful because the man chooses to go after something not pious and not precious as God had originally intended. However, this is the choice which each and every human must decide upon, because, needless to say, Pandora's box is extremely tempting but it is up to man to realize that God is doing everything that he can do out of his love for humanity.

The last segment of the poem, states, 'Yet let him keep the rest, / But keep them with repining restlessness.' Here, Herbert insists that both God and man are failures.

God insists that the man must keep the gifts, but this leads to him being discontent in every aspect of his life due to the transitory choices he makes. Herbert goes on to suggest:

*Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.*

Thus, God finally decided that the man may remain rich but weary. Since God's goodness could not make man to worship him, then let these troubles and worries make people return to God. In this manner, we are back to discussing the pulley which was talked about in the early part of the poem. Human beings, in general, have a choice. The individual can either choose to remain weary and lead a miserable life. Nevertheless, he can also take recourse to good that God has made for him; thus, continuing to remain under his protection forever. God specifically wants the best for his prized creation. God desires that man will worship him of his own will. Yet, if this does not happen then let through despair, he will be drawn back to God and in the process have the good life that he possess.

To no one's surprise, God has intentionally withheld the gift of rest from man. As God is fully aware that his other treasures would finally result in bringing upon a spiritual restlessness and fatigue in man. Man will after all grow tired with his material gifts that he has provided. Soon humans will turn to God in exhaustion and desperation. Certainly, God is omniscient and prophetic. He is fully aware that the wicked might not come back to him, yet at the same time, he knows that his mortal creation will linger in lethargy. At this point of time, 'his lassitude, then, would be the leverage.'

Once the reader goes through this poem, he will realize that God is only seeking to make the best possible life for all humans. Herbert prays that people might get the right powers to choose the correct path and follow God because the latter has created them. For some reason, if man decided not to choose the right path, then he will be surrounded by the Pandora's box. This will continue as long as he does not decide to change his course of action and worship the almighty. Through this poem, Herbert is trying to make a very strong point. According to the poet, God has created man but human beings are prone to mistakes. Thus, God has made a metaphorical pulley which will constantly remind human beings that they are still connected, yet they need that extra pull at times to remind them of the God's existence.

1.3.2 Myth and Conceit in *The Pulley*

Many critics consider the poem, *The Pulley*, containing a myth of origins. Yet many others suggest that it is a moral and spiritual fable. However, both these genres overlap

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because of the way the poem is presented. According to Herbert, someone's devotional responsibility is perfectly consistent with the flow that decides his personality. The poem is short and yet simple, but Herbert manages to reaffirm several key facts. The approach to creation myth emphasizes the dignity of humankind. This dignity is bestowed by God, who is always considered to be thoughtful, generous apart from being kind. In the *Book of Genesis*, the story of creation that we come across says that a spiritual breath raised dusty clay to life and this living being was Adam. Nevertheless, in Herbert's poem, the creation appears to be even more wonderful because humanity as well as humankind is projected as the summation of all the riches that the world possesses. Moreover, God is a being that can easily and cordially communicate with all his creations—living and non-living.

Along with this emphasis on the dignity of humankind, there is, however, a carefully drawn difference; beauty, strength, wisdom, honour along with pleasure are all integral and vital aspects of humankind. Yet, these are not sufficient to guarantee the spiritual health of the people. Only for this purpose, human beings need rest and this is one quality that God has held back. Thus, the independence of human beings is definitely curtailed. *The Pulley* never suggests that humankind is miserably flawed or impotent, or life that we come across in the world of nature is insignificant or useless. Herbert opines that life can, definitely, be 'rich'. Nevertheless, the poem highlights the limitations of human beings and the liabilities that one comes across while undergoing this earthly existence.

The Pulley is one of those rare poems which are replete with meaning. God is presented as a being who knows everything and has clear knowledge about how eventually life will turn out to be.

This poem begins with the story of God creating man and goes on to say:

*'For if I should' said he,
'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
and rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.*

Here, we see that God is tense that man might prefer to rest in nature, while ignoring him completely. God was definitely aware that his treasures would eventually tire man and exhaust him. He desired that man should find true rest only in him. God wanted all of us to rest in him, for he is the only one who is able to give the best while the rest appear desperately seeking comfort.

1.3.3 George Herbert and Metaphysical Conceit

George Herbert employs a single conceit throughout his compositions. In the poem, *Easter Wings*, the conceit that keeps recurring throughout the work is depicted through the print shape that is spread upon the page. While in *The Pulley*, the conceit is visible through the content that the poem presents. Herbert takes on an argumentative tone while trying to express the relationship that God has with his creation that of 'the whimsical man and the logical power'. The conceit that we come across here appears in the image of the pulley that continuously moves in a pleasing manner, trying to carry heavy loads that will signify the tensed and restless condition of man during his life:

*When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,*

'Let us,' said he, 'pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.'

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This specific poem, just like his other poetic output, underline that Herbert was a devotional preacher. He was definitely burdened by an inner conflict that was spiritual in nature, especially between his worldly desires and the commitment that he owed towards his religious duties that he graced in the capacity of a priest. His poems, in general, speak about the fact that he considered life as something 'worthless' and 'unprofitable'.

1.3.4 The Notion of Sleep and *The Pulley*

In the context of the mechanical operation that we come across in the poem through the imagery of a pulley, the same kind of leverage and force when 'applied makes the difference for the weight being lifted'. The same idea is applied to man in this composition by Herbert. One can definitely suggest that the denial of rest by God is actually the leverage that will make it possible to hoist or draw mankind towards the almighty. However, if we look at the first line of the last stanza, we realize that Herbert puns with the word 'rest', implying that it may be God's will, after all, allow man to 'keep the rest'. Yet, such a reading will appear to lessen the intensity behind the poem's conceit. Rest, which also implies sleep, is an idea that was definitely plaguing the minds of the Renaissance writers.

One can come across numerous Shakespearian plays which speak about sleep or denial of it as a result of some punishment or due to some heinous sins committed. For example, in *Macbeth*, king Macbeth is said to 'lack the season of all natures, sleep' while both he and Lady Macbeth are tortured due to lack of sleep. If we consider the case of Othello, we realize that even he is disconcerted by the fact that he is not being able to sleep peacefully. Especially, once Iago tries to poison him with a remote possibility that his wife might be infidel to him and preferring Cassio over him. Hence, considering the poem in this context, we realize Herbert's *The Pulley* does not provide us with any new concept. Rather, the ideas presented in the poem are extremely commonplace, especially, if we consider for seventeenth century religious poems that were composed by Herbert and his contemporaries. Though the most distinctive feature of this metaphysical poem is the religious tone it conveys through a secular as well scientific image that not just requires the reader's friendliness with the subject matter but also expects certain knowledge of some basic laws of physical sciences.

1.4 ANDREW MARVELL

The son of a priest, Andrew Marvell was born on 31 March 1621, in the church house of a vineyard near Hull of Yorkshire, England. He was the fourth child and the first son of his parents. The fifth and last child of the family, a boy, died at the age of one and Andrew, therefore, grew up as an only son with three sisters, Anne, Mary and Elizabeth.

Andrew Marvell's contribution to literature may be classified as follows:

- Poems which, for the most part, belong to the years 1650–1652
- Satires, which he wrote on public men and public affairs during the reign of Charles II

Check Your Progress

7. What is the theme of the poem, *The Pulley*.
8. What are the gifts bestowed by God on man in *The Pulley*?

- Newsletters, which he regularly addressed to his constituents in Hull after his election as Member of Parliament for that borough in 1659 and which extend from 1660 to the time of his death in 1678
- His controversial Essays on ecclesiastical questions written at intervals between 1672 and 1677

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Fig 1.3 Andrew Marvell

1.4.1 Poet of Nature

One set of poem by Marvell shows him as an ardent nature lover. These poems include *Upon Appleton House*, *Upon the Hill*, *Grove at Bilbrough*, *The Garden*, *On a Drop of Dew*, *Bermudas*, *The Picture of Little T.C.*, and *The Nymh Complaining for the Death of Her Fawn*. Then there are the four ‘*Mower*’ poems which are more or less in the tradition of pastoral poetry; though the principal character in these poems is a mower, not a shepherd. All these poems show Marvell's detailed observation of nature. Nature, indeed, casts a spell upon him. He finds the appeal of nature to be simply irresistible and he surrenders to her charm with the utmost willingness and joy.

Upon Appleton House provides the finest examples of his precise description of nature. In this poem, we have detailed pictures of the flower garden in Lord Fairfax's estate, followed by equally graphic descriptions of the meadows, the river in flood and after the flood. These descriptions are followed by perfectly realistic and vivid pictures of the wood into which the poet withdraws in a contemplative mood. In this part of the poem, the realism and accuracy with which Marvell describes the activities of the nightingale, the doves, and the wood pecker have been admired by every critic and reader.

Here he identifies himself with the birds and growing things:

*‘Thus I, easy philosopher,
Among the birds and trees confer.’*

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Here he can, 'through the hazels thick, espy the hatching throstle's shining eye.' He has dialogues with the singing birds. The leaves trembling in the wind are to him Sibyl's (mystical or spiritual) leaves. To be covered with the leaves of trees is a delight to him:

'Under this antic cope I move,

Like some great prelate of the grove.'

In more than forty stanzas of this poem Marvell shows that he is familiar with all aspects of the countryside, the trees and birds and that he has attentively listened to and compared the songs of birds. He feels so happy and peaceful in the midst of these scenes of nature that he calls upon the trees and the plants to cling to him and not to let him leave this place:

'Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines,

Curl me about ye, gadding vines.'

This is the exalted love for nature of a romantic poet. Joined with this love for nature and for birds, is Marvell's feeling for animals. His suffering when they suffer is voiced with infinite gracefulness in his semi-mythological poem, *The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Fawn*. Here, the girl utters a pathetic lament over the death of her pet animal and this lament is so touching that it cannot but have come from the heart of the poet himself.

In *An Horatian Ode* we have the picture of a falcon thrown casually into the poem in order to convey the idea of Cromwell's obedience to the commons in spite of his fierce nature. The behaviour of the falcon in returning from the sky and perching on the branch of a tree in response to the lure is depicted in just a few lines and shows the accuracy of Marvell's observation. In *Eyes and Tears* there is, in the last but one stanza, a series of brief pictures of nature: two clouds dissolving into two raindrops; two fountains trickling down, and two floods overflowing the banks of the two rivers.

The finest examples of Marvell's sensuous nature-imagery are to be found in *The Garden* and *Bermudas*. In *The Garden*, ripe apples drop on the poet's head, the luscious clusters of grapes squeeze their juice upon his mouth; the nectarine and the peach reach his hands of their own accord; he stumbles on melons; and he is ensnared with flowers. These lines make the reader's mouth begin to water. In *Bermudas*, we have an equally alluring description of fruits. Here we have bright oranges shining like golden lamps in a green night; the pomegranates containing jewels more rich than are found in Hormuz; the figs meet the mouths of the visitors without any effort on the part of the latter. The visitors find the melons thrown at their feet. The apples here are of such exquisite quality that no tree could ever bear them twice. The cedars here have been brought from Lebanon. The presence of ambergris on the sea shores is proclaimed by the roaring waves. This whole description makes an irresistible appeal to our senses of taste, smell and sight. It is a richly colourful and sumptuous description. (In the same poem, *Bermudas*, there is a two-line picture of whales which is extremely realistic and highly poetic. The huge sea monsters are imagined as lifting the sea upon their backs).

In certain poems, Marvell's way of looking at natural scenes and phenomena shows his spiritual approach to nature and arouses corresponding spiritual feelings in the reader. *The Garden* is one such poem. Here, after describing the rich fruits growing in the garden, the poet tells us that his mind withdraws from the sensuous pleasure of the fruits into its own happiness. The natural environment puts Marvell into a contemplative mood in which his mind can create worlds and seas transcending the actual worlds and

seas and in this mood his mind annihilates everything 'to a green thought in a green shade'. At this time, while his body lies somewhere close to the fountains and the fruit trees, his soul glides into the branches and sits there like a bird singing and combing its silver wings in order to prepare itself for a longer flight. The spiritual tranquility and bliss which Marvell experiences here remind him of Adam's bliss in the garden of Eden before Adam's tranquility was broken by his being provided with a companion in the shape of Eve. In the poem, *On a Drop of Dew*, again, a natural phenomenon suggests a spiritual significance, or we might say a spiritual experience of the poet lends a new significance to a dew drop. The poet first gives us a picture of a dew drop, investing this tiny drop of water with a life and a soul, and then goes on to describe the human soul which, he says, comes from heaven and which is anxious to go back to that original abode. The soul of man, says the poet, remembers its previous exalted status and shuns the pleasures of this world. The soul is ever ready to go back to heaven: 'How girt and ready to ascend'! The pleasures of the earthly world are here referred to in terms of the beauty of nature: 'the sweet leaves and blossoms green'.

Marvell was the first to sing on the beauty and glory of gardens and orchards. In them he tastes his dearest delights. *The Garden* forestalls Keats' style by its sensuousness and Wordsworth's by its optimistic and serene meditative mood. Yet Marvell preferred nature in its wild rather than cultivated form. It is in the spirit of charming Perdita in Shakespeare's *The Winters Tale* that Marvell protests, in *The Mower Against Gardens*, against artificial gardening processes such as grafting, budding and selection.

The feeling for nature is sometimes introduced by Marvell into poems which are otherwise inspired by Christianity or by love. In *Bermudas*, Marvell imagines that he hears a Puritan refugee from the Stuart tyranny singing praises to God as he rows along the coast of an island in the Bermudas, safe from the storms and the rage of prelates; and then the singer mentions the sensuous delights provided by nature on this island. Sometimes, Marvell returns to the pastoral, but he gives it a new emphasis of truth, and of realism. The short idyll *Ametas and Thestylis* is very original and graceful and there is also the touching complaint of *Damon the Mower* who, working beneath a burning sun, laments his Juliana's hardness of heart. Nor can we ignore *The Mower to the Glow-Worms* in which Marvell gives us delightful pictures of the light shed by the glow-worms and concludes with a reference to the Mower's disappointment in his love for Juliana. The fanciful picture of the nightingale studying late in the night and composing her matchless songs is especially very pleasing. Then there is the poem called *The Fair Singer* in which the wind and sun image lends the required magnitude to the overpowering appeal of the eyes and the voice of the beloved. Likewise the image of the lovers placed as far apart as the two poles imparts the necessary magnitude to the situation in the poem *The Definition of Love*. The mention of the Indian Ganges and the English Humber in *To His Coy Mistress* enhances the humour of the opening passage.

1.4.2 Poet of Love

Marvell's love poems constitute an important division of his lyric poetry, the other two important divisions being poems dealing with the theme of religion and those dealing with the theme of nature. His love poems include *The Fair Singer*, *The Definition of Love*, *To His Coy Mistress*, *Young Love*, *The Unfortunate Lover*, *The Picture of Little T.C.*, *The Mower to the Glow-worms*, and *Damon the Mower*. Then there are poems in which the theme of love occurs as a subsidiary subject, poems like *Upon Appleton*

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House and *The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn*. According to one critic, the least satisfactory of the poems of Marvell are those whose theme is love. In the opinion of this critic, Marvell's love poetry has, with the exception of *To His Coy Mistress*, as little passion as Cowley's, while it is as full of conceits. *The Unfortunate Lover*, says this critic, is probably the worst love poem ever written by a man of genius, while *The Definition of Love* is merely a study in the manner of Donne's *Valediction Against Mourning*. Cleverer and more original and somewhat more successful, is *The Gallery*. The two opposite sides of one long picture gallery into which the chambers of the lover's heart have been thrown by breaking down partitions are supposed to be covered with portraits of his lady. On the one side she is drawn in such characters as Aurora and Venus and on the other as an enchanteress and a murderess.

The charge of a want of passion in the love poems of Marvell has been confirmed by some other critics also. The abundance of conceits in all the poems of Marvell, whether of love or religion or nature, is a fact which every reader knows. As for the adverse opinion about *The Unfortunate Lover*, most readers might agree. Nonetheless, to say that Marvell's poems of love are, on the whole, the least satisfactory may be too sweeping a statement. *To His Coy Mistress* is, as even this critic agrees, a masterpiece. About it, this critic says that here passion is allowed to take its most natural path, that as a love poem it is unique, and that for sheer power it ranks higher than anything Marvell ever wrote.

In certain respect, Marvell, in his love poems, adopt the established Petrarchan approach, while in other his treatment of love, like his technique or style of expression, is wholly unconventional. The Petrarchan mode, which became very popular with the Elizabethan poets, was to exalt the beloved and to shower glowing and eloquent praises on her beauty and charm. The Petrarchan lover was given to sighing and weeping over the indifference and callousness of his beloved and over the disappointment he felt as a consequence of her attitude. Now, we have these Petrarchan elements in at least three of Marvell's love poems, namely, *The Fair Singer*, *To His Coy Mistress*, and *The Unfortunate Lover*. In the first of these poems, the lover praises the beauty of his mistress's eyes and voice in extravagant terms, and speaks of her total and complete conquest over his mind and heart. In *To His Coy Mistress*, the lover speaks of the beauty of his mistress' limbs in exaggerated terms, asserting that he needs hundreds and thousands of years to be able to praise them adequately. In *The Unfortunate Lover*, the lover has learnt from the winds and the waves to sigh and to shed tears.

In these three poems, the passion of the lover is as intense as in any Elizabethan love poem. The statement that Marvell's love poems are cold is certainly not true of these three poems. In *The Fair Singer*, the lover says that both beauties of his mistress (the beauty of her eyes and the beauty of her voice) have joined themselves in fatal harmony to bring about his death, and that with her eyes she binds his heart, and with her voice she captivates his mind. He then goes on to speak of the 'curled trammels of her hair' in which his soul has got entangled, and the subtle art with which she can weave fetters for him of the very air he breathes. If a lover can thus speak about his feelings, we cannot say that he is a cold kind of lover. In the poem *To His Coy Mistress*, the passion is equally ardent. While the lover adopts a witty and somewhat sarcastic manner of speaking in the first two stanzas, he becomes truly ardent and spirited in his passion in the last stanza. In this final stanza, he becomes almost fierce in his passion when he suggests that he and she should roll all their strength and all their sweetness up into one ball and should tear their pleasures with rough strife through the iron gates of life. In *The*

Unfortunate Lover also the passion is intense, almost red-hot. The lover here is hit by 'all the winged artillery of cupid' and, like Ajax, finds himself between the 'flames and the waves'. The lover is then depicted as one 'dressed in his own blood'. It is true that the unfortunate man's plight in love is only briefly described because his other misfortunes too form an important part of his story, but his love is certainly not of the lukewarm kind. It is his disappointment in love which constitutes his real tragedy and which brings his life to a painful close.

In the other poems, the passion of love is certainly not very intense, and therefore, T.S. Eliot is right in speaking of 'a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace'. The intellectual element in some of the poems is so strong so as to push the passion of love into the background. These poems have an argumentative quality which has the effect of diminishing the passion. In such poems, the lover feels his love to be very strong. No doubt he gets so entangled in arguing his case that the passion is almost forgotten. *The Definition of Love* is an outstanding example of the argumentative love-lyric. The poem begins with a highly intellectual conceit. His love, says the poet, was begotten by 'despair upon impossibility'. 'Magnanimous despair' alone could show him so divine a thing as his love. He could have achieved the fruition of his love, but fate drove iron wedges and thrust itself between him and the fulfillment of his love. The poet then goes on to say that fate grows jealous of two perfect lovers and does not permit their union because the union of two lovers would mean the downfall of the power of fate. Fate, the poet goes on to say, has placed him as far away from his beloved as the two poles are from each other, that is, the North Pole and the South Pole. This love can be fulfilled only if the earth undergoes some new convulsion and if the world is cramped into a plan sphere. The poet next compares his own love and his mistress' love to parallel lines which can never meet even if stretched to infinity. Finally, the poet describes the love between him and his mistress as the 'conjunction of the mind' and the 'opposition of the stars'. The whole poem is a kind of logically developed argument in which the passion itself is almost forgotten and the speaker's chief concern is to establish the utter hopelessness of true love, the villain in the case being fate. The conceits in the poem are audaciously far-fetched. It is a learned poem in which every subject of the academic trivia is exploited in turn. Marvell, here, has made the fullest use of the logic which he had learnt at Cambridge. Geometry and astronomy are pressed into the service of logic here. It is a thoroughly unconventional kind of love poem and it occupies a unique position in the whole range of English love poetry.

The poem *Young Love* has an unusual theme wherein the poet's arguments are more pronounced than the theme of love. It is logic that dominates the poem.

The theme of the poem revolves around a grown up man's attraction towards a girl in her early teens (around thirteen or fourteen) and the girl's logic for not responding to his 'love'. The man tries to persuade the girl with his arguments that it is the right time for them to fall in love and be with each other as time will fly fast and this opportunity will never remain. The lover wants the immature girl to take a quick decision and not wait to attain further maturity. He does not want to wait for another one to two years for her to turn fifteen. He is not confident that fate will favour them, and hence is in haste.

The whole poem is one extended argument, and the originality of the poem lies in the manner in which the argument is developed. Although the response of the girl is not included in the poem, an element of disappointment is briefly introduced. Interestingly, the main subject of *The Nymph Complaining* is the death of a pet fawn. Despite this, the theme of love is dominant.

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The poem speaks of the girl's suffering at the hands of her 'lover' Sylvio at equal breath as her suffering at the loss of her pet fawn by the wanton troopers. The girl, the nymph, is not portrayed as cold-hearted but had intense feeling for Sylvio who deserted her.

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The poem speaks of the strong love of the first Fairfax for Miss Thwait whom he was able ultimately to win as his bride in spite of the opposition of the nuns and her own excessive modesty, as related in the poem, *Upon Appleton House*. In these two poems, however, the passion of love is not much dwelt upon; it is merely indicated and we have ourselves to imagine its intensity.

In the pastoral poems, too, the passion of love does not find any direct expression. For instance, in *The Mower to the Glow-Worms*, the speaker mentions his love only in the last stanza, as a kind of after thought. So it could be regarded as a cold poem.

1.4.3 Elements of Wit in Marvell's Poetry

The word 'wit' has several meanings. It means intelligence or understanding; it also means the capacity to amuse others by an unexpected combination of ideas or a contrast between ideas or expressions. These are the two most common meanings of the word 'wit'. In the second sense, wit is allied to humour. However, the word 'wit' has had certain other connotations as well, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For instance, Alexander Pope described 'wit' as being that which has been often thought but was never before so well-expressed. Dr Johnson described wit, in relation to the metaphysical poets, as a kind of *Discordia concors* or a combination of dissimilar images. The metaphysical poets, according to Johnson, put together the most varied ideas by violence; and they ransacked both nature and art for illustrations, comparisons and illusions. This was Dr Johnson's way of explaining the kind of conceits which are found in abundance in the poetry of Donne and his followers. Then, in the twentieth century, T.S. Eliot has used the word 'wit' in relation to Marvell in his own way, meaning by it 'a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace'. Now, the poetry of Marvell contains all these kinds of wit and contains them in abundance.

Wit in the sense of the capacity to amuse or entertain by employing words in unexpected combinations or by means of unexpected comparisons and contrasts or by means of ingenious ideas is to be found to a most striking degree in Marvell's poem *To His Coy Mistress*. We are here amused, in the opening passage, by the very idea that, if the lovers had enough space and enough time, the mistress could easily search for rubies by the Indian Ganges, and the lover could complain by the banks of the river Humber in England. We are amused by the idea that the lover would love her from ten years before the Flood, and that she could refuse his love till the conversion of the Jews; and that the lover would be able to spend hundreds and thousands of years in praising the beauty of the mistress's limbs. Here 'wit' arises from what is known as hyperbole or an exaggerated manner of speaking. The notions stated by the lover here tickle our minds and we smile with amusement. In the second stanza, we have an example of wit in the lover's remark that, in the grave, worms would try the long-preserved virginity of the mistress. Here wit arises from the very unexpectedness of the possibility which the lover visualizes because ordinarily we never think of worms in the context of the seduction of a woman. Then the lover makes another witty observation when he says that the grave is a fine and private place but that nobody can enjoy the pleasure of embracing his beloved there. Here, we are amused by the lover's sarcastic remark.

The same kind of wit may be found in *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body*. Here we feel amused by the manner in which the soul and the body attack each other. The very idea of the two being regarded as separate entities is funny. Then the manner in which the complaints and grievances are given vent to is quite entertaining, in spite of the serious intention of the author in writing the poem. For instance, we feel greatly amused to read the soul describing itself as a prisoner who stands fettered in feet and handcuffed, with bolts of bones; here blinded with an eye, and there deaf with the drumming of an ear. The body amuses us equally by its retort when it complains that the soul, stretched upright inside the body, impales the body in such a way that the body goes about as 'its own precipice'. It may be pointed out that the speakers themselves are not to be regarded here as being consciously witty, but somehow their attacks and counter-attacks do produce the effect of wit. There is no such wit or amusing effect in *A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure*, the whole of this poem being characterized by an atmosphere of solemnity.

In *An Horatian Ode*, we have a couple of examples of wit arising from the use of irony. When the poet uses the phrase 'wiser art' in connection with the role of Cromwell in the flight of King Charles I from Hampton Court, he is employing irony. Apparently, Marvell here pays a compliment to Cromwell but actually he is hinting at Cromwell's cunning and crafty nature. Similarly, Marvell seems to be ironical when, at the end of this poem, he says that the same arts, through which Cromwell gained power, will be required to maintain or retain that power. Thus, a paradox may serve as a source of wit. The best example of this is to be found in the following two lines from *The Garden*:

'Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.'

Then we come to Marvell's use of wit in the sense of unexpected metaphors, the putting together of heterogeneous ideas and images and ingenious or far-fetched notions. Actually, the wit in the poem *To His Coy Mistress* proceeds from conceits of this kind, because Marvell makes use of certain fantastic assumptions such as the lovers having enough time and space at their disposal. Nevertheless, all metaphysical conceits are not witty in the sense of having the capacity to amuse or entertain. We have, for instance, a metaphysical conceit in the poem *On a Drop of Dew*, but the conceit here is of a kind that produces the effect of sublimity. The conceit in this poem lies in the connection which the poet establishes between a dew drop and the human soul, a connection which normally we would never think of. The poet here first describes a dew drop lying lightly on a rose petal, and then expresses the unexpected idea that the dew drop is gazing wistfully upon the sky, and is shining with a mournful light because it feels sad at having been separated from heaven. In this context, the dew drop is 'like its own tear'. Then the poet proceeds to describe the human soul which also, according to him, feels sad in this world because it recollects its original abode in heaven. Both the dew drop and the soul will ultimately dissolve, like Manna (mentioned in the Bible), and 'run into the glories of the Almighty Sun.' In this poem, the word 'wit', therefore, means a fantastic and far-fetched notion or idea or comparison.

In *The Coronet*, we also have an example of wit of this kind in the poet's idea that his garlands would at least crown the feet of Christ, though they could not crown his head. We also have the same kind of wit in the conceited notion that the poet's motives of fame and self-interest in offering his tribute to Christ represent 'the old serpent' which, says the poet, should be crushed by Christ's feet.

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Wit of the same variety is to be found in the metaphysical conceits of the poem *Eyes and Tears*. Here tears are compared to watery lines and plummets. Then we have the conceited notion that two tears have long been weighed within the scales of the poet's two eyes and then been paid out in equal poise. Another example of wit, in the sense of ingenuity and the unexpectedness of the image, is found in the idea that the sun first makes the water on the earth evaporate and then sends it back to the earth out of a feeling of pity. Next, two eyes swollen with weeping are compared to full sails hasting homewards, to the chaste lady's pregnant womb, and to 'Cynthia teeming' that is, the full moon. Also, the poem goes on like that, one witty image following another, not witty in the sense of amusing or entertaining, but in the sense of far-fetched, original, and clever.

1.4.4 To His Coy Mistress: Text and Explanation

To His Coy Mistress a lover addresses his beloved who refuses to grant him sexual favours on account of her modesty and her sense of honour. The lover says that her coyness or sexual reluctance would have been justified if they had enough space and time at their disposal. If they had enough space at their disposal, she could have occupied herself by searching for rubies on the banks of the Indian river, the Ganga, while he would complain about his unfulfilled love on the banks of the river Humber in England. If they had enough time at their disposal, he would have started loving her ten years before the great flood (mentioned in the Bible) while she could refuse to satisfy his desire till the Judgment Day when the Jews might agree to be converted to Christianity. If they really had enough time, he would spend a hundred years in praising her eyes and gazing on her forehead; he would spend two hundred years in admiring each of her breasts; and he would spend thirty thousand years in praising the remaining parts of her body. She really deserves so much praise and adoration, says the lover.

However, all this is not possible; the lover goes on to say. Time is passing at a very fast pace, and eventually they have to face the 'deserts of vast eternity'. After some years, her beauty will no longer be found on this earth. She will lie in her marble tomb, and he would no longer be there to sing his love song. There, in the grave, worms will attack her long-preserved virginity. Her sense of honour will then turn to dust, and his desire to make love to her will then turn to ashes. The grave is a fine and private place, but nobody can enjoy the pleasure of love making there.

Therefore, it would be appropriate for both of them to enjoy the pleasures of love when there is still time, when her skin is still youthful and fresh, and when her responsive soul is still burning with a desire for lovemaking. They should, like amorous birds of prey, devour the pleasures of love, which now time still permits them to enjoy, rather than that they should suffer the pangs of unsatisfied love. They should roll all their strength and all their sweetness into one cannon-ball and shoot it through the iron gates of life. (In other words, they should enjoy the pleasure of love making with all their energy and vigour, and they should even become fierce in extracting the maximum pleasure from their love-making). If they cannot arrest the passage of time, they can at least quicken time's speed of passing.

Had we but world enough and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Check Your Progress

9. Which aspects of nature does Marvell describe in *Upon Appleton House*?
10. Give examples of sensuous images of nature from *The Garden* by Marvell.
11. What Petrarchan elements do we see in Marvell's poems?

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
 Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
 Of Humber would complain. I would
 Love you ten years before the flood,
 And you should, if you please, refuse
 Till the conversion of the Jews.
 My vegetable love should grow
 Vaster than empires and more slow;
 An hundred years should go to praise
 Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
 Two hundred to adore each breast,
 But thirty thousand to the rest;
 An age at least to every part,
 And the last age should show your heart.
 For, lady, you deserve this state,
 Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
 Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
 And yonder all before us lie
 Deserts of vast eternity.
 Thy beauty shall no more be found;
 Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
 My echoing song; then worms shall try
 That long-preserved virginity,
 And your quaint honour turn to dust,
 And into ashes all my lust;
 The grave's a fine and private place,
 But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
 Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
 And while thy willing soul transpires
 At every pore with instant fires,
 Now let us sport us while we may,
 And now, like amorous birds of prey,
 Rather at once our time devour
 Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
 Let us roll all our strength and all
 Our sweetness up into one ball,
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife
 Through the iron gates of life:
 Thus, though we cannot make our sun
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

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Explanation

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To His Coy Mistress is probably the best-known poem of Andrew Marvell and his most popular one. It is a love poem in which the speaker offers a strong plea for the beloved to soften towards him and to relax her rigid attitude of Puritanical reluctance and to grant him sexual favours. The lover, who may be the poet himself, builds up a really strong case and supports it with arguments which no sensible woman can reject. The poem has, what is known as, a *carpe diem* theme. (*Carpe diem* is a Latin phrase meaning: 'seize the day.' The full Latin sentence is: '*Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*' which means: 'Enjoy the present day, trusting the least possible to the future'.)

The poem is written in the form of what is known as a syllogism. A syllogism means an argument developed in a strictly logical form and leading to a definite conclusion. In a syllogism there are three stages which may be indicated by three words initiating each stage in the argument. These three words are: 'if', 'but'; 'therefore'. This poem is divisible into three clearly marked sections. The first section begins with 'if': 'Had we but world enough, and time.' In this line, the word 'had' conveys the sense of 'if', and the line means: 'If we had only enough space and time at our disposal.' The second section of the poem begins with the word 'but': 'But at my back I always hear'. And the third section begins with 'therefore': 'Now, therefore, while the youthful hue'. Thus, the poem begins with the statement of a condition; then reasons are given why that condition cannot be fulfilled and finally a conclusion is drawn. The conclusion of the poem is that the lovers should lose no time in enjoying the pleasures of love. The conclusion justifies us in saying that the theme of the poem is that of *carpe diem*, which means that one should enjoy the present day.

There are a number of concrete pictures in the poem and a whole series of metaphysical conceits. The very notion of the lover that, having enough space and time at their disposal, they would be able to wander as far apart as the Indian Ganges and the English Humber is fantastic. Then the lover's saying that he would love his mistress from a time ten years before the Flood and would spend hundreds and thousands of years in admiring and adoring various parts of her body constitutes another metaphysical conceit. The picture of Time's winged chariot hurrying and coming closer and closer to overtake the lovers vividly brings before our minds the rapid passing of time.

Here, an abstract idea has been made concrete by means of a metaphor, and this is a realistic picture in contrast to the metaphysical conceits noted above, though there is a conceit in the image of Time as having a winged chariot. The pictures of the woman lying in her grave and the worms attacking her long preserved virginity and her honour turning to dust are conceits because worms are regarded here as being capable of seducing a woman and a dead woman at that. Then we have metaphysical conceits in the concluding stanza, where the mistress's willing soul is depicted as giving out instant fires at every pore and the lovers are imagined as rolling their strength and their sweetness into one ball and tearing their pleasures with rough strife through the iron gates of life.

The witty manner in which the poet argues his case is note worthy. In fact, the whole poem is characterized by metaphysical wit, and a streak of irony runs through it. The lover is mocking at his mistress's coyness. If the lovers had enough time, the beloved would be in a position to refuse till the conversion of the Jews. This is a witty and ironical remark. Then the lover speaks of his 'vegetable love' growing vaster than empires. The manner in which the lover would have spent hundreds and thousands of years to admire her beauties is also described in a witty manner. Here, we have an example of a witty exaggeration.

The style of the poem is marked by compression and economy in the use of words. There is a concentration of meaning in the lines, and the poet shows a remarkable skill in compressing his ideas in the fewest possible words. The idea of time passing rapidly has admirably been compressed in four lines, and the idea of all the beauty and charm of the woman coming to nothing has also been stated in only a few words. Some of the lines have an epigrammatic quality, for example:

- i. 'Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song.'
- ii. 'The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.'

Even the two opening lines of the poem have an epigrammatic quality.

Important stanzas for explanation

- (i) 'I would love you ten years Jews.'

These are very amusing lines, like those which follow. The lover says that he would have started loving his mistress from ten years before the Flood. This Flood is mentioned in the Bible and is believed to have occurred in the year 2354 BC. The conversion of the Jews is expected to take place only a little before Doomsday. This means that the lover would have started loving nearly 2500 years ago, and the mistress would be free to refuse his love till a little before Doomsday. According to the calculations of a critic, the period of the lover's love would extend over 30,600 years. The phrase 'the conversion of the Jews' implies impossibility.

- (ii) Let us roll all our strength the iron..... gates of life.

Several interpretations of the word 'ball' have been suggested by critics. However, the most satisfactory interpretation is to regard the ball as a cannon-ball which crashes through the iron gates of a town. The whole idea in these lines, therefore, is that the lovers would invade life and time with the violence of their love making. Their love making is not to be of the ordinary, common kind which is generally characteristic of weak, anaemic people. The passion of the lovers in the poem is intense and ardent. They will tolerate no obstacle in their way, but would extract the maximum possible pleasure from love making; and their pleasure, like their passion, would be of a fierce kind.

1.5 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: AN INTRODUCTION

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 August 1792 – 8 July 1822) was radical in his poetry as well as his political and social views. He is well-known for his poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *The Cloud* and *The Masque of Anarchy*. His other major works include long visionary poems such as *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonais* and the visionary verse dramas, such as *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

Shelley studied at University College, Oxford. *Zastrozzi* (1810) 'a gothic novel' was his first published work. Shelley published his second gothic novel, *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*, in 1811 and in the same year, a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism* was also published. The revolutionary ideas in the pamphlet led to his expulsion

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Check Your Progress

12. What does the term *carpe diem* imply?
13. What is the lover trying to convey to his beloved in *To His Coy Mistress*?

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from Oxford on 25 March 1811. After a few months of being expelled from Oxford, on 28 August 1811, Shelley, then nineteen years old, eloped with a sixteen year-old girl Harriet Westbrook to Scotland. Though initially Shelley was exuberant about Harriet Westbrook, but as days passed he became increasingly unhappy in his marriage to Harriet. Subsequently, on 28 July 1814, Shelley abandoned her and ran away to Switzerland with Mary who was the daughter of William Godwin (Shelley's mentor, the revolutionary writer) and Mary Wollstonecraft (often considered as the first feminist writer). He lived the next part of his life with Mary and they lived close to London; and at this period Shelley wrote the following poems: *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude*, and so on. (Mary Shelley herself was a famous writer and the novel *Frankenstein* is her great achievement where she criticizes the revolutionary spirit of the Romantic poets.) P B. Shelley's major writing in this period, when he was with Mary, was *Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City* which was later edited and republished as *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818. In 1818, Shelley also began the long lyrical play *Prometheus Unbound*. It was completed when the poet was in Rome.



Fig 1.4 Percy Bysshe Shelley

1.5.1 *Prometheus Unbound*

Percy Bysshe Shelley's four-act lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* was first published in 1820 which portrayed the suffering of the Greek mythological character Prometheus. It was Zeus who made him suffer due to the punishment to which he was sentenced to for eternity. Shelley's play was inspired by the classical work, *Prometheia*, a trilogy of plays which is usually attributed to the classical Greek dramatist Aeschylus. What Shelley is doing is not a translation or transliteration of Aeschylus' plays; he is taking the basic plot of Prometheus from the Greek source to treat it according to the demands of the romantic era. When one compares Shelley's play with Aeschylus, we see that there are vast differences between the two of them. Shelley borrowed only that part of the play from the Greek source which was essential for him to convey the message of how Prometheus is a rebellious figure, who rebelled against the tyranny of Zeus. Shelley's play deals with Prometheus' release from captivity which is unlike Aeschylus' plays. In Shelley's work, there is no reconciliation between Prometheus and Jupiter (Zeus); instead, Jupiter is overthrown, which allows Prometheus to be released.

Shelley's lyrical play is not meant to be performed on stage; instead it can be termed as a closet drama, which is staged in the mind of the readers. In other words, we can say that the imagination of the readers will make them visualize the play in their minds while reading the same. *Prometheus Unbound* is a play which is meant to be read rather than staged. Though the format of the text is that of a play, it is usually considered to be one of the best lyrical poetry ever written.

'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' – this critical statement of Shelley itself points out what he thought to be the role of the poet in society. The poet, according to Shelley, is always striving for the ideal, trying to always provide a better model from the then society so that people have a better life due to wisdom that has been garnered over the ages. They are like the legislators who are always striving towards proving a better society; but the poet's contribution of new ideas of society often goes unacknowledged which makes Shelley term the poets as 'unacknowledged legislators.' Shelley's poems deal with the ideal (a better world, a utopian world) and therefore, make a critique of the existing society by exposing the pitfalls that ought to be addressed and rectified. The revolutionary characters, whether Satan or Prometheus, become heroic for Shelley as they question the tyranny of the existing order and try to come up with a better world. In choosing Prometheus as the hero for his lyrical drama, Shelley is choosing the theme of questioning the tyrannical authority which is in keeping with the rebellious spirit of the French Revolution (1789).

Text and Explanation

Act I

Act I of *Prometheus Unbound* begins in the Indian mountain Caucasus. The chief character Prometheus is chained to a rock in the mountain Caucasus as he is surrounded by the Oceanides, Panthea and Ione. The suffering Prometheus, in the beginning of the play, makes us sympathetic towards him as the educated readers of Shelley already are acquainted with the character. As soon as the pitiable state of the protagonist is shown, immediately the readers' sympathies are drawn towards him. As the day breaks, the Greek Titan Prometheus cries out against the 'Monarch of Gods and Daemons', Jupiter, and his tyranny which is making him suffer in this manner. His vexation against God Jupiter, even while he is being trapped and bound by him, makes us look up to him and the cause for which he is suffering. Prometheus proclaims that even though he is being chained by Jupiter, he is greater and nobler than him. Prometheus narrates his tale of suffering to the earth, heaven, sun, sea, and shadow. He tells how nature has aided in his suffering as his flesh is constantly torn by 'Heaven's winged hound' that is, the hawks of Jupiter:

*'No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, forever!'*

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As Prometheus carries on relating his tale of suffering, four voices, from the mountains, springs, air, and whirlwinds, respond to him by describing how they see the world and how:

*'We shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence'*

Following this, the Earth proclaims how the whole world is aware of the woeful tale of Prometheus and his suffering and knows how unjust it is to suffer in this manner. They cry out 'Misery' as they perceive Prometheus suffering.

Prometheus reflects on the voices that he listens to and then again returns to his own tale of suffering (how Jupiter is making him suffer) and recalls his love for Asia. After sometime, Prometheus asks earth to repeat his curse against Jupiter (so the audience/readers comes to know), and the earth is made to tell Prometheus:

*'I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.'*

The earth also relates to Prometheus that he is 'more than God / being wise and kind'. Prometheus further asks who she is talking about. The earth says that she is the mother of all who suffered and is suffering under Jupiter's tyranny. Listening to this, Prometheus starts praising earth, but again stresses on the fact that she should recall the curse that he had laid upon Jupiter. The earth responds to Prometheus by describing Zoroaster. She says that there are two realities: one that one can perceive and the other is the shadow that exists 'Till death unite them and they part no more'. She then talks about Demogorgon whom she describes as 'the supreme tyrant' of the shadow realm, and further asks Prometheus to call upon

*'Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades, or Typhon or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil.'*

Taking earth's advice, Prometheus calls upon the Phantasm of Jupiter. Ione and Panthea narrate the Phantasm's appearance. The Phantasm first asks,

*'Why have the secret
powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms?'*

Prometheus asks the Phantasm to repeat the curse he made against Jupiter, and the Phantasm obeys Prometheus and says:

*Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue....
Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will....
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse*

*Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
 'Till thine Infinity shall be
 A robe of envenomed agony;
 And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
 To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.*

After hearing these words, Prometheus could not believe that these were his words. When the earth tells him that they were indeed his words, Prometheus repents saying these and says:

'I wish no living thing to suffer pain.'

The earth laments that Prometheus is defeated and Ione responds to it by saying that it is not true. When they are speaking thus, they are interrupted by the appearance of Mercury. With him appear furies who intend to torture Prometheus further. Mercury has come with message from Jupiter:

*'I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
 To execute a doom of new revenge.'*

Seeing the state that Prometheus is in, Mercury pities him but cannot help but oppose him as Prometheus stands against Jupiter. Mercury requests Prometheus to tell the secret of Jupiter's fate which only Prometheus knows, but Prometheus refuses Jupiter's request.

Finding no way to make Prometheus submit to his will, Mercury tries to bargain with Prometheus. Mercury offers Prometheus that he will be made free from his suffering and pain and would be welcomed among the gods if he agrees to what Mercury demands. However, Prometheus would not budge and he refuses the offer. Jupiter is angered by Prometheus' refusal and he, in his rage, makes thunder ring out across the mountains. Mercury understands the omen and departs immediately. The impending furies, who have been stopped by Mercury till now, begin to haunt Prometheus. Panthea and Ione can do nothing but despair over Prometheus's tortured self. Prometheus describes his suffering as part of his martyrdom and tells the remaining fury:

*'Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;
 And yet I pity those they torture not,'*

Fury departs immediately. Thereafter, Prometheus announces that peace comes with death, but that he would never want to be mortal. The earth reacts to Prometheus,

*'I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy
 As pain and virtue give.'*

At that very moment, a Chorus of Spirits appears and celebrates Prometheus's secret knowledge, which then breaks into accounts of dying individuals and the ultimate triumph of good people over evil. The spirits together tell Prometheus,

*'Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
 Woundless though in heart or limb,'*

The spirits depart, leaving Ione and Panthea to discuss the spirits' message with Prometheus and Prometheus recalls the Oceanid Asia. The Act ends with Panthea telling Prometheus that Asia is waiting for him.

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Act II

Act II Scene I of the lyrical drama begins in the valley of Caucasus where the Oceanid Asia speaks to Panthea. She says:

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'This is the season, this the day, the hour;

At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine'

Panthea then describes to Asia how her and Ione's lives have changed consequent to the fall of Prometheus; and how she came to figure out Prometheus' love for her in a dream. Asia tells Panthea to lift her eyes so that she may read his soul written in her eyes. Panthea agrees to it and the dream of the Titan Prometheus is revealed to Asia. Asia then could see another dream in Panthea's eyes. Soon the words 'Follow! Follow!' are repeated in Panthea and Asia's minds. The words are then soon repeated by Echoes, which tells them to follow. Both of them are mesmerized but Asia questions the Echoes. The Echoes only summon them further:

'In the world unknown sleeps a voice unspoken;

By thy step alone Can its rest be broken'

Asia and Panthea begin to follow the voices of the Echo.

In Scene II, the spirits describe Asia's and Panthea's journey and how

'There those enchanted eddies play

Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,

By Demogorgon's mighty law,

With melting rapture, or sweet awe,

All spirits on that secret way.'

Scene III takes place in mountains, to which Panthea announces that:

'Hither the sound has borne us - to the realm

Of Demogorgon.'

A Song of Spirits begins, calling Panthea and Asia 'To the deep, to the deep, / Down, down!' Asia and Panthea follows the spirits and descend.

Scene IV begins in the cave of the Demogorgon. Panthea illustrates Demogorgon upon his throne in the following words:

'I see a mighty darkness

Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom

Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,

Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,

Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is

A living Spirit.'

Asia asks Demogorgon who create the world, and Demogorgon replies that God created everything – all of the good and all of the bad. Asia asks Demogorgon to reveal the name of God:

'Utter his name: a world pining in pain

Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.

When Demogorgon still does not say his name, Asia continues to question Demogorgon, and accounts the history of Saturn and Jupiter as rulers of the universe. She says:

'Then Prometheus

Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,

*And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign.'*

She then criticizes Jupiter for all the problems of the world — famine, disease, strife and death. Prometheus, she says, gave man everything that is good — fire, the knowledge of mining, speech, science and medicine. Demogorgon responds to this by saying that:

*'All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:
Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no'*

As Asia carries on further to pestering Demogorgon for answers, Demogorgon merely says that 'All things are subject to eternal Love.' Asia then asks when Prometheus will be freed. Demogorgon asks Asia to watch the mountain opens and chariots moves out across the night sky, which are being driven by the Hours. One Hour stays to talk to Asia, and Asia questions him as to who he is. The Hour responds,

*'I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.'*

Asia could not fathom what the Hour meant, and Panthea describes how Demogorgon has risen from his throne to join the Hour to travel across the sky.

Scene V takes place upon a mountain top where the chariot in which Panthea and Asia are travelling stops. The Hour says that his horses are tired, but Asia asks him to go forward. Panthea asks the Hour, to 'Tell whence is the light/ Which fills the cloud? The sun is yet unrisen', and the Hour informs her 'Apollo/ Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light... Flows from thy mighty sister.' Panthea realizes that Asia is changed, and describes how her sister radiates with beauty. It is through Asia's love that she understands how people move through time and ends with a notion of the paradise.

If Act I of the play was about the repetition of the Prometheus' curse to him and the repentance of Prometheus and a tale of his suffering and torments, then Act II is about Hope, about love and ideals. The two dreams of Asia — of release of Prometheus and the renewal of the world, and the consequent journey to the realm of Demogorgon asserts that though there is suffering and injustice that Jupiter has perpetrated on Prometheus, yet there is hope that such suffering will be over soon. Demogorgon's speeches to Asia suggest that things are not all over yet. It is the hope that Shelley wanted to give his contemporary readers that though the French Revolution has failed, yet there are hopes of a change — a change for the ideal to manifest itself in terms of the overthrowing of the omnipotent tyrannical forces.

Act III

Act III Scene I of *Prometheus Unbound* is set in heaven where Jupiter, the monarch, is sitting on his throne along with other gods. The scene is a natural consequence of what we have seen in the last scene. After Demogorgon and his speeches on creation and creator of the world to Asia, we are eagerly waiting to meet Jupiter basking in his own glory forgetting that things may take a turn which is least expected by him. Jupiter is in conversation with the other gods and is rejoicing over his omnipotent force. He

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claims that he has conquered almost everything except the soul of mankind. Jupiter says that:

*'Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the distant hour arrive,
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.*

Though Jupiter is celebrating, he seems to have forgotten that there is Demogorgon, his own offspring who has the potential in him to drag Jupiter to the abyss of chaos. As Jupiter is rejoicing over his omnipotence, Demogorgon appears and proclaims himself to be Jupiter's child. He, moreover, states that he is more powerful than Jupiter. Jupiter on the other hand claims that not even Prometheus would have him suffer. A fight between Jupiter and Demogorgon ensues, in which Jupiter tries his best to attack Demogorgon, but the elements refuse to help him and consequently Jupiter falls.

Scene II is set at a river on Atlantis, where Ocean discusses Jupiter's fall with Apollo in the hands of Demogorgon. Apollo says that he will not like to talk about the fall. Scene III moves back again to the Mount Caucasus where Hercules has unchained Prometheus. Hercules tells Prometheus:

*'Most glorious among spirits! thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
and thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.*

Prometheus is grateful to Hercules for freeing him. Prometheus then turns to Asia and tells her about a cave where they can go and live and which they could call home. Prometheus requests the Hour to take Ione, with the conch shell of Proteus, over the earth so she can 'breathe into the many-folded shell/loosing its mighty music; it shall be/as thunder mingled with clear echoes, then/return; and thou shalt dwell besides our cave.'

Prometheus also calls upon the Earth and she responds that she feels life and joy. Asia questions Earth as to why she talks about death, and the Earth responds that Asia will not be able to understand because she is immortal. She then talks about the nature of death, of war and faithless faith. She then calls forth a spirit, her torch bearer, who would guide Prometheus, Asia, and the others to a temple that was once dedicated to Prometheus and will become their cave to dwell in.

Act IV

In Scene IV, we are shifted to a forest near the cave. Asia and the spirit which guarded the forest and the cave begin to talk to each other about nature and love. The Hour comes and tells of a change:

*'Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thing air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,*

Had folded itself round the sphered world.

He then talks of a revolution within mankind when thrones were abandoned and men treated each other as equals and with love. This is Shelley's dream and answer to the French Revolution. French Revolution was meant to liberate the people of France from the tyrannical authority. nevertheless, what happens in France immediately after the French Revolution (1789) was Reign of Terror (1791) and advent of one of the greatest monarch on the throne of France, Napoleon. That was not the dream with which the French revolution started. It started with the notion of overthrowing monarchical form of governance and end of all kind of oppression and suppression leading to a just society where common people will enjoy their rights and live a prosperous life; but instead of achieving the objective the French Revolution substituted one monarch (Louis XIV) by another (Napoleonic).

Shelley in writing *Prometheus Unbound* is trying to talk about his notion of revolution and what would ensure a successful revolution. In this context of the play, we see that mankind is no longer fearful of Jupiter, the tyrant.

*'The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread.
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless; no, yet free from guilt or pain.'*

In the beginning of Act IV of the play a voice fills the forest near the cave where Prometheus is living. We find Ione and Panthea to be asleep. The voice narrates the dawn in front of a group of shadows, who claim to be the dead Hours and begins to sing of the King of the Hours' death. Ione wakes up and asks Panthea who they were and Panthea explains to her. Panthea describes spirits of the human mind approaching and these spirits soon join in with the others singing and rejoicing love. Eventually, they decide to break their song and go across the world to proclaim love. As we have said earlier, Shelley's answer to the French Revolution is love for intellectual beauty and that love is spread through the song of the spirits.

Ione and Panthea notice a new music, which Panthea describes as

*'the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,
Æolian modulations.'*

Panthea then describes how the two melodies are different, and Ione describes a beautiful chariot with a winged infant whose 'two eyes are heavens/of liquid darkness, which the deity/within seems pouring, as a storm is poured/from jagged clouds' and 'in its hand/ It sways a quivering moon-beam.' Panthea begins describing a sphere of music and light containing a sleeping child who is the Spirit of the Earth. The Earth interrupts and describes:

*'The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vapourous exultation not to be confined!'*

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The Moon responds by describing a light which has come from the Earth and penetrates the Moon. The Earth explains how all of the world 'Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter'. The Moon then describes how all of the moon is awakening and singing. The Earth sings of how man is restored and united:

*'Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamant stress.'*

The Earth continues by declaring that man now controls even lightning and that the Earth has no secrets left from man.

Panthea and Ione interrupt the Earth and the Moon by describing the passing of the music as a nymph rising from water. Panthea then claims:

*'A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which has been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight'.*

Demogorgon appears next and speaks the final words of the lyrical play. His speech is considered by many scholars as the central theme of the play.

*This is the day, which down the void abyss
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.
Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.*

Check Your Progress

14. Mention the major poems written by P. B. Shelley.
15. When did Shelley begin writing *Prometheus Unbound*?
16. Who is Demogorgon?
17. Who is Prometheus?

1.6 SUMMARY

- Robert Burns (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796) is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland. He was a poet and lyricist best known for poems written in his native Scottish language.
- Robert Burns's poetry is a political and civil commentary on the events of the times. In many ways he is a pioneer of the Romantic movement since his concerns with oppression, freedom and the impact of changes on the rural landscape are reflected in the works of the other poets.
- Burns lived during the period of the French Revolution and it influenced his poetry. The theme of republicanism in his work can be attributed to this influence.
- Literary critic David Daiches describes Burns as 'the greatest songwriter Britain has produced' and calls the poem as a 'combination of tenderness and swagger'.
- George Herbert was born on 3 April 1593.
- The course of development that one comes across in English poetry, suggests that there are two kinds of conceit (a) the Petrarchan conceit and (b) the metaphysical conceit.
- Metaphysical poetry was in vogue during the seventeenth century. It was popularized by John Donne. Later on many of his literary successors like Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, and Richard Crashaw carried on the tradition.
- Distinct characteristics of metaphysical poetry include extreme use of puns, allegories and conceits which are incorporated into the ordinary speech.
- Speaking about the metaphysical writers in his essay, T. S. Eliot opines that the metaphysical poets used the conceit as a prominent tool to challenge the existing imagery used in the contemporary writings 'in order to stimulate both emotions and intellects'.
- The poem, *The Pulley*, by George Herbert, centres on the theme of the relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man.
- In *The Pulley*, George Herbert draws an analogy between a pulley and a Pandora's box.
- Many critics consider the poem, *The Pulley*, containing a myth of origins. Yet many others suggest that it is a moral and spiritual fable.
- Andrew Marvell, a poet of the seventeenth century England, expressed extraordinary terseness and sensuousness in his poems.
- The finest examples of Marvell's sensuous nature imagery are to be found in *The Garden* and *Bermudas*.
- Marvell's love poems constitute an important division of his lyric poetry, the other two important divisions being poems dealing with the theme of religion and those dealing with the theme of nature.
- In certain respects Marvell, in his love poems adopt the established Petrarchan approach, while in other respect his treatment of love, like his technique or style of expression, is wholly unconventional.

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- The word 'wit' has several meanings. It means intelligence or understanding; it also means the capacity to amuse others by an unexpected combination of ideas or a contrast between ideas or expressions.
- P. B. Shelley's lyrical four-act play *Prometheus Unbound* is based on the Greek character Prometheus who is usually thought to be an archetypal rebel.
- Though the character of Prometheus is based on Aeschylus *Prometheia*, there are significant differences from the original myth as Shelley shows no reconciliation between Prometheus and Jupiter, the tyrannical omnipotent figure.
- Shelley's intention in dealing with the myth is to manifest his idea of revolutionary character in the character of Prometheus.
- Prometheus is similar to Satan in his rebellious spirit but different from him as he does not have the characteristics of envy, revenge, wickedness and other follies that characterized Satan in canonical English literature.
- Shelley's intention in *Prometheus Unbound* is to create an ideal rebellious character who would be an answer to the French Revolution (1789) which championed the notions of liberty, equality and fraternity.

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Prelate:** A high ranking member of the clergy, such as a cardinal, abbot, or bishop, who has authority over lesser clergy, is called a prelate.
- **Syllogism:** It is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive reasoning to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true.
- **Transliteration:** It means writing or printing using the closest corresponding letters.
- **Utopia:** It is an imagined state of perfection.

1.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Robert Burns was born on 25 January 1759 in Scotland.
2. The French Revolution affected Burns' writings.
3. Burns was described as the greatest songwriter of Britain by David Daiches.
4. In the poem, *A Red, Red Rose*, the speaker calls his beloved 'a bony lass'.
5. The salient features of George Herbert's poetry include its deep religious devotion, linguistic accuracy, fluidity in rhyme and most importantly, the use of metaphysical conceit.
6. The major poems written by George Herbert are as follows:
 - *Holy Sonnets*
 - *The Pulley*
 - *Affliction*
 - *The Collar*

7. The poem, *The Pulley* centres on the theme of the relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man.
8. In *The Pulley*, God bestows the gifts of wisdom, honour and pleasure on man.
9. In *Upon Appleton House*, Marvell gives us detailed pictures of the flower garden in Lord Fairfax's estate, followed by vivid descriptions of the meadows, the river in flood and after the flood. These descriptions are followed by perfectly realistic and life-like pictures of the wood into which the poet withdraws in a contemplative mood. In this part of the poem, Marvell also describes the activities of the nightingale, the doves and the woodpecker.
10. In *The Garden*, ripe apples drop on the poet's head, the luscious clusters of grapes squeeze their juice upon his mouth; the nectarine and the peach reach his hands of their own accord; he stumbles on melons; and he is ensnared with flowers. These lines make the reader's mouth begin to water. The images also appeal to the sense of smell, eyes and touch besides taste.
11. The Petrarchan mode, which became very popular with the Elizabethan poets, was to exalt the beloved and to shower glowing and eloquent praises on her beauty and charm. The Petrarchan lover was given to sighing and weeping over the indifference and callousness of his beloved and over the disappointment he felt as a consequence of her attitude. We see these characteristics reflected in three of Marvell's poems, *The Fair Singer*, *To His Coy Mistress*, and *The Unfortunate Lover*.
12. Carpe diem is a Latin phrase meaning 'seize the day.'
13. In *To His Coy Mistress*, the lover is trying to convince his beloved that they should waste no time and indulge in lovemaking and the pleasures of love.
14. The major poems written by P. B. Shelley are as follows:
 - *Ozymandias*
 - *Ode to the West Wind*
 - *To a Skylark*
 - *Music*
 - *The Cloud*
 - *The Masque of Anarchy*
15. In 1818, Shelley began writing *Prometheus Unbound*.
16. Demogorgon is the force that represents the masses of the French Revolution. It is formidable and indestructible.
17. Prometheus is a Titan who stole fire from the Heavens and gave it to man and for this 'transgression' he was bound to a rock by Zeus to be eternally tormented.

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1.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did Robert Burns become famous as a song writer?
2. Why are the final verses of the poem *A Red, Red Rose* important?
3. Provide a short biographical sketch of George Herbert.

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4. What qualities of the metaphysical does Marvell display in his works?
5. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) Marvell as a poet of nature
 - (b) Marvell as a poet of love
6. State the importance of the Introduction or the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.
7. How is Shelley's play *Prometheus Unbound* different from Aeschylus' trilogy on Prometheus?
8. Give a brief description of Prometheus' suffering in *Prometheus Unbound*.
9. According to Shelley, who were responsible for the collapse of the French Revolution?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the effect of the French Revolution in the poetry of Burns.
2. Critically analyse the poem *The Pulley* by George Herbert.
3. Compare Marvell and Wordsworth's style or approach to nature.
4. 'The poetry of Marvell contains all these kinds of wit, and contains them in abundance.' Elaborate with examples.
5. Is Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* different from the protagonist of Aeschylus' trilogy on Prometheus? Give reasons to support your answer.
6. Prometheus is a portrait of an archetypal rebellious intellectual. Do you agree? Give your views.
7. Shelley's intention in writing *Prometheus Unbound* was not to create a play but a poem dealing with a rebellious figure who has contemporary relevance. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.
8. Comment critically on the character of Prometheus with reference to Milton's Satan (*Paradise Lost*). Do you think Prometheus is similar to Satan? Give a reasoned answer.

1.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 POETRY-II

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Alfred Tennyson: An Introduction
 - 2.2.1 *Break, Break, Break*: Text and Explanation
- 2.3 Thomas Hardy: An Introduction
 - 2.3.1 Works of Thomas Hardy
 - 2.3.2 *The Darkling Thrush*
- 2.4 Louis MacNeice: An Introduction
 - 2.4.1 *Prayer Before Birth*
- 2.5 Mathew Arnold: An Introduction
 - 2.5.1 *Longing*
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Key Terms
- 2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.9 Questions and Exercises
- 2.10 Further Reading

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Coming down in the history of English literature from the Romantic age of idealism to the Victorian era of realism, one experiences the feeling of a return from solitude to society, from nature to industry, from concepts to issues, from spiritualism to pragmatism, from optimism to agnosticism, from lyricism to criticism and from organicism to compromise.

The movement of realism is an integral part of Victorian age. Although the literary scene during the Victorian period was dominated by novel, its achievement in poetry was not less significant. Although the period may not have produced as great poets as were begotten by the preceding period of Romanticism, it did produce a number of poets who not only carried on the poetic tradition in English but also made significant contributions to it. Just as in the Romantic period, there were two distinct generations of poets, in the Victorian period too, there were the early Victorians (ending around 1870) and the late Victorians.

Among the early Victorians, the most prominent poets were Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Emily Bronte, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, George Eliot among others. Writers associated with the late Victorian Period include Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, Robert Louis Stevenson among others. In this unit, you will study the poems written by Alfred Tennyson, Thomas Hardy, Louis MacNeice and Mathew Arnold.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the major works of Alfred Tennyson
- Analyse the poem, *Break, Break, Break* by Tennyson

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- Describe Thomas Hardy as a prominent poet of the Victorian era
- Compare *The Darkling Thrush* by Hardy with Keats *Ode to a Nightingale*
- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Louis MacNeice
- Identify the distinguishing features of *Prayer Before Birth*
- Summarize Mathew Arnold's contribution to Victorian poetry
- Explain the poem *Longing* by Mathew Arnold

2.2 ALFRED TENNYSON: AN INTRODUCTION

Alfred Tennyson was born on 6 August 1809 in an old Lincolnshire family. He was the first Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Freshwater. He was an English poet who is generally considered as being the chief representative of Victorian age poetry.

His parents had twelve children and Alfred was fourth among them. In 1815, three brothers— Charles, Frederick and Alfred, were sent off to Louth grammar school. However, Alfred remained unhappy there and left the place in 1820. Even though difficult conditions existed in the household, his father managed to provide him a good and wide literary education. Alfred was an intelligent child and even before he turned thirteen, he had begun composing in the style of great literary figures like John Milton, Sir Walter Scott and Alexander Pope. Also, in the works of Alfred from his youth, one can clearly see a dominant influence of Lord Byron. *The Devil and the Lady* is a collection of unpublished poems from his youth which was published in 1930 as a collection, many years after his death.

The influence of Lincolnshire countryside is clearly visible in the writings and especially, poetry of Tennyson. Phrases such as 'the waste enormous marsh,' 'the sea about his home' and 'the sand-built ridge of heaped hills that mound the sea' abound in his works.

His father's health started declining in 1824 and he turned to drinking as a refuge. Despite unhappy conditions at home, Alfred did not stop writing. He wrote in collaboration with Charles and Frederick in *Poems by Two Brothers* (1826; dated 1827).

Frederick joined Charles and Alfred in 1827 at Trinity College, Cambridge. This is where Alfred established his lifelong friendship with Arthur Hallam. Arthur was the talented offspring of Henry Hallam, the famous historian. The two of them joined the Apostles which was an exclusive undergraduate club catering to earnest intellectual interests.

During this time in Cambridge, there was a rise in the reputation of Tennyson as a poet. In 1829, Alfred became the winner of the chancellor's gold medal for his poem *Timbuctoo*. *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* was printed in 1830. In 1830 itself, Alfred Tennyson and Hallam visited Spain to aid the unsuccessful revolution against Ferdinand VII. In the meantime, Hallam had formed an attachment towards Emily, Tennyson's sister, but their correspondence was forbidden for a year.

Alfred's father passed away in 1831 leaving the family in debt. As result, Alfred left Cambridge without getting his degree. In 1831 itself, a eulogistic article on *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* was published by Hallam in *Englishman's Magazine*. Then 1832, he arrived in Somersby as Emily's accepted suitor, the same year in which Tennyson

published another volume of his poems (dated 1833), including *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Palace of Art* and *The Lotos-Eaters*. Among these poems was a satirical epigram on the critic Christopher North (Scottish writer John Wilson), who in *Blackwood's Magazine* had made an attack on *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. He again attacked Tennyson's new works in *Quarterly Review*. Tennyson was deeply distressed by this, yet he carried on revising old and writing new poems.

Hallam, whose engagement his family recognized in 1833, met a sudden death in September while visiting Vienna. This even added to Tennyson's misery as he was going through a difficult phase in his life. His works were not being received well and his three brothers Septimus, Charles and Edward were mentally ill. It was at this time that Tennyson produced *The Two Voices* (1842) *Ulysses*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, and possibly also *Morte d'Arthur* (first draft). Several of the poems that he wrote at this time are present in *In Memoriam*.

In 1836 Alfred's brother Charles got married to Louisa Sellwood of Horncastle. It was at this wedding that Alfred fell in love with Louisa Sellwood's sister, Emily. The two of them corresponded with each other for years, despite the disapproval of Emily's father. Her father disapproved of Tennyson due to the latter being a bohemian, with an addiction for tobacco and port and liberal religious views. In the meantime, the Tennysons had moved near London and were leading a sort of wandering life. During this time, Tennyson befriended several men of fame, such as William Ewart Gladstone (politician), Thomas Carlyle (historian) and Walter Savage Landor (poet).

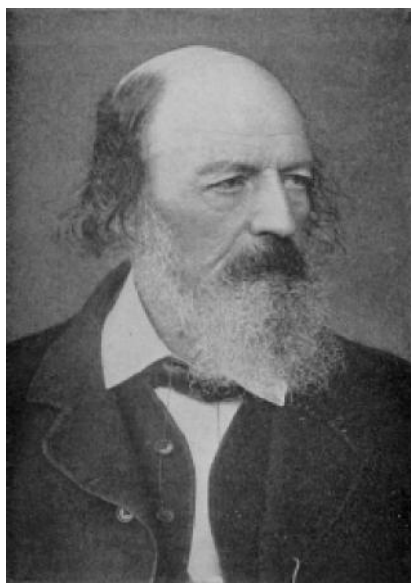


Fig 1.2 Alfred Tennyson

Major literary works

In 1842 Tennyson published *Poems* in two volumes. While one volume comprised revised selected works from the volumes of 1830 and 1832, the other volume consisted of new poems. The new poems included *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Two Voices*, *Locksley Hall*, *The Vision of Sin*, *The May Queen*, *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* and *The Lord of Burleigh*. Over all, the volume of new poems was not successful. It was the £200 pension that he was getting from the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel that enabled Tennyson to deal with

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his financial troubles. The first long poem by Tennyson named *The Princess* was published in 1847 and was a singular anti-feminist fantasia.

A major turning point in the life of Tennyson took place in 1850. He renewed his correspondence with Emily Sellwood, got engaged and married her. In the meantime, an offer was made by Edward Moxon to publish Tennyson's elegies on Hallam which he had been composing for years. These had already been published in *In Memoriam* (1850), anonymously and had attained huge success with the public as well as critics. This publication had helped him to acquire the friendship of Queen Victoria. Consequently, he was appointed as poet laureate in 1850.

Tennyson enjoyed a happy married life with Emile. He had two sons whom he named Hallam and Lionel. By 1853, Tennyson's life of wandering ended and finally he bought a house in the Isle of Wight, named Farringford. This was where he spent the rest of his life.

Tennyson's recognition as the national poet was confirmed with the publication of *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852) and *Charge of the Light Brigade* (1855).

One of Tennyson's long considered project came out as the *Idylls of the King* (1859), which was a set of twelve poems, all related to each other and providing an outlook on the legendary life of King Arthur. *Idylls of the King* became an instant success. Tennyson, who had loathing for publicity, attained much public fame with this work.

Tennyson embarked on writing poetic drama in 1874, and in 1875 *Queen Mary* appeared. In 1876 its abridged version was produced at the Lyceum but was only moderately successful. Then came *Harold* (1876; dated 1877), *Becket* (unpublished in full until 1884), and the 'village tragedy' named *The Promise of May*, which failed in November 1882 at the Globe. His poem named *Despair*, which had been published in the November 1881 issue of *The Nineteenth Century*, had caused a certain amount of sensation. It also indicated his beliefs which became apparent in his later works such as *The Ancient Sage*, published in *Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885). In this work, he has mentioned his intimations of life before and life after death.

Alfred Tennyson accepted peerage in 1884. In 1886 he brought out a new volume containing *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, which mostly contained imprecations against modern decadence and liberalism and a retraction of the earlier poem's belief in inevitable human progress.

The poem *Crossing the Bar* was written by Tennyson in 1889 while passing through the Isle of Wight. In 1889, Tennyson also published *Demeter and Other Poems*, that also had *To Mary Boyle*, *The Progress of Spring*, and *Merlin and the Gleam*, the last being an allegorical that summed up Tennyson's poetic career. Tennyson's play, *The Foresters* was produced successfully in 1892 in New York City. In spite of his deteriorating health, he fixed the proofs of his works *The Death of Oenone*, *Akbar's Dream* and *Other Poems* (1892).

Tennyson is considered as a forerunner of the Victorian age in England. By the middle of the nineteenth century, he held the position much like that held by Alexander Pope in the eighteenth century. He is regarded as a consummate poetic artist, who refined and consolidated such traditions that were passed on to him from his predecessors

in the Romantic Movement, more specifically by Keats, Byron and Wordsworth. Tennyson's poetry is notable for verbal melodies, descriptive imagery and metrical variety. In addition, Tennyson was regarded as the spokesman of the educated middle class on religious and moral outlooks. Tennyson used his poetry to address such misgivings in the form of intimate personal problems of a sensitive and troubled individual who would become dismal. Even then Tennyson's poetry provides a clear feeling of serenity and reassurance. He can be considered as the first great English poet who completely knew the modern day picture of man's place in the universe revealed by modern science. Even though this precarious position of mankind caused forebodings in Tennyson's mind, at the same time, it provided him a wider range for his imagination which went to provide his art with greater resonance and depth.

Even during Tennyson's lifetime itself, people posed questions with respect to his ascendancy among Victorian poets. In the twentieth century criticism which was guided by a new school of poetry lead by T.S. Eliot, put forth the proposal that Tennyson's works have been drastically devaluated. They are of the opinion that most of the works written by Tennyson and that were much admired by his contemporaries have lost their appeal. In the present times, there is a balanced view of Tennyson's works, with the recognition of the enduring greatness of *Ulysses*, the unique poignancy of Tennyson's best lyric poems, and, above all, the stature of *In Memoriam* as the great representative poem of the Victorian age. Today, it is even recognized that the comic and realistic aspects found in the works of Tennyson have greater importance than they were considered in the period when anti-Tennyson reaction was at its peak.

2.2.1 *Break, Break, Break*: Text and Explanation

As against the grim realities of life, Tennyson presented an ideal of life in his poems, reflected by their recourse to the historical past. Tennyson used a wide range of subject matter, ranging from medieval legends to classical myths and from domestic situations to observations of nature, as source material for his poetry. The influence of John Keats and other Romantic poets is evident from the richness of his imagery and descriptive writing. The insistent beat of *Break, Break, Break* emphasizes the relentless sadness of the subject matter.

*Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.
O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!
And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!
Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.*

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. List the well-known works of Alfred Tennyson.
2. In which year did Tennyson become the poet Laureate?

NOTES

Explanation

The short poem *Break, Break, Break* composed by Alfred Tennyson is an expression of his personal grief. However, it is more than an individual cry of pain and despair. He has presented grief and suffering as a universal characteristic of our world. He has drawn a picture of permanent and lasting images in contrast with temporariness of human life. The narrator grieves the loss of his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, a promising poet and essayist who had been engaged to Tennyson's sister, Emily. Hallam died of a stroke in 1833 when he was only twenty-two years old. The shock at the sudden death of his best friend, Arthur Hallam from a stroke at age twenty-two, teaches us the priceless value of youth and good health.

The whole world is indifferent to individual suffering. World has nothing to do with individual's grief. Tennyson also presents man's mechanical attitude towards a big individual loss. It clearly shows that man passes away so quickly but the scene of nature remains the same. The poem has similarity with W.H. Auden's *In Memory of W.B. Yeats* in which the death of a great poet does not affect anyone. In this poem also, the poet mourns the death of a dear friend who will never come back. In a sorrowful mood, the poet depicts the picture of sea and its waves constantly striking against cold gray stones. He also draws the image of fisherman's boy singing in his boat or at play with his sister and the grand ships coming to the harbour. He believes that these images are more enduring than the life of a man.

The poet thinks that these things remain unchanged. Nature is totally unaffected by any individual's loss. Even people keep doing their daily work. They hardly care for any individual loss. Thus, the world is too busy and man's life is so transitory. It is in a flux. It changes from childhood to youth, then to old age and finally embraces death. As man grows old, the sweet memories of his life become a part of the vanished past. Thus, between past and present, man suffers and complains.

The poet is missing his lost friend while standing on the sea bank. He expresses his sorrow that he will never feel the soft touch of that hand and will never hear that voice again. On the surface, the poem looks sad and depressing. Nevertheless, the grief is set against things which are permanent.

The poem describes the narrator's feeling that there is loss throughout the world, but also that there is some life within that loss. The sea is then used to represent that there is something greater beyond the cycle of life and death even though words can never truly describe what this is:

*Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.*

The poem begins with an apostrophe: 'Break, break, break, On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!' The speaker tells the sea to crash on the shore to cool down and change form. It is probably the cry of the speaker in an attempt to break the silence of his heart which impedes him to 'utter / The thoughts that arise in' him.

The word 'break' has been repeated, probably underlining the speaker's intention to interrupt the unbearable silence. The terms 'cold' and 'grey' might be associated with death, morbidity and mourning. Crashing of waves on 'cold, grey' stones is an expression that narrates the speaker's feeling and attempt to come out of the slumber and paralytic state of mind.

From the second stanza onwards, the focus of the poem shifts and we experience the sound of an active and fruitful life. The speaker recognizes that the sea is an indispensable part of his life, and conveys what he sees — that the fisherman's boy is playing with his sister, the sailor lad who sings rowing down the sea and the stately ships which sail with the purpose of trade. It is the ceaseless motion of life painted through the words of the speaker. It tells us that motion is continuous, heedless of personal anxiety and pain.

The speaker looks on, depicting motion as life. But he cannot become part of these activities as he is troubled by his memory. The person in his thought weighs down the speaker, but his identity has not been revealed. It can only be understood that he is close to the speaker. However, it is evident that the person is no more as the speaker can feel the touch of his 'vanish'd hand' and the 'sound of' his voice. It is often conjectured that *Break, Break, Break* is a requiem of Tennyson's close friend and fellow poet, Arthur Henry Hallam.

The poem *Break, Break, Break* can have different interpretations. Firstly, the poem presents Tennyson's true love for his friend. Secondly, the poem reflects the dying of religion and the theory of evolution being introduced to society. The religious faith is disappearing from the world and man has become so mechanical that he has lost that fellow feeling which he used to have in ancient times.

Tennyson uses lots of punctuation, especially commas, which makes the poem move extremely slow, which when added with the context of the poem, heightens the feeling of sadness and depression in the poem. Another technique which Tennyson uses in this poem to make it more slow and depressing is his use of the sound 'O':

O Sea! - [1st Stanza, 2nd line]

O well for the fisherman's boy, [2nd Stanza, 1st line]

O well for the sailor lad, [2nd Stanza, 3rd Line]

Tennyson displays a mastery of imagery in this lyrical poem of heartache and bereavement. The poet's pain is real as he expresses the indifference of nature in a cruel and unfeeling world through personification in an address to the sea.

2.3 THOMAS HARDY: AN INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was a prominent writer of the Victorian era. His life can be easily compartmentalized into three phases. The first phase (1840–1870) was marked by his early life, including first marriage, early compositions and a first unpublished novel. The second phase (1871–1897) was marked by his establishment as a writer, along with a prosperous writing career in the form of fourteen published novels and numerous short stories. The third phase (1898–1928) was marked by his attainment of a celebrity stature, moving away from composing novels and returning to poetry.

Except for the period in London during young manhood, Thomas Hardy passed his life near Dorchester, close to the place where he was born in 1840 and died in 1928. He was surrounded by people and customs, the monuments and the institutions of Dorset and contiguous counties of south-western England, which he placed permanently on the literary map by the ancient name Wessex. As a writer, Hardy was a living paradox. A natural poet, much of his poetry is nevertheless in prose. He had the poet's largeness, minuteness and intensity of vision—a threefold faculty displayed throughout his novel. The irony in Thomas Hardy's novels is not directed at human egotism but at the very conditions of human existence. He saw his characters as elemental figures whose passions were doomed to run the course that human conditions had set for them.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. What does insistent beat of the poem *Break, Break, Break* emphasize?
4. How does the poem *Break, Break, Break* teach us the priceless value of youth and good health?

NOTES

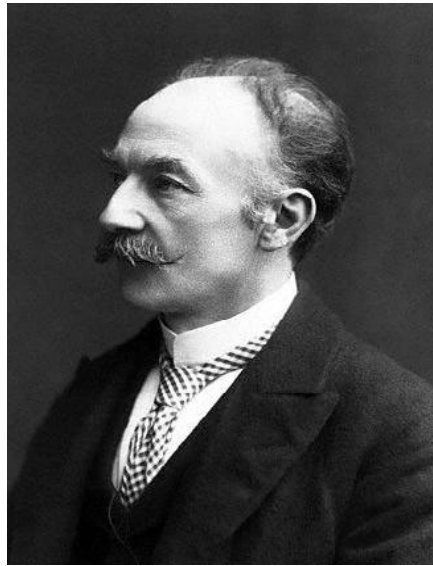


Fig 2.2 Thomas Hardy

Hardy was neither a philosophical novelist nor a subtle psychologist. His view of man is neither holy consistent nor any degree profound. His prose has air of being self-taught; it is often clumsy, sometimes pretentious generally rough-hewn and unequal. Hardy's vision of life was genuine and he wrestled it alone. The underlying rhythm of his novel is sound and what Henry James called the 'sense of felt life' is movingly present.

'Critics can never be made to understand that the failure may be greater than the success... To have the strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of a mountain is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of then hundredweight only halfway up that mount is a failure. But the latter is two or three times as strong a deed.' (Hardy in his diary, 1907)

Hardy was born to a master mason and building contractor in the village of Higher Bockhampton, on the edge of Puddletown Heath. His mother, who had literary tastes and read Latin poets and French romances, had a huge impact on him. Early training as an architect gave him intimate knowledge of local churches utilized to advantage in his writings. He married Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. At the age of 22, Hardy moved to London and started to write poems which idealized the rural life. Emma Lavinia Gifford encouraged him and he started to consider literature as his 'true vocation.'

Hardy's first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* was rejected and he was advised by Alexander Macmillan to improve his work. *Under the Green Wood Tree* (1872) is an idyllic tale of rustic life. *Far From the Madding Crowd*, (1874) use a wider canvas and take a closer look at the nature and consequences of human emotions. Misfortune, coincidences and the intrusion into the pastoral life makes this love story tangled and violent. *The Return of the Native*, (1878) is a more ambitious work.

In the novel, the *Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), nature, civilization and human character work on each other continually. The novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* outraged the religious conscience of 1891 and his novel *Jude the Obscure* is fatally injured by his ruthlessness.

In 1896, disturbed by the public uproar over the unconventional subjects of two of his greatest novels, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy announced that he would never write fiction again. In April, 1912, Hardy wrote:

‘Then somebody discovered that *Jude* was a moral work — austere in its treatment of a difficult subject — as if the writer had not all the time said in the preface that it was meant to be so. Thereupon many uncursed me, and the matter ended, the only effect of it on human conduct that I could discover being its effect on myself — the experience completely curing me of the further interest in novel-writing.’

He continued writing poems the rest of his life.

As for his marriage to Emma, it was an unhappy one, but they continued to stay with each other. They did not have any offspring. Hardy, however, had many affairs.

Emma died in 1912 and a couple of years later he married Florence Emily Dugdale, his secretary, who was a woman in her 30s and approximately thirty years younger to him.

Hardy breathed his last on 11 January 1928 in Dorchester, Dorset. Hardy was popular as a lyrical pastoralist. He was also a modern, even revolutionary writer. It may be a sign of the times that some of us take his books to bed, as if even his pessimistic vision was one that enabled us to sleep soundly.’

2.3.1 Works of Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy tries to create impressions by the skilful use of similes, metaphors, allusions and images. He invests in his characters, objects and elements an extraordinary power which is not inherently their own.

The popular works of Thomas Hardy include the following:

Novels and Short Stories

- *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
- *Jude the Obscure*
- *Under the Greenwood Tree*
- *Far from the Madding Crowd*
- *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
- *The Fiddler of the Reels and Other Stories (1888-1900)*
- *The Hand of Ethelberta*
- *A Changed Man and Other Tales*
- *Desperate Remedies*
- *The Distracted Preacher*
- *A Laodicean*
- *Life's Little Ironies*
- *A Mere Interlude*
- *A Pair of Blue Eyes*
- *The Return of the Native*

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- *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*
- *Selected Stories of Thomas Hardy*
- *Stories of Wessex*
- *The Trumpet-Major*
- *Two on a Tower*
- *The Well-Beloved*
- *Wessex Tales*
- *The Withered Arm and Other Stories*
- *The Woodlanders*

Poems

Hardy wrote poems during the second Boer War of 1899–1902 and the Great War of 1914–1918. Naturally, his verses reflected the conflicts related to war. His war poems reflect a wide diversity in attitude. While *Channel Firing* has a deeply pessimistic tone, *The Breaking of Nations* is rather optimistic and focuses on the good things of daily life that are sure to survive even when wars are long forgotten. His popular poems include the following:

- *At an Inn*
- *Beeny Cliff*
- *The Darkling Thrush*
- *The Dead Man Walking*
- *Heiress and Architect*
- *Her Dilemma*
- *Her Immortality*
- *I Look into my Glass*
- *The Ivy-Wife*
- *The Man He Killed*
- *Neutral Tones*
- *The Ruined Maid*
- *She, At his Funeral*

2.3.2 THE DARKLING THRUSH

Thomas Hardy invariably wrote about gloomy and fatalistic perspective of life. Hence, when he uses a bleak winter landscape, in his poem, to symbolize the transitory nineteenth century, it does not surprise anyone. In the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, he calls nineteenth century a ‘corpse’ which is lying in a ‘crypt’.

When Hardy composed *The Darkling Thrush* he was living on the threshold of the twentieth century. In addition, it was not just the age but he himself was also making a transition in his creative approach, from writing novels he was focusing on writing poems. The desire for this transition was the negative public reception of his two novels, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Hardy had been too frank in his depiction of morally disagreeable subject matter. This had outraged the

readers of his time. Hardy's contemporary novelist, George Gissing (1857–1903), had famously called the novel *Jude the Obscure*. This was of course, one personal reason for which Hardy was gloomy in temperament.

Ironically, both *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure* are widely read and appreciated today along with his poetry which is considered to be of high quality.

The Darkling Thrush was composed at the far end of the nineteenth century. The poem was first printed as *By the Century's Deathbed* sometime during December 1900.

The poem appears in the form of an ode. It is a conventional lyric poem. It appears in the form of an address identifying a particular subject. It is written in a lofty and elevated fashion. The poem has a formal tone although we also know that odes can be written in the form of a personal note as well. On the very special occasion of the adieu hours of the old century, the poet puts down his reflections in the first person, 'I'. It appears as if he is leaning on a gate by the little wood. Such a pose is traditionally considered to be a 'thinking pose'.

Apart from the thinking pose, the gate symbolizes the arrival of the new year as well as the century.

Hardy portrays a frosty evening landscape in the poem. It is that time when everyone else has gone indoors. He has depicted realistic pictures of the winter landscape. It appears to him as if the season is a corpse, that resembles, the corpse of the almost dead nineteenth century. Along with the natural surroundings, the cloudy sky is considered as the crypt (burial place) for the corpse. Adding to it is the sound of the winter wind; for the poet it is a lament that is usually associated with a dead person (the nineteenth century). Each and every living organism appears to be as devoid of passion as Hardy. Both of them appear to be almost as dead as the century. At this moment of absolute despair a thrush's beautiful song suddenly is heard somewhere nearby. It breaks upon the grim cold scene or as the poet prefers to call, the 'growing gloom'. This makes Hardy wonder whether the bird is aware of any such cause/subject which might indicate hope. Perhaps Hardy is ignorant of such subject. The title of the poem, *The Darkling Thrush* is indicative that Hardy was intentionally incorporating words that have a long poetic history. 'Darkling' implies darkness, or emergence of darkness. Emergence because Hardy can still view the landscape, as well as figure out that the sun is 'weakening' but it is not completely set. It is believed that the title probably is a shorthand for 'the thrush that sang as night was approaching.'

*I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.*

Explanation

The poem begins with the speaker stating that finally it is the middle of winter. One can also call it a very cold and dreary autumn. There is no fun of springtime here. Everywhere,

NOTES

Check Your Progress

5. Mention the three phases of Thomas Hardy's life.
6. What is the name of Hardy's first novel?
7. List the major poems written by Thomas Hardy.

NOTES

it is cold and ice, darkness and grey. The speaker is leaning against a gate. Even the exact identity of 'I,' is vague. However, 'I' could refer to a depressed soul.

What is important to mention here is that the word frost is mentioned in capital 'F'. It is almost as if frost has attained human-like characteristics. This is very typical to human beings whose names are capitalized while writing them. Certain elements of nature, like snow, ice and frost are definitely not proper names but the capitals suggest their human-like attributes.

As we move on, we come across further human-like qualities, the 'almost human' part of the description. The speaker probably thinks that frost is 'spectre-grey.' Here, the word 'spectre' means 'ghost'. That is why if frost is human-like then it is also ghost-like, thus, being human and non-human.

The speaker continues to suggest that this winter day is dreary. The word 'dregs' is related to coffee. It refers to those grainy, bitter things that cling to the bottom of the coffee cup. Dregs invariably imply anything which is not good to taste. Hence, when the speaker of the poem suggests that we are in the dregs of winter, he wishes to convey that this is not the beautiful snowfall that one comes across during Christmas time. In fact, it refers to those grey and gloomy elements which make the reader depressed.

The speaker goes on to mention that the day has got an eye. This seems to imply that 'Winter' is a person. In continuation with the dreary image, the whole world appears to be mostly dead. In fact, as our speaker observes, the day already appeared inferior and in a weak state long before winter's dregs made things all the more worse.

Despite the fact that Hardy is writing this poem at the end of the nineteenth century, it is surprising to note that he is not celebrating the arrival of the new century. Also, he is not looking ahead to see good times. He is rather carrying forward the gloom and despair of the previous century with him.

Further, the speaker is describing things which he sees while gazing the patch of tangled brushes. However, amidst those bushes all he can see is death and destruction. The vines in front of the speaker appear to resemble the broken bits of a lyre. Lyre is a harp-like instrument used in the classical times.

Hardy has incorporated classical allusions which makes the poem all the more beautiful. The lyre also appears in infinite poems of the antiquity. Hardy probably intends to suggest that with the new era setting in; the stock and trade of traditional poetry are also moving out of their way.

The first stanza reconfirms that the speaker is a loner. The speaker is outside observing the surroundings when other people are not out and around. It is definitely some late hour. Even the speaker mentions that everyone else he is acquainted with is curled up by the fire or may be enjoying dinner or probably relaxing over a nice cup of tea. The speaker is sure there is life out there somewhere but just that it does not happen to be anywhere in his proximity.

But then the question arises: Is there really life out there somewhere. After all, as the speaker makes it clear that the people who we assume are enjoying life were earlier 'haunting' the landscape. So are these people human at all?

It is believed that the writing of *The Darkling Thrush* by Hardy is a prequel to *Night of the Living Dead*. Some reasons for such thought could be that Hardy is writing this poem towards the end of the Industrial Revolution. With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, Britain, an agrarian nation, became an industrial one. People migrated

to cities in search of better livelihood. Nevertheless, the industries turned cities into centres of smog and dust which in turn brought in many deadly diseases.

Hardy is trying to point out that the Industrial Revolution changed the way work was perceived and executed. Prior to the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, both men and women worked as peasants for rich landowners yet they were in touch with nature. However, as soon as people started working in factories, everything changed suddenly. The workers had to work for 12 or 14-hours a day. It was all about getting a job and working arduously. No worker got to see the sun due to long working hours. Most of them turned pale as a ghost. Several English novels like *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell highlight this plight of workers during the Industrial Revolution.

We can assume that the folks, who are walking around like ghosts as the speaker perceives them, could be the industry workers and they have been turned into automations by the life being led by them. It is a scary and dreary scenario.

Hardy is probably drawing a parallel between the end of the century and Doomsday because some almost dead exist here. Nevertheless, it is more than evident that the speaker, just like Hardy himself, is not very appreciative of the modern age.

The land's sharp features seemed to be

The Century's corpse outleant,

His crypt the cloudy canopy,

The wind his death-lament.

The ancient pulse of germ and birth

Was shrunken hard and dry,

And every spirit upon earth

Seemed fervourless as I.

Explanation

In the second stanza, the speaker uses metaphor to describe the desolate landscape as the carcass of the nineteenth century.

The speaker wonders why is the century 'outleant'? Though technically, outleant is not a word per se, but Hardy's speaker probably considers himself out of this world and hence, has chosen to use the word. The word is so special that even the entire vocabulary of the English language could not match up to find one word to describe the speaker's experience. This is precisely where the word has been incorporated for literary effect. Till now, we realize Hardy has been discussing inanimate concepts like 'Winter' or 'the century'. Yet he has hardly made any reference to living beings. Hardy's speaker insists on focusing on the death of inanimate (or at times abstract) things, so much so that at times, we wonder if we are still alive or are we heading towards our grave.

Nature appears to conspire to lament over the transition of the century. In a way, the whole idea is very romantic (like Wordsworth or Coleridge would have expressed it). A Romantic poet might have understood something similar.

It is interesting to note here that even the speaker moves on with the idea of ending all things; the rhythm of the poem remains absolutely constant and conventional. One can definitely see an uncanny relationship being built between the rhyme scheme and the huge void that the speaker experiences around himself.

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‘The ancient pulse of germ and birth/ Was shrunken hard and dry’ is filled with symbolism. Hardy incorporates metaphors of germination. Here in the poem, he refers to the unsuccessful and futile germination.

In the last two lines of this stanza, the speaker says that there is some kind of spirit that is present at the moment. It could also imply a lack of reason or perhaps the speaker is too engrossed in the gloom and sorrow around that he happens to see a spirit. It appears as if Hardy is trying to prove that there is no real living being in this poem.

Hardy insists on calling people as spirits only to highlight the physical rejection of any real living being. He insists on calling humans-as-ghosts or even at times, ghosts-as-humans making it difficult for us to discern the differences.

*At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.*

Explanation

You must have noticed by now that these lines indicate a significant shift in the poem. It seems that in the midst of the silence and death, the speaker suddenly hears something. This time what he hears is something beautiful. It is a love song. It is embalmed with happiness.

Finally, as the title suggests, the thrush makes an appearance. However, if one hears more closely, one realizes that this sound resembles the gloominess which permeated the initial parts of the poem.

One might compare Keats *Ode to a Nightingale* with this poem. Keats nightingale was more happy and melodious than the one suggested by Hardy in this poem. Keats nightingale was immortal while Hardy’s thrush is combating a nasty storm in the middle of nowhere land. Nonetheless, the only positive thing about this bird is that it manages to survive despite the rough weather.

The tiny and adversity ridden bird has successfully managed to survive the despair and dejected atmosphere which even the speaker is unable to do. The bird has forgotten about the adversities and is simply singing merrily. The song does not make the ‘growing gloom’ disappear but at least it lessens the impact of the gloomy atmosphere. The song alone drew the attention of the speaker towards the bird as a welcomed distraction.

*So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afair or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air*

Explanation

Once again the first four lines of the stanza get merged into each other. This also builds up the momentum as the speaker continues to give special attention to the song of the thrush. The bird is singing a happy song whereas the speaker is discussing that the world is full of lifeless people. Perhaps the bird is happy from within. Hence, nature with elements of art (the bird song) becomes the epitome of real art for the poet.

It is wonderful to figure out that the bird is happy. It seems that the speaker is also comforted by the ideas which make the bird happy and cheerful.

Yet the speaker insists that he is not happy. He now insists that he is not sure whether the bird is singing a song of ecstasy. The speaker just imagines that the bird is probably singing for a cause and the speaker might in time just get to know about the cause.

Finally, the arrival of the twentieth century becomes apparent in this stanza. In the final couplet, he manages to capture the perspective of the major writers of the successive decades. Hardy brings in a sense of negotiation by bringing in hope (through the speaker) though in a subtle manner.

2.4 LOUIS MACNEICE: AN INTRODUCTION

Frederick Louis MacNeice was born in Belfast. His father, John Frederick MacNeice, was a minister and ultimately became a bishop of the Anglo-Irish Church of Ireland. His father favoured Home Rule and was vocal against the Protestant bigotry and violence in Northern Ireland. When MacNeice was six-years old, his mother, Elizabeth Margaret MacNeice, was sent to a nursing home in Dublin as she was suffering from severe depression. MacNeice did not see his mother again after this and she died in 1914 of tuberculosis. His father remarried when young MacNeice was ten. Since then, MacNeice studied in English schools. He was highly impressed with the free and positive atmosphere at Sherborne Preparatory School in Dorset and Marlborough College. He lost his Irish accent and gave up his baptismal first name of Frederick and his father's faith. Henceforth, he could never feel at home with his father or in Ireland. However, he always held this recognition of himself as an Irishman in England in his mind.

MacNeice was brought up among books and started writing poetry at the age of seven. Moreover, he read modern poets as Edith Sitwell and T. S. Eliot. MacNeice was good in studies. He took a first in Honour Moderations (Mods) in 1928. However, his further studies took a backseat due to his courtship of the stepdaughter of an Oxford scholar, Giovanna Marie Therese Babette Ezra, to whom he dedicated *Blind Fireworks*. He respected his colleague E. R. Dodds but had no desire of becoming a scholar like him. MacNeice, despite his reservations and hesitations, was able to establish himself as a poet in 1930s with the publication of his work *Poems* (1935). *Poems* facilitated in establishing MacNeice as one of the promising new poets of the 1930s.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

8. What kind of transition does the poem, *The Darkling Thrush* indicate?
9. How is the landscape portrayed by the speaker?

NOTES

1935 was a significant year both professionally and personally. In the same year, his wife suddenly left him (and their year-old son), running away with a young American graduate student who had been staying with them in Birmingham. The couple was formally divorced in 1936. This incident inspired him to write about the loss of his wife. MacNeice was able to overcome his grief with the passage of time. From 1941 until his death, Louis MacNeice dedicatedly worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). He died on 3 September 1963, just before the publication of his last book of poems, *The Burning Perch*.

Prominent works of MacNeice include the following:

Poems

- *Blind Fireworks*
- *Poems*
- *Letters from Iceland*
- *The Earth Compels*
- *Autumn Journal*
- *The Last Ditch*
- *Selected Poems*
- *Plant and Phantom*
- *Springboard*
- *Prayer Before Birth*
- *Holes in the Sky*
- *Collected Poems*
- *Ten Burnt Offerings*
- *Autumn Sequel*
- *Visitations*

Plays

- *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*
- *Out of the Picture*
- *Christopher Columbus*
- *He Had a Date*
- *The Dark Tower and other radio scripts*
- *Goethe's Faust*
- *The Mad Islands*
- *Persons from Porlock*

Books (fiction)

- *Roundabout Way*
- *The Sixpence That Rolled Away*

- *I Crossed the Minch*
- *Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay*
- *Zoo*
- *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*
- *The Strings Are False*
- *Meet the US Army*
- *Astrology*
- *Varieties of Parable*
- *Selected Prose of Louis MacNeice*



Fig 3.3 Louis MacNeice

2.4.1 Prayer Before Birth

The poem *Prayer Before Birth* was written in London in 1944. It was composed during the Second World War. The poem employs free verse but it appears more like a prayer. The rhythms, insistent alliterations and consecutive repetitions give the poem hymn-like appearance. Moreover, each stanza resembles a single long sentence.

I am not yet born; O hear me.

Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the club-footed ghoul come near me.

I am not yet born, console me.

*I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me,
with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me,
on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.*

I am not yet born; provide me

With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk

NOTES

Check Your Progress

10. Where was Louis MacNeice born?
11. Why was the year 1930 significant for MacNeice?

*to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light
in the back of my mind to guide me.*

NOTES

*I am not yet born; forgive me
For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words
when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me,
my treason engendered by traitors beyond me,
my life when they murder by means of my
hands, my death when they live me.
I am not yet born; rehearse me
In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when
old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains
frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white
waves call me to folly and the desert calls
me to doom and the beggar refuses
my gift and my children curse me.*

*I am not yet born; O hear me,
Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God
come near me.*

*I am not yet born; O fill me
With strength against those who would freeze my
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
one face, a thing, and against all those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me.*

*Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me.
Otherwise kill me.*

Explanation

The speaker of the poem *Prayer Before Birth* is an unborn child. The child is addressing not just the divinity but also speaks to humanity in general. The child insists that it wants to be human or nothing else. The child dreams of being a free person once it is born and does not want to be trampled by whims of random people.

Prayer Before Birth is a dramatic monologue. It is written from the perspective of a child who is yet to be born. The unborn child through its monologue tries to express its desire for a free life that is devoid of manoeuvre and corrupt influence that pave the way for threat and terror in this world.

This poem was composed during the Second World War. The consequences of the war were everlasting and extremely depressing. A war only leads to devastation and destruction. A war is solely responsible for halting the progress of a country. The disillusionment is not unheard of. Human beings are mercilessly displaced and millions go astray. MacNeice in the poem highlights this fear (through the unborn child) of the threat that looms on mankind brought upon by the war. The poet voices his fear about how the anarchy of the world can have a detrimental impact on the innocence of a child.

The poem is divided into six stanzas and each stanza is slightly longer than the previous one indicating the growth of the baby which is inside the womb. The very first stanza talks about the apprehensions of the little child. The child asks the almighty to 'hear' him and keep him (the child) away from nocturnal beasts like the 'bat or the 'rat' or the 'stoat'. The 'bloodsucking bat' that the child mentions could refer to the parasites that exist within human beings. The child's plea suggests that the world appears to be infested with poison and the poet requests (through the child) to protect ourselves from those negative aspects of life.

In the next stanza, the child requires God to 'console' him because the child fears that the human beings who exists in this world may intoxicate him with dangerous drugs or manipulate him with their clever ways or probably, if it is really unlucky, 'rack' him in 'black racks' and 'roll' him in 'bloods-baths'. Needless to say, the child wants God to ensure him and surround him with nature; the only thing that has not been completely corrupted by man. The child also asks for some guiding light.

By the time we read the fourth stanza, we realize that the baby has matured a little. The child asks God for protection from the malice and corruption of the world. The poet mentions the words, 'treason engendered by traitors'. Probably, the child intends to suggest that the society, in due course of time, may compel him to take someone's life or the political traitors may force him to betray the cause of the motherland. The child asks for all forgiveness even before it is born.

The fifth stanza is about morals. The baby in the womb asks God to be its teacher and teach him how to act when he comes across adverse situations like bureaucracy or lecturing from senior citizens, his own child cursing him or the beggars' refusal to accept his gift.

The sixth stanza summarizes the entire poem. The initial lines of the sixth stanza probably hint at autocratic people like Hitler and Xerxes. The child asks God to keep him away from such men. Moreover, the child asks God to 'fill' him with confidence and willpower which will further help them to stand up against inhumanity and many such similar human beings who would go out of their way to destroy him in their desire to make the child an insignificant part of a machine. They might as well make the baby's face turn into 'one expressionless face' or like as if the child was a small stone which the winds plays with, 'hither and thither or hither and thither'.

Poetic devices

Louis MacNiece has incorporated a number of poetical devices in this poem. He uses figures of speech like repetition, personification, alliteration, assonance and so forth to

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focus the truth that he was trying to project through the poem. The usage of comma several times, suggests that the child is in an extreme urgency to extend his request to the almighty. If you notice the line 'I am not yet born' is continuously repeated in every stanza. This signifies that even though the child is still in the womb, he is aware of the misery and inhumanity that prevails in the world of human beings. The usage of 'O hear me', 'O fill me' arms the child's prayer with more power and underlines the baby's emotions and brings forth his plea more explicitly.

The poet, Loius MacNiece, includes alliteration and assonance to a large extent. Most prominent alliterations include 'strong drugs dope me', 'with wise lies lure me', 'black racks rack me'. All these lines highlight horror that is coming in the mind of the unborn child. The creation of assonance through 'bat' and 'rat', 'tall wall', 'wise lies' gives a different yet enticing rhyme pattern to the poem along with its readers. The poem enlists themes and metaphors which are religion specific. The most obvious one is the use of the child which is used as the metaphor of Christ.

On a close reading of the third stanza, we realize that the poet has made use of personification. He has personified nature in the lines where he talks about 'trees to talk to me, skies to sing to me, water to dandle me'. The lines make it more than clear that the child desires the company of nature and is frightened to have the company of the cruel human world. Somehow nature is considered to be unaltered by the influence of man. Again, the poet uses the image 'mountains frown at me'. This image created in our mind paves way to create refuge that when everything is lost, nature is still there by our side.

The poem has many historical references as well. The poem was composed during the period of the Second World War. There are certain references which directly allude to it. The use of the phrase 'cog in a machine' suggests that the child has a feeling that the society will turn him into an insignificant existence, one that is absolutely worthless. This analogy has a direct reference to the First and the Second World Wars 'where soldiers were "dragooned" into being an "automaton"'.

The final line is a long breathless sentence. The reader comes across constant repetition of images that bring out the agitation of the speaker. Throughout the poem, we realize that the poet effectively portrays evil and devilish images that showcase the decadent state of the human existence and the world that surrounds it. It also conveys the presence of evil that moves on endlessly and strives to haunt humanity.

The poem interestingly ends with a surprising conclusion and the child in the end, pleads to be killed and not to be allowed to be born. The baby is disinterested in coming to such a cruel world if his prayers are not answered. By using the prayer of the child, Loius MacNiece makes his poem a mouthpiece for denouncing the deplorable condition to which humanity is heading towards with the passage of time.

As far as the tone of the poem is concerned, the poem can be described in various ways. The unborn baby obviously appears to be apprehensive of the future which lies ahead him. A sense of urgency is reflected in his voice. The poem is scattered with apocalyptic as well as gloomy visions.

Check Your Progress

12. Who is the speaker of the poem, *Prayer Before Birth*?
13. When was *Prayer Before Birth* written?

2.5 MATHEW ARNOLD: AN INTRODUCTION

Matthew Arnold was born in 1822 at Laleham in England. He was educated in Winchester and Oxford. In 1841, he won an open scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford. His poem

Cromwell won the Newdigate prize in 1843. In 1845, he started teaching at Rugby. In the same year he was elected as the Fellow of Oriel College, distinction at Oxford. In 1847, he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council of UK. He remained loyal to France and French connection throughout his life. He died in 1888.

He represented his age in a profound manner by being the true voice of sensitive Victorian intellectual brooding over inevitable loss of faith and the meaning of life. Nineteenth century Hellenism, romantic interest in folk tales and legends, the preference for solitary meditation in evocative surroundings— these elements give a distinctive character to his poetry. His first volume was *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems*, which was published in 1849 anonymously was immediately withdrawn from circulation. In 1852, Arnold published his second volume of poems, *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. However, he did not reprint the long title poem because situations ‘in which suffering finds no vent in action, in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope or resistance, in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done’ are not fit subjects for poetry. ‘What are the eternal objects of poetry and at all times?’ Arnold asked in his 1853 preface and he replied, ‘they are actions, human actions, possessing an inherent interest in themselves and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the poet’.

Arnold is as great an exponent of Victorian elegiac as Tennyson. According to him, the main duty of a writer is to present his criticism of life in whatever medium he can as richly, luminously and broadly as possible. In his poem *Dover Beach*, he reflects the problems afflicting the Victorian society. Loss of faith is given its most memorable utterance; public values have disappeared and all that is left are the private affections, little society of love and friendship. His two best known poems are *The Scholar Gipsy* (1853), which is about the poet himself and his generations, and *Thyrsis* (1866), which is an elegy to Arthur Hugh Clough who died in 1861.



Fig 2.4 Mathew Arnold

2.5.1 Longing

Longing is one of Matthew Arnold's most popular works. *Longing* is part of a collection called *Faded Leaves*. It will be interesting to point here that the five poems from *Faded Leaves* collection revolve around the theme of lost love. Each poem identifies the timeline from ‘the end of a love affair to the bitter-sweet memory and longing to be reunited in dreams’. In the very first poem, *The River*, we see the portrayal of the emotions of the

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Check Your Progress

14. Mention the prominent poems written by Mathew Arnold.
15. When was Arnold's first volume of poems *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* published?

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rejected lover. In the second poem, *Too Late*, one comes across the reflection on the reality of 'at the wrong place, at the wrong time'. The very next poem or the locus of the collection *Separation* attains a pivotal point in the sequence of poems. It is, in this poem, when a raging heart soothes down, yet begs that no memory of this kind of love should be there with him. This memory was too painful to be treasured. The fourth poem, *On the Rhine* alludes to memory and the final poem *Longing* moves to pleading where he desires that his beloved must return to his dreams.

One comes across interesting similes and descriptions all through the *Faded Leaves*. Needless to say, Arnold appears to find solace in the constancy that nature has to offer which is in absolute contrast to the unbelievable ambivalence of the human world. While the first poem, *The River*, sets the mood of the surroundings that are described, it also presents a stark contrast to the inner feelings of the speaker. Nature again reappears in its most picturesque way in the fourth poem, *On the Rhine*. This poem attempts to calm down the anguish of the forlorn love that the speaker is experiencing at that point of time. In the very same poem, the snow-capped and moonlit Alpine mountains profess the speaker's own gradual demise. The peace of nature is described in the final stanza of the same poem as follows:

‘Ah, *Quiet*, all things feel thy balm!
Those blue hill's too, this river's flow
Were restless once, but long ago.
Tamed is their turbulent youthful glow;
Their joy is in their calm’.

The sun of the dusk that appears in the fourth poem takes the readers to the much awaited dream land of *Longing*. In this poem, one realizes that day and night are juxtaposed with each other while the former is the source of the suffering of life and the latter is all about bringing death.

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world, and be
As kind to others as to me!

Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth,
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say, My love why sufferest thou?

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Explanation

The poem *Longing*, explanation written by Mathew Arnold, is an expression of the speaker's love for his beloved. In the first stanza, the speaker states that if he dreams of the beloved at night, it will transform the wait to see her the next day much less painful. The lines clearly indicate that the speaker is in pain due to the absence of his beloved. The line 'The hopeless longing of the day' furthermore, justifies that the poet is certainly eager to see his beloved. The rational that without the existence of his beloved, the speaker is left directionless and helpless, suggests that perhaps this lady holds extreme significance in the day-to-day being of the speaker.

The speaker extends an appeal to his beloved to come to him, as she has done so many times before. She is more like a messenger from the radiant world. This happens to be the (assumed) origin point of meteors, especially when a meteor shower takes place. One can easily read the lines as the speaker comparing his beloved with meteor showers. Needless to say, meteor showers are almost always beautiful and amazing. They are admired by people all across the globe.

The speaker wants that the beloved should be as kind and humble with the people around her as she is to him. The use of 'thy new world' may imply that his beloved exists in different parts of the world. There is an uneasy reference to the fact that she might be no more or may be travelling overseas. Perhaps this is the precise reason why the poet is missing her so much. Else, she is in a state where he cannot physically get in touch with her anymore. Yet, the speaker wishes that even though he cannot physically see her anymore, he longs that she will be able to spread her kindness towards people in general, the way she had done to him.

*Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth,*

The above lines suggest that the meaning of the word truth moves across from honesty to faith and even to sincerity. There is no specific agreement with fact or reality specifically.

One entertains differing claims regarding a question like this: As to what constitutes the truth. Is it even possible to define as well as identify truth?

The poet is insisting his love to return to him. He desires that she should part his hair. He also wants her to kiss his brow while he is in his dream. The speaker desperately longs to be in her real company again but for some unexplained reason that remains impossible.

The speaker desires that when he meets his woman finally in his dreams, she should explain to him why he is suffering even though she is not there with him for so long. This implies that love continues even after death.

*Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.*

Arnold repeats this stanza probably in a quest to further highlight the longing and pain that he feels for her in her absence. He keeps praying and pleading to her to visit his dreams.

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It is difficult to argue as to which of two poems by Matthew Arnold — *Longing* and *To Marguerite* wins our heart. That is because both poems are very different from each other. Nevertheless, many might suggest *To Marguerite* as better because the use of meter in *Longing* is very predictable and has a monotonous quality to it. The iambic rhythm hardly changes and many a times the poem lapses into sheer dullness.

2.6 SUMMARY

- The movement of Realism is an integral part of Victorian age. Although the literary scene during the Victorian period was dominated by novel, its achievement in poetry was not less significant.
- Among the early Victorians, the most prominent poets were Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Emily Bronte, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, George Eliot among others.
- Alfred Tennyson was born on 6 August 1809 in an old Lincolnshire family. He was the first Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Freshwater.
- The influence of Lincolnshire countryside is clearly visible in the writings and especially, poetry of Tennyson.
- During this time in Cambridge, there was a rise in the reputation of Tennyson as a poet. In 1829 Alfred became the winner of the chancellor's gold medal for his poem *Timbuctoo*.
- In 1842 Tennyson published *Poems* in two volumes. While one volume comprised revised selected works from the volumes of 1830 and 1832, the other volume consisted of new poems.
- Tennyson embarked on writing poetic drama in 1874 and in 1875 *Queen Mary* appeared.
- The short poem, *Break, Break, Break* composed by Alfred Tennyson is an expression of his personal grief. But it is more than an individual cry of pain and despair. He has presented as a universal characteristic of our world.
- The narrator grieves the loss of his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, a promising poet and essayist who had been engaged to Tennyson's sister, Emily. Hallam died of a stroke in 1833 when he was only twenty-two.
- The poem, *Break, Break, Break* has similarity with W.H. Auden's *In Memory of W.B. Yeats* in which the death of a great poet does not affect anyone. In this poem also, the poet mourns the death of a dear friend who will never come back.
- Tennyson uses lots of punctuation, especially commas, which makes the poem move extremely slow, which when added with the context of the poem, heightens the feeling of sadness and depression in the poem.
- Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was a prominent writer of the Victorian era. He was born in a hamlet in Higher Bockhampton in the county town of Dorset. He spent his entire life, with the exception of a few years, in England.
- Thomas Hardy's works often met with a lot of pessimistic responses. His depiction of the seduction of the village belle in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and the sexual violence and innocent murders in *Jude the Obscure* met with unkind reception.

Check Your Progress

16. What is the theme of *Longing* written by Mathew Arnold?
17. What does the line 'The hopeless longing of the day' signify?

- Hardy's first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* was rejected and he was advised by Alexander Macmillan to improve his work.
- On 27 November 1912, misfortune struck Hardy as his wife Emma passed away. Though the couple has long been estranged, the death had a severe effect on Hardy. He wrote many compositions honouring her memory.
- Between 1920 and 1927, Hardy spent quality time writing his autobiography. It was published in two parts (1928 and 1930) under the authorial credit of Florence Hardy.
- In the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, he calls nineteenth century as a 'corpse' which is lying in a 'crypt'.
- *The Darkling Thrush* was composed at the far end of the nineteenth century. The poem was first printed as *By the Century's Deathbed* sometime during December 1900.
- One might compare Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* with Hardy's *The Darkling Thrush*. Keats nightingale was more happy and melodious than the one suggested by Hardy in this poem. Keats nightingale was immortal while Hardy's thrush is combating a nasty storm in the middle of nowhere land.
- Frederick Louis MacNeice was born in Belfast.
- MacNeice, despite his reservations and hesitations, was able to establish himself as a poet in 1930s with the publication of his work *Poems* (1935). *Poems* (1935) facilitated in establishing MacNeice as one of the promising new poets of the 1930s.
- From 1941 until his death, Louis MacNeice dedicatedly worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). He died on 3 September 1963, just before the publication of his last book of poems, *The Burning Perch*.
- *Prayer Before Birth* by MacNeice is a dramatic monologue. It is written from the perspective of a child who is yet to be born. The unborn child through its monologue tries to express its desire for a free life that is devoid of manoeuvre and corrupt influence that pave the way for threat and terror in this world.
- Matthew Arnold was born in 1822 at Laleham in England. He was educated in Winchester and Oxford. In 1841, he won an open scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford.
- Arnold is as great an exponent of Victorian elegiac as Tennyson. According to him, the main duty of a writer is to present his criticism of life in whatever medium he can as richly, luminously and broadly as possible.
- *Longing* is one of Matthew Arnold's most popular works. *Longing* is part of a collection called *Faded Leaves*.
- The poem *Longing* written by Mathew Arnold is an expression of the speaker's love for his beloved.

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2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Eulogism:** It means to praise highly in speech or writing.
- **Requiem:** It refers to a hymn, composition, or service for the dead.

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- **Apocalyptic:** It implies forecasting final disaster of the world.
- **Dramatic monologue:** It is a technique devised by Robert Browning in which there is only one speaker speaking but there is a silent listener.
- **Pessimistic:** It is the tendency to stress the negative or unfavourable or to take the gloomiest possible view.

2.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The well-known works of Alfred Tennyson are as follows:
 - *In Memoriam* (1850)
 - *Idylls of the King* (1859)
 - *Ulysses* (1842)
 - *The Lady of Shalott* (1832)
2. In 1850, Tennyson became the poet Laureate of England.
3. The insistent beat of the poem *Break, Break, Break* emphasizes the relentless sadness of the subject matter in the poem.
4. Arthur Henry Hallam, a promising poet and essayist who had been engaged to Tennyson’s sister, Emily, died of a stroke in 1833 when he was only twenty-two years old. The shock at the sudden death of his best friend, Arthur Hallam, therefore, teaches us the priceless value of youth and good health.
5. Thomas Hardy’s life can easily be divided into three phases. The first phase (1840–1870) was marked by his early life, including first marriage, early compositions and a first unpublished novel. The second phase (1871–1897) was marked by his establishment as a writer, along with a prosperous writing career in the form of fourteen published novels and numerous short stories. The third phase (1898–1928) was marked by his attainment of a celebrity stature, moving away from composing novels and returning to poetry.
6. The name of Hardy’s first novel is *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was rejected and he was advised by Alexander Macmillan to improve his work.
7. The major poems written by Thomas Hardy include *At an Inn*, *The Darkling Thrush*, *I Look into my Glass*, *The Ruined Maid* and *The Dead Man Walking*.
8. *The Darkling Thrush* written by Thomas Hardy indicates the change from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Also, it indicates the change in Hardy’s creative approach, from writing novels he focused on writing poems.
9. The speaker portrays a bleak winter landscape in the poem *The Darkling Thrush*.
10. Louis MacNeice was born in Belfast.
11. 1930 was a significant year both professionally and personally for MacNeice. In 1930, MacNeice published his work *Poems* which established him as a poet. In the same year, his wife suddenly left him (and their year-old son), running away with a young American graduate student who had been staying with them in Birmingham.
12. The speaker of the poem, *Prayer Before Birth* is an unborn child.
13. *Prayer Before Birth* was written during the period of the Second World War.

14. The prominent poems written by Mathew Arnold are: *Dover Beach*, *The Scholar Gipsy*, *Longing* and *Thyrsis*.
15. Arnold's first volume of poems *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* was published in 1849.
16. The speaker's longing for his beloved is the theme of *Longing* written by Mathew Arnold.
17. The line 'The hopeless longing of the day' signifies that the poet is certainly eager to see his beloved.

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2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Alfred Tennyson.
2. Write a short note on the childhood and youth of Thomas Hardy.
3. Briefly discuss the poetic devices used by MacNeice in *Prayer Before Birth*.
4. Why is Mathew Arnold regarded a representative poet of the Victorian age?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Critically analyse the poem, *Break, Break, Break*.
2. 'Hardy's female protagonists are based on the author's own notion of the feminine ideal.' Explain this statement with suitable examples from his works.
3. *The Darkling Thrush* reflects Hardy's pessimistic outlook of life.' Discuss.
4. *Prayer before Birth* is a poem belonging to the 'Auden Generation' poetry. Explain.
5. 'In most of Arnold's poems, we have noticed a melancholy strain.' Elucidate.

2.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 *THE NECKLACE*: GUY DE MAUPASSANT

*The Necklace: Guy De
Maupassant*

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 About the Author
 - 3.2.1 Background of the Story
 - 3.2.2 Story in Brief
 - 3.2.3 Text and Important Passages for Explanation
 - 3.2.4 Character Sketches
 - 3.2.5 Theme
- 3.3 Summary
- 3.4 Key Terms
- 3.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.6 Questions and Exercises
- 3.7 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The Necklace or 'La Parure' in French is a very famous short story by Guy De Maupassant. It was first published in 1884 in a French newspaper known as *Le Gaulois*. It gained wide popularity and as a result, it was included in Maupassant's short story collection *Tales of Day and Night* in 1885. *The Necklace* is considered one of the best examples of the realist fiction that intends to explore the harsh realities of the lives of ordinary people. It is a story of a young woman who is never satisfied with her meager lifestyle and makes a possible attempt to escape her destiny. Born into a family of lower economic status, she constantly feels that she deserves much better than what she has. As fate would have it, she is married off to a clerk who can only provide her with life's basic necessities which is not what her heart desires. While her husband cherishes the small joys of life, she dreams of an exuberant life. Her destiny gives her a roller coaster ride from fulfilling her heart's desire to bringing her back to the harsher world of reality. She understands the true meaning of impoverished existence only when she gets to experience it. She understands that denying the reality of one's situation can bring about all the uninvited troubles, despite doing everything to make life appear different from what it actually is. Finally, life makes her wonder at its fickleness – how one small incident can overturn one's life!

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand Maupassant as a short story writer
- Discuss the various characters of the story
- Discuss the theme of *The Necklace*

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3.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Henri Rene Albert Guy de Maupassant was born on 5 August 1850 to an affluent family at the Chateau de Miromesnil, in France. He loved his mother very much and hated his father who was an absent figure for the young boy during his childhood. He got his love of books from his mother. He had a fairly active childhood and spent much of it playing outdoor games. He was the eldest child of Gustav de Maupassant, a man of some means who squandered his wealth on women. His mother Laure Le Poittevin was an educated woman. She was a childhood friend of Flaubert. Maupassant dedicated *A Life* to him. His parents separated formally in 1863 and the young boy went to live with his mother and younger brother Herve at Etretat, Normandy. The Franco-Prussian war changed everything for Maupassant. The war destroyed the family's fortunes and Maupassant joined the Ministry of the Navy as a minor civil servant. Later he shifted to the Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, he began his literary career under the tutelage of Flaubert and Zola. He was a prolific writer and could soon purchase his own yacht La Louisette in 1883. His *A Life* proved to be a bestseller and sold over 25,000 copies. Maupassant suffered from syphilis. By 1883 the symptoms were fairly advanced (hair loss, headache, eye problem and others). The physical deterioration led to the writer suffering from depression. Maupassant attempted suicide by slitting his throat with a paper knife in 1892 and finally died in a psychiatric clinic in 1893.

Maupassant was unhappy in school and escaped from sadness through writing. Writing meant the purging of emotions to him. Writing became his escape from reality as a child. While at school he wrote a poem comparing his unhappiness with a soon to be married cousin's happiness. He was expelled from school because the poem was deemed obscene. This marks the beginning of his use of common images to refer to the misery of human life and also points to the later charge that a lot of his work is obscene. After this expulsion he enrolled in the Lycée Corneille in Rouen. Louis Bouilhet, Flaubert's close friend was his guardian here. Bouilhet's guidance and sense of himself as an artist inspired young Maupassant and rekindled his mother's connection to Flaubert, whose mentorship would eventually shape his career.

Work pressures contributed to his failing health. But the major cause was his brother, Herve's descent into madness, subsequent institutionalization and death. Medicines were available at the time to treat him but they were so expensive that Maupassant was compelled to write to finance his treatment. His place in French literature is evident from the fact that the leading intellectuals and writers of his age attended his funeral. His life is representative of the social and political changes France saw during the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, his influence goes beyond his contemporaries and can be seen in the works of writers like Tolstoy, Chekhov, Somerset Maugham, and O Henry.

In France, Realism began in the mid nineteenth century and was a movement in response to the Romantic movement that preceded it. According to the realists, the Romantics focused on the idealization of characters instead of a realistic portrayal. In contrast, the realists in France focused on the life of the middle class and portrayed their action and the consequences of such actions with little or no subjectivity. For instance, in *The Necklace*, the portrayal of Mathilde and her husband, the choices they make and the consequences of those choices is very realistic. According to proponents of realistic literature, social factors and the cultural environment plays an important role in the

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formation of character. Keeping in line with this view, realists lay a lot of importance to rationalism and scientific reasoning in explaining motive and behaviour. Flaubert was one of the earliest practitioners of the realistic genre in France. He wrote *Madame Bovary* (1857), a realistic novel in terms of motivation of action and representation of character. Later on realism went on to influence artists in other fields like painting. French painters like Gustave Courbet, Edgar Degas, and Édouard Manet were deeply influenced by realism.

Like his mentor Flaubert, Maupassant also believed that fiction should represent reality as much as possible. This influenced not just his characterization but also the structure of his work. In his characterization and description he tried to achieve objectivity rather than psychological exploration or romantic descriptions. His novels and short stories also had clearly defined plot lines and specific, observable details. Nevertheless, he disagreed that any fiction was 'realistic'. His argument for this was simple — the very act of writing fiction implied the creation of an illusionary world by the artist to convey a specific idea and to inspire a specific response and effect on the reader. He did, however, believe that the closer the fictional world that the artist created was to 'real' life more incisive would be the revelation. In other words, if the artist was able to faithfully represent the facts he saw after a close, focused and detailed observation, he would be able to understand and reveal new depths and perspectives to even the most common, unremarkable aspects of life.

The Necklace was written with these ideas in mind. At no point of time does the writer explore Mathilde's yearning for wealth and her unhappiness with her current state. He focuses on the bare facts and simply tells the reader of her unhappiness and of the things that she desires. He then goes on to inform the reader of what she does to fulfil these desires and her reactions when this happens. Later, towards the end of the story, he does not tell us about Mathilde's reaction when it is revealed that the necklace was not real and that she has wasted the best years of her life chasing a mirage. He just reveals the information and leaves it to the reader to draw conclusions. At no point in the story does he hide the motivations behind her actions nor does he try to idealize the characters. There is no artifice or pretence either in his prose or in his treatment of characters.

Maupassant wrote over 300 short stories. While most of them deal with realistic tales of everyday people, he was also skilful in dealing with supernatural elements. In his stories, he focuses on the realistic and not the fantastical because according to him writing should not aim at 'telling a story or entertaining us or touching our hearts but at forcing us to think and understand the deeper, hidden meanings of events'.

3.2.1 Background of the Story

The Necklace is set in Paris, the city of love and glamour, in the late nineteenth century. The story provides many clues to this period, as Mathilde Loisel's fanciful flight in the 'silent ante chambers hung with oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candlebra... long reception halls hung with ancient silk, little coquettish perfumed reception rooms...' She often dreams of dainty dinners and shiny silverware, whispered gallantries and pink meat of a trout or the wings of a quail. In addition, to her imaginative setting, there is a realistic setting of the story, which is a poor dwelling place with bare walls, shabby chairs and ugly curtains. In contrast to her imaginative world where she finds herself having an elaborate meal in the most precious dishes, her real dinner table is round which is covered with a table cloth in use for the past three days. Most of the story takes

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place in the Loisel's mean dwelling and only some part of it is set in the palace where the ball takes place, although there is no description of the palace. We can assume the grandeur of the place by the measures of Mathilde's ecstasy during the ball. Later, with the twist of fate, Mathilde has to leave the house that she does not love much due to its impoverished look. She moves to a much smaller house than she could have ever wished for.



Fig. 3.1 Guy de Maupassant

3.2.2 Story in Brief

The Necklace is a famous short story written by Maupassant and revolves around the life of Mathilde Loisels. Mathilde was such a pretty and charming girl that it seemed she was mistakenly born in the family of clerks. Her beauty deserved much more affluent upbringing. As fate would have it, she got married to a clerk in the Ministry of Education. All her hopes and expectations of having the marriage portion, luxuries and recognition, and marrying a rich man were dashed against her destiny. She started leading a simple yet unsatisfied life because she yearned for the greater riches of life. She was as unhappy as she could be, leading an impoverished life; she believed that she had descended to lead a poverty-stricken lifestyle after marriage. Her constant sufferings upon thinking herself as being born for every luxury and delicacy that life can offer only elevated the level of her pain. The causes of her distress were numerous: the poorness of her house, the mean walls, the worn chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things, of which other women of her class probably would not even have been mindful, tormented and humiliated her. Her heart was full of regret and despair at the sight of her poor little Breton house maid. She dreamed of silent ante rooms, oriental tapestries, tall bronze candlebra, tall footmen in knee breaches sleeping in large arm chairs due to the warmth of the stove. She imagined vast reception halls hung with antique silk, exquisite drawers containing precious ornaments, and little perfumed rooms exclusively created for little celebrations with close friends and famous men, whose attention was sought by every envious woman.

However, she sat down for dinner with her husband at the round table covered with a table cloth in use for the past three days. She kept imagining the dainty dishes and elaborate meals in the middle of a fairy forest, served alongside murmured gallantries, as her husband uncovered the soup tureen and exclaimed with delight, 'Ah, the good soup! I don't know anything better than that.' She longed for precious jewels and gowns which she never had, but she only loved those things and felt that she was made for them. Her

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1. When did realism as a movement begin in France?
2. How did Maupassant escape unhappiness in school?

only desire was to be desired and envied. She had an old schoolmate, Madame Forestier, who was quite affluent and Mathilde she avoided visiting her as she would come back more depressed than ever, and wept whole day out of agony and regret.

One evening her husband returned home holding a large envelope in his hand. He declared with an exultant air about it that there was something for her. She tore it swiftly and took out a printed card bearing the words that they were invited by the Minister of Education at the palace on 18 January. On reading the invite, she threw it across the table murmuring what she had got to do with that. Her husband was expecting her to be ecstatic for being invited to the palace, but to his surprise, she threw it carelessly. He told her that he had tremendous trouble in getting the invite, yet he managed to get it for her, as this was a great occasion for her to go out. She was furious at her husband's words and told him that she had nothing to wear for such a grand occasion. He hesitantly suggested her to wear the dress that she wore at the theatre. He was taken aback when she started weeping and two large tears trickled from the corner of her eyes. He asked her what the matter was, to which she replied that she had nothing to wear so she could not go to the ball. She wiped her tears and told him to give the invite to a colleague whose wife could afford a nice dress for the ball. His heart broke as he resumed to ask her the estimated cost of the gown that she would like to wear for the occasion. She answered four hundred francs after a much speculated calculation. He grew slightly pale on listening to her wife as he had been saving exactly the same amount for a gun that he wished to buy. He had planned a little shooting excursion with his friends next summer and had been saving money for it. Nevertheless, without hesitating a moment, he offered to buy her the dress that she desired with those four hundred francs.

Mathilde Loisel appeared sad and uneasy as the day of the ball drew closer, although her dress was ready. Her husband asked her why she had been behaving strangely for the past three days. She replied that she felt miserable for not having any jewellery and ornaments to wear with the dress. She said that she would not want to appear impoverished and it would be better not to go to the ball. He suggested her to wear flowers as they would look smart and not cost much, but failed to convince her. She asserted that she did not want to be humiliated by looking poor among other rich women. Her husband told her to go to her old school friend Madame Forestier and borrow some jewels. She was delighted by his suggestion. Next day she went to her friend's house and revealed her trouble. Madame Forestier brought her a large box from her dressing table and asked her to choose for herself. She tried various bracelets and necklaces, looked in the mirror and asked her if she had something else. However, she found a diamond necklace in a black satin case and her heart throbbed at her desire to wear that piece. She wore it around her neck with trembling hands and got lost in her own reflection in the mirror. She hesitantly asked her friend if she could lend her only that necklace. Madame Forestier agreed. Mathilde embraced her with joy and left with the diamond necklace.

Madame Loisel was a great success on the night of the ball. She looked prettier than any other woman present in the ball. She looked more elegant and graceful than anyone else. She was dancing and smiling with joy as she was the most sought after woman in the ball. Men wanted to waltz with her, they inquired her name, and even the Minister noticed her. She was drunk with pleasure and ecstatically dancing and celebrating her beauty. She had been victorious in getting all the admiration and attention that she had yearned for all her life. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight in a little room with other men whose wives were enjoying the ball.

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She left about four o' clock in the morning with her husband who had brought an ordinary wrap to cover her shoulders. The modest shrug was contrasting the exuberant ball dress and she was aware of the impoverished cloth as she noticed the expensive furs of other women. She wished to disappear so as not to be seen by other women in that ordinary shrug. However, Madame Loisel's husband told her to wait until he called a cab. She refused and hurriedly went outside looking for a carriage, shouting at the passing drivers. Desperate and shivering with cold, they walked down the Sienne, and at last found an old carriage on the quay; such carriages could only be found after dark as if their shabbiness would be shameful in the daylight. They reached their house and sadly walked up to their apartment. For her, it was the end of everything, as for him, he was thinking about the time that he should be in his office. She stood in front of her mirror, so as to have a last glance at her glorious beauty. But, she uttered a cry as the necklace around her neck was missing! Her husband, already half undressed inquired her and she revealed that Madame Forestier's diamond necklace had been lost. He was stupefied at her statement. They frantically searched for it in the folds of her dress, in the pockets of the coat, everywhere else, but it could not be found. Loisel put on his clothes and went out to search for it through the way they had returned from the ball. She sat on a chair in her ball dress, dumbfounded, lacking strength to go to bed. She remained seated without a single thought. Her husband returned home about seven o' clock without finding the necklace. He went everywhere: to the police station, to the newspaper offices to offer a reward, to the cab companies and anywhere he felt hopeful. She waited in bewilderment all day long. Loisel returned at night without finding anything about the necklace, he looked pale and worried. He suggested her to write to Madame Forestier that she had broken the clasp of the necklace and was getting it mended. He dictated to her the words to be written the letter. A week passed and they had lost all hope of finding the necklace. Loisel looked as if he had aged five years in one week. He said that they should arrange for replacing the necklace. The following day, they went to a jeweller whose name was there on the box, but the jeweller said that he only crafted the box and had no idea about the necklace. Then they went to different jewellers in search of a necklace that looked like the one they had lost, relying only on their memory of the necklace. Finally, they found a similar necklace in a shop at Palais Royal. Its price was forty thousand francs but the cost settled down to thirty six thousand francs. They made an arrangement with the shopkeeper and he agreed not to sell it for three days. Loisel's father had left him eighteen thousand francs, and he intended to borrow the rest of the money. He arranged the money somehow, borrowing some money, giving notes of hand, undertaking various agreements, doing business with money lenders and usurers. He mortgaged the rest of his life signing various documents without even realizing whether he could meet the terms and demands. With great sufferings and struggles yet to come, he managed to give the jeweller thirty six thousand francs. Madame Loisel went to return the necklace to Madame Forestier who was not happy with the delay in returning the necklace and complained that she should have returned it earlier. However, to her relief, Madame Forestier did not open the case to check the necklace as she feared that she could detect the substitution.

Thus, began the ordeal of the Loisels which they bore heroically. Madame Loisel was determined to pay off the debt and thus worked hard for it. She dismissed the service of her house maid and started doing all the household work herself, they moved to a smaller apartment and rented the garret. She would dress like a poor woman and bargained with the fruit and vegetable sellers to save whatever money she could. Her husband worked in the evenings as well as nights to earn more. At the end of each

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month, they would pay off the notes and renewed others. Their struggle lasted ten years and after ten years they had paid off all their debt including the interest. Madame Loisel looked much older than before. Her appearance was no different than any other old, coarse and strong woman of a poor household. Her hair was unkempt, skirts were awry and hands were red. She swept the floor with long swishes of water making loud noise herself. However, when her husband was away to office, she would sit near a window and think about that fateful evening when she was the most attractive lady in the ball. She recalled the time when she was beautiful and admired by all. She would think about the fickleness of life as how a small thing or incident can change the entire course of one's life. Had she not lost the necklace, how different her life would have been!

One Sunday having gone for a walk in the Champs Elysees, Madam Loisel suddenly caught sight of a woman who was taking a child for a walk. She recognized that woman who was none other than Madame Forestier, who still looked young and charming as ever. She became emotional and thought of speaking to her. She hesitated for a while and then regained her confidence thinking that she had paid off all the debt and she felt like sharing it all with her. She went up to her and wished her good morning in a familiar voice. Madame Forestier did not recognize her as she had the looks of a poor old lady. She was rather surprised by a familiar address of a poor old woman. She said that she did not recognize her and told her that she had mistakenly taken her for someone else. Madame Loisel smiled and told her that she was Mathilde, her old friend. She uttered a cry on being told so. She said that poor Mathilde had changed a lot. Mathilde told her that she had led a very hard life on her account. Madame Forestier was even more surprised on hearing that. She asked how it was so. Mathilde reminded her of the diamond necklace that she had once borrowed from her. She confessed that she had lost her necklace and brought her back another necklace exactly like the original. She continued that her life completely changed in repaying the debt that they had undertaken for the payment of the diamond necklace. However, she told her with pride that all the agony had ended as they had paid off the debt after working very hard for ten long years. Madame Forestier was shocked to know that they had suffered so much on account of that necklace. She asked her if she bought a new diamond necklace to replace the one she borrowed and Mathilde confirmed it with joy. Madame Forestier was deeply touched by her story. She took her hands in hers and told her that her necklace was a piece of imitation jewellery and not real diamonds. It hardly cost five hundred francs.

3.2.3 Text and Important Passages for Explanation

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as though fate had blundered over her, into a family of artisans. She had no marriage portion, no expectations, no means of getting known, understood, loved, and wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and she let herself be married off to a little clerk in the Ministry of Education. Her tastes were simple because she had never been able to afford any other, but she was as unhappy as though she had married beneath her; for women have no caste or class, their beauty, grace, and charm serving them for birth or family, their natural delicacy, their instinctive elegance, their nimbleness of wit, are their only mark of rank, and put the slum girl on a level with the highest lady in the land.

She suffered endlessly, feeling herself born for every delicacy and luxury. She suffered from the poorness of her house, from its mean walls, worn chairs, and ugly curtains. All these things, of which other women of her class would not even have been aware, tormented and insulted her. The sight of the little Breton girl who came to do the work in her little house aroused heart-broken regrets and hopeless dreams in her mind. She imagined silent antechambers, heavy with

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3. Who was Mathilde Loisel?
4. Who was Mathilde's husband?

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Oriental tapestries, lit by torches in lofty bronze sockets, with two tall footmen in knee-breeches sleeping in large arm-chairs, overcome by the heavy warmth of the stove. She imagined vast saloons hung with antique silks, exquisite pieces of furniture supporting priceless ornaments, and small, charming, perfumed rooms, created just for little parties of intimate friends, men who were famous and sought after, whose homage roused every other woman's envious longings.

When she sat down for dinner at the round table covered with a three-days-old cloth, opposite her husband, who took the cover off the soup-tureen, exclaiming delightedly: 'Aha! Scotch broth! What could be better?' she imagined delicate meals, gleaming silver, tapestries peopling the walls with folk of a past age and strange birds in faery forests; she imagined delicate food served in marvellous dishes, murmured gallantries, listened to with an inscrutable smile as one trifled with the rosy flesh of trout or wings of asparagus chicken.

She had no clothes, no jewels, nothing. And these were the only things she loved; she felt that she was made for them. She had longed so eagerly to charm, to be desired, to be wildly attractive and sought after.

She had a rich friend, an old school friend whom she refused to visit, because she suffered so keenly when she returned home. She would weep whole days, with grief, regret, despair, and misery.

One evening her husband came home with an exultant air, holding a large envelope in his hand.

'Here's something for you,' he said.

Swiftly she tore the paper and drew out a printed card on which were these words:

'The Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau request the pleasure of the company of Monsieur and Madame Loisel at the Ministry on the evening of Monday, January the 18th.'

Instead of being delighted, as her husband hoped, she flung the invitation petulantly across the table, murmuring:

'What do you want me to do with this?'

'Why, darling, I thought you'd be pleased. You never go out, and this is a great occasion. I had tremendous trouble to get it. Everyone wants one; it's very select, and very few go to the clerks. You'll see all the really big people there.'

She looked at him out of furious eyes, and said impatiently: 'And what do you suppose I am to wear at such an affair?'

He had not thought about it; he stammered:

'Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It looks very nice, to me . . .'

He stopped, stupefied and utterly at a loss when he saw that his wife was beginning to cry. Two large tears ran slowly down from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth.

'What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you?' he faltered.

But with a violent effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, wiping her wet cheeks:

'Nothing. Only I haven't a dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to some friend of yours whose wife will be turned out better than I shall.'

He was heart-broken.

'Look here, Mathilde,' he persisted. 'What would be the cost of a suitable dress, which you could use on other occasions as well, something very simple?'

She thought for several seconds, reckoning up prices and also wondering for how large a sum she could ask without bringing upon herself an immediate refusal and an exclamation of horror from the careful-minded clerk.

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At last she replied with some hesitation:

‘I don’t know exactly, but I think I could do it on four hundred francs.’

He grew slightly pale, for this was exactly the amount he had been saving for a gun, intending to get a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre with some friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

Nevertheless he said: ‘Very well. I’ll give you four hundred francs. But try and get a really nice dress with the money.’

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy and anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

‘What’s the matter with you? You’ve been very odd for the last three days.’

‘I’m utterly miserable at not having any jewels, not a single stone, to wear,’ she replied. ‘I shall look absolutely no one. I would almost rather not go to the party.’

‘Wear flowers,’ he said. ‘They’re very smart at this time of the year. For ten francs you could get two or three gorgeous roses.’

She was not convinced.

‘No . . . there’s nothing so humiliating as looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women.’

‘How stupid you are!’ exclaimed her husband. ‘Go and see Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her quite well enough for that.’

She uttered a cry of delight.

‘That’s true. I never thought of it.’

Next day she went to see her friend and told her her trouble.

Madame Forestier went to her dressing-table, took up a large box, brought it to Madame Loisel, opened it, and said: ‘Choose, my dear.’

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross in gold and gems, of exquisite workmanship. She tried the effect of the jewels before the mirror, hesitating, unable to make up her mind to leave them, to give them up. She kept on asking:

‘Haven’t you anything else?’

‘Yes. Look for yourself. I don’t know what you would like best.’

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin case, a superb diamond necklace; her heart began to beat covetously. Her hands trembled as she lifted it. She fastened it round her neck, upon her high dress, and remained in ecstasy at sight of herself.

Then, with hesitation, she asked in anguish:

‘Could you lend me this, just this alone?’

‘Yes, of course.’

She flung herself on her friend’s breast, embraced her frenziedly, and went away with her treasure. The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was the prettiest woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling, and quite above herself with happiness. All the men stared at her, inquired her name, and asked to be introduced to her. All the Under-Secretaries of State were eager to waltz with her. The Minister noticed her.

She danced madly, ecstatically, drunk with pleasure, with no thought for anything, in the triumph of her beauty, in the pride of her success, in a cloud of happiness made up of this universal homage and admiration, of the desires she had aroused, of the completeness of a victory so dear to her feminine heart.

She left about four o’clock in the morning. Since midnight her husband had been dozing in a deserted little room, in company with three other men whose wives

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were having a good time. He threw over her shoulders the garments he had brought for them to go home in, modest everyday clothes, whose poverty clashed with the beauty of the ball-dress. She was conscious of this and was anxious to hurry away, so that she should not be noticed by the other women putting on their costly furs.

Loisel restrained her.

‘Wait a little. You’ll catch cold in the open. I’m going to fetch a cab.’

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the staircase. When they were out in the street they could not find a cab; they began to look for one, shouting at the drivers whom they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down towards the Seine, desperate and shivering. At last they found on the quay one of those old night prowling carriages which are only to be seen in Paris after dark, as though they were ashamed of their shabbiness in the daylight.

It brought them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they walked up to their own apartment. It was the end, for her. As for him, he was thinking that he must be at the office at ten.

She took off the garments in which she had wrapped her shoulders, so as to see herself in all her glory before the mirror. But suddenly she uttered a cry. The necklace was no longer round her neck!

‘What’s the matter with you?’ asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him in the utmost distress.

‘I . . . I . . . I’ve no longer got Madame Forestier’s necklace. . . .’

He started with astonishment.

‘What! . . . Impossible!’

They searched in the folds of her dress, in the folds of the coat, in the pockets, everywhere. They could not find it.

‘Are you sure that you still had it on when you came away from the ball?’ he asked.

‘Yes, I touched it in the hall at the Ministry.’

‘But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall.’

‘Yes. Probably we should. Did you take the number of the cab?’

‘No. You didn’t notice it, did you?’

‘No.’

They stared at one another, dumbfounded. At last Loisel put on his clothes again.

‘I’ll go over all the ground we walked,’ he said, ‘and see if I can’t find it.’

And he went out. She remained in her evening clothes, lacking strength to get into bed, huddled on a chair, without volition or power of thought.

Her husband returned about seven. He had found nothing.

He went to the police station, to the newspapers, to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere that a ray of hope impelled him.

She waited all day long, in the same state of bewilderment at this fearful catastrophe.

Loisel came home at night, his face lined and pale; he had discovered nothing.

‘You must write to your friend,’ he said, ‘and tell her that you’ve broken the clasp of her necklace and are getting it mended. That will give us time to look about us.’

She wrote at his dictation.

By the end of a week they had lost all hope.

Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

‘We must see about replacing the diamonds.’

Next day they took the box which had held the necklace and went to the jewellers whose name was inside. He consulted his books.

‘It was not I who sold this necklace, Madame; I must have merely supplied the clasp.’

Then they went from jeweller to jeweller, searching for another necklace like the first, consulting their memories, both ill with remorse and anguish of mind.

In a shop at the Palais-Royal they found a string of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They were allowed to have it for thirty-six thousand.

They begged the jeweller not to sell it for three days. And they arranged matters on the understanding that it would be taken back for thirty-four thousand francs, if the first one were found before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs left to him by his father. He intended to borrow the rest.

He did borrow it, getting a thousand from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes of hand, entered into ruinous agreements, did business with usurers and the whole tribe of money-lenders. He mortgaged the whole remaining years of his existence, risked his signature without even knowing if he could honour it, and, appalled at the agonising face of the future, at the black misery about to fall upon him, at the prospect of every possible physical privation and moral torture, he went to get the new necklace and put down upon the jeweller’s counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the necklace to Madame Forestier, the latter said to her in a chilly voice:

‘You ought to have brought it back sooner; I might have needed it.’

She did not, as her friend had feared, open the case. If she had noticed the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she not have taken her for a thief?

Madame Loisel came to know the ghastly life of abject poverty. From the very first she played her part heroically. This fearful debt must be paid off. She would pay it. The servant was dismissed. They changed their flat; they took a garret under the roof.

She came to know the heavy work of the house, the hateful duties of the kitchen. She washed the plates, wearing out her pink nails on the coarse pottery and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-cloths, and hung them out to dry on a string; every morning she took the dustbin down into the street and carried up the water, stopping on each landing to get her breath. And, clad like a poor woman, she went to the fruiterer, to the grocer, to the butcher, a basket on her arm, haggling, insulted, fighting for every wretched halfpenny of her money.

Every month notes had to be paid off, others renewed, time gained.

Her husband worked in the evenings at putting straight a merchant’s accounts, and often at night he did copying at two pence-halfpenny a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years everything was paid off, everything, the usurer’s charges and the accumulation of superimposed interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become like all the other strong, hard, coarse women of poor households. Her hair was badly done, her skirts were awry,

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her hands were red. She spoke in a shrill voice, and the water slopped all over the floor when she scrubbed it. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down by the window and thought of that evening long ago, of the ball at which she had been so beautiful and so much admired.

What would have happened if she had never lost those jewels? Who knows? Who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed to ruin or to save!

One Sunday, as she had gone for a walk along the Champs-Élysées to freshen herself after the labours of the week, she caught sight suddenly of a woman who was taking a child out for a walk. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still attractive.

Madame Loisel was conscious of some emotion. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

‘Good morning, Jeanne.’

The other did not recognise her, and was surprised at being thus familiarly addressed by a poor woman.

‘But . . . Madame . . .’ she stammered. ‘I don’t know . . . you must be making a mistake.’

‘No . . . I am Mathilde Loisel.’

Her friend uttered a cry.

‘Oh! . . . my poor Mathilde, how you have changed! . . .’

‘Yes, I’ve had some hard times since I saw you last; and many sorrows . . . and all on your account.’

‘On my account! . . . How was that?’

‘You remember the diamond necklace you lent me for the ball at the Ministry?’

‘Yes. Well?’

‘Well, I lost it.’

‘How could you? Why, you brought it back.’

‘I brought you another one just like it. And for the last ten years we have been paying for it. You realise it wasn’t easy for us; we had no money. . . . Well, it’s paid for at last, and I’m glad indeed.’

Madame Forestier had halted.

‘You say you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?’

‘Yes. You hadn’t noticed it? They were very much alike.’

And she smiled in proud and innocent happiness.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her two hands.

‘Oh, my poor Mathilde! But mine was imitation. It was worth at the very most five hundred francs! . . .’

Selected Passages for Explanation

Reference to Context

1. [Mathilde] suffered endlessly hopeless dreams in her mind.’

Explanation

The above lines refer to Mathilde's endless agony at the realization that her hopes and dreams have been shattered on being married to a clerk and not a wealthy man as she desires. She has to dress up like an ordinary woman and feels that her lifestyle has become impoverished after marriage, although she is born and brought up in a poor family.

Mathilde is endlessly tormented by her poverty. She feels that she is entitled to receive all the riches and luxuries of life. She was stressed due to the poor house in which she lived, she wanted a bigger house; she hated to see the empty walls of her house, the sight of old and worn out chairs disturbed her and she was disgusted to look at the ugly curtains hanging in her house. These were the things of which other women of her class would not have bothered a bit, but she constantly felt miserable and angry at her poor standard of living.

Reference to Context

2. 'Ah, the good soup! or the wings of a quail.'

Explanation

The above lines are spoken by Loisel, Mathilde's husband. He is an exact opposite of his better half as he cherishes the little pleasures that life provides him. He enjoys them rather than cribbing for what he does not possess. The couple sits down to have dinner and Mathilde is depressed as usual on looking at the three days old table cloth, but Loisel appreciates the soup as he uncovers the soup bowl.

Loisel exclaims with delight that the soup looks good as he takes the cover off the bowl. He says that he loves to have it as there's nothing better than the soup. However, Mathilde was least interested in her husband's sense of gratitude. Rather she was busy imagining the elaborate meals served in shining silverware. She dreamt of tapestries gleaming on the walls with the pictures of ancient folk and strange birds in the fairy woods. She imagined delicate food served in dainty dishes, murmured gallantries, to be listened with a curious smile trifling with the rosy flesh of trout or wings of asparagus chicken.

Reference to Context

3. 'What do you wish me to dothe whole official world will be there.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to a conversation between the Loisels regarding an invite. Loisel returns from the office and excitedly hands over a large envelope to Mathilde. She opens it and finds an invitation to the ball at the palace of the Ministry of Education. Instead of being delighted, as her husband hopes, she throws the invitation on the table.

Mathilde throws away the invite and asks angrily what he wishes her to do with the invitation. Loisel replies calmly that he thought it would make her happy because it seems a good opportunity for her to socialize as she always desires. He tells him that he managed to receive the invitation from the Ministry with great difficulty as everyone wants to go there but very few are invited. Being a clerk, it is a matter of pride for him to go to an official party where many high ranked officials are invited.

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Reference to Context

4. 'Two great tears ran slowly is better equipped than I am.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to Mathilde's desperation and frustration as she wants to go to the ball but finds that she has no dress appropriate for the occasion. Her husband suggests her to wear the gown that she wears to the theatre but she feels tormented at the idea of not having a good dress. She begins to weep.

Mathilde starts weeping and two big tears trickle from the corner of her eyes towards her mouth. Her husband asks her the reason for crying and she pretends to overcome her anger with a calm gesture. She wipes her cheeks and replies that there is nothing that is bothering her. It is just that she has no gown appropriate for the ball; hence, she is not willing to go there. She sarcastically tells him to hand over the invitation to some colleague whose wife can afford a nice dress for the ball and can turn out better than her.

Reference to Context

5. 'It annoys me not to haveor three magnificent roses.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to a conversation between Mathilde and her husband. Her husband offers her four hundred francs to buy a dress for the party and she manages to buy a beautiful frock for the ball. However, she behaves strangely for the past three days and her husband is worried for her. He asks her why she has seemed very queer and she tells him about her agony.

Mathilde tells her husband that she is sad because she does not possess a single piece of jewellery that she can wear with her new dress. She complains that she has nothing to put on and she would only be flaunting her poverty if she goes to the ball. So, it is better not to go to the ball at all. He suggests her to wear flowers instead of jewellery as they would look smart and also not cost them more than ten francs. He tells her that she can buy two or three beautiful roses and wear them with her new dress.

Reference to Context

6. 'Haven't you anymore? Then fled with her treasure.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to Mathilde's conversation with her friend. On her husband's advice to borrow some jewellery from her friend Madame Forestier, she goes to the latter's house and discloses her problem to her friend. Madame Forestier brings her a box of jewellery and asks her to choose for herself. She tries various necklaces and bracelets in front of the mirror, but keeps asking for more.

Mathilde asks her friend Madame Forestier if she can show her some more pieces of jewellery that she can try. Her friend tells her to try as long as she finds what

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suits her best as she has no idea what she would like most. Suddenly, Mathilde finds a beautiful diamond necklace in a black satin box and looks at it admiringly. Her heart desires it so badly that she picks it with her trembling hands and puts it around her neck. She is ecstatic to see her reflection in the mirror and hesitantly asks her friend, if she could lend her only that necklace. Her friend readily gives it to her and she embraces her friend in sheer delight of getting what her heart longs for. She kisses her friend and leaves with her treasure.

Reference to Context

7. 'She danced with rapturewives were enjoying the ball.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to Mathilde's joyful dance at the much awaited party where she is a success. She looks prettier than any other woman in the party. It seems that she has got all the attention that she had been yearning for years. She is wild with joy as she looks the most elegant and graceful of all women in the party. All men look at her and inquire her name; she is even noticed by the Minister. Everyone wants to waltz with her. Such admiration drives her crazy with unparalleled happiness.

She dances with an overwhelming ecstasy as if to celebrate her beauty and glory. She seems victorious and drunk with pleasure and passion. It seems that she has been waiting all her life for this moment of admiration and rapture. Her happiness knows no bound and she dances all night. She leaves the ball at four o' clock in the morning, while her husband has been dozing off in a little room, with other men whose wives were enjoying the ball.

Reference to Context

8. 'She removed her wraps..... but did not find it.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to the beginning of Mathilde's miserable life. She returns home from the ball after enjoying every bit of it and goes up to her house sadly as if entering a despicable place. It seems that everything has ended for her. However, her husband moves in casually with the only concern of reaching the office on time that morning.

Mathilde stands before the mirror so as to look at herself in all her glory that had been so admired at the ball. She unwraps herself and looks closely in the mirror. Suddenly, she utters a painful cry. She no longer has the diamond necklace around her neck! Her husband half undressed, rushes to her room on hearing her loud cry. She stammers and reveals that she has lost Madame Forestier's diamond necklace. He is awestruck on hearing that. They frantically search for it everywhere, in the creases of her skirt, of her cloak, in the pockets, everywhere, but it is nowhere.

Reference to Context

9. 'You must write to your friendto replace that ornament.'

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Explanation

The above lines are spoken by Loisel as he tries to figure out what to do next. He has searched for the necklace at every possible place. He has been to the police station, the newspaper office, and the cab companies but has not been able to find the necklace. He returns home empty-handed while his wife has been waiting all night for him to return with the necklace.

He comes home and tells his wife that she should write a letter to her friend Madame Forestier apologizing for the delay in returning the necklace. He says that she should give the excuse that she has broken the clasp of the necklace and is getting it mended. He thinks that this would give them some time to search for the missing necklace or in arranging for its substitute. She writes the letter as he dictates it. A week passes by without any clue to finding it and by now they have lost all hope also. Loisel's appearance has tremendously changed in a week's time. He looks five years older than his actual age. Finally, he declares that it is no use looking for the lost necklace as it would not be found, so they should think of replacing it with another similar necklace.

Reference to Context

10. 'It was not I, madame, could have it for thirty six.'

Explanation

The above lines are spoken by a jeweller who is approached by the Loisels. They decide to replace the diamond necklace. So, they try to locate the place from where it was originally bought. They find the address of a shop and go there to check if they can find another similar necklace. They go to the jeweller and tell him about their problem. He consults several books and tells them that he did not sell that necklace to Madame Forestier.

Instead he only designed the case and thus, his name was inscribed on the case. They felt helpless and went to different jewellery shops trying to find a lookalike of the lost necklace. They trusted their memory and tried to recall how it looked. Both of them were tired and broken-hearted due to the embarrassment that awaited them if they failed to find a substitute of the diamond necklace. Finally, they found a similar necklace in a shop at Palais Royal. They looked at it closely and gathered that it resembled the original piece very closely. Its price was forty thousand francs, however, the jeweller agreed to sell it for thirty six thousand francs.

Reference to context

11. 'Loisel possessed eighteen thousandwhether he could meet it.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to Loisel's financial crisis that falls upon him due to a diamond necklace. He makes an arrangement with the jeweller that he would not sell the diamond necklace to anyone for three days so that they can arrange the money to buy it. They also make an agreement with the jeweller that he would buy it back for the same amount in case they find the original necklace within a month.

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Loisel realizes that he already has eighteen thousand francs that his father left for him. He decides to borrow the rest of the amount and pay for the necklace. He goes from place to place borrowing a thousand francs from one person and arranging five hundred from another. He gave notes, entered into various obligations and agreements and did business with a number of usurers and money lenders. He nearly compromised the rest of his life with heavy debts, taking huge financial risks and signing various bonds without realizing whether he could meet the demands later.

Reference to Context

12. 'You should have returned Madame Loisel for a thief?'

Explanation

The above lines are spoken by Madame Forestier as she displays her displeasure over the delay in returning the necklace. She had happily given the diamond necklace to her friend Mathilde without making her uncomfortable and she expects the same courtesy back from her friend. However, Mathilde having lost the necklace does her best to replace it so that she is not ashamed in front of her friend.

Madame Loisel takes back the necklace to Madame Forestier who tells her in a cold voice that she should have returned it sooner. She should have realized that she might have needed it. Madame Loisel is worried about the authenticity of the necklace, she fears that her friend might just open the case and see that her necklace has been replaced. She fears that her friend may accuse her of stealing the necklace on finding out that she has returned a substitute and not the original one that she had borrowed. Nonetheless, to her relief, Madame Forestier takes the case and does not open it.

Reference to Context

13. 'She came to know what heavy Miserable money, sou by sou.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to the miserable life that Madame Loisel starts leading in order to repay the debts. Only when she herself lives an impoverished life, does she truly realize the daily torments of the poor and needy. However, she is determined to pay off the heavy debt and, therefore, plays her role heroically. The Loisels dismiss their house maid and shift to a smaller house. They also rent the garret.

Madame Loisel truly realizes the meaning of heavy household work as she takes up the chores in her hands. She does all the household work, including washing the greasy dishes with her delicate fingers and painted nails. She washes the dirty clothes, dries them upon a line and also goes down the street to fetch water. Now she dresses like any other simple woman and also goes to the grocer, vegetable seller and the butcher and bargains for the provisions so as to save money in every possible way.

Reference to Context

14. 'Madame Loisel looked old So beautiful and so admired.'

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Check Your Progress

5. What invitation did Mathilde's husband bring home?
6. Why was Mathilde furious at her husband's suggestions about the dress?
7. Did Mathilde agree to wear flowers?
8. Why did Mathilde go to Madame Forestier's house?

Explanation

The above lines refer to Madame Loisel's transformation in ten years from a young and beautiful girl to an ordinary old woman. The Loiseles work very hard to repay their debts and lead a miserable life trying to save every possible penny. They succeed in paying off their complete debt including the cumulative interest in ten years. However, the hard work and stress takes a toll on their lives.

Madame Loisel looks much older than her actual age. She bears the looks of an impoverished housewife who has turned strong and hard owing to the struggles of life. She has unkempt hair and awry skirts, her hands are red and she talks loudly while washing the floor. However, sometimes when she is alone and her husband is away to office, she sits near the window and thinks about that fateful evening when she was so admired for her beauty and charm at the ball.

Reference to Context

15. 'I brought you back another Most only five hundred francs.'

Explanation

The above lines refer to a conversation between Madame Loisel and Madame Forestier who meet after almost a decade. Madame Loisel recognizes her friend who still looks young, beautiful and charming. She hesitates initially but then goes up to her and greets her. Madame Forestier takes some time to recognize her old friend and they talk about the last time they met. Madame Loisel tells her about the hardships that she faced because of her necklace.

Madame Loisel reveals to her friend that she had lost her diamond necklace and then replaced it with a new one exactly similar to the original. She tells her about the ordeal on account of the necklace and confesses that she is happy as the debts have been finally paid off. Madame Forestier is surprised to hear her friend's story of hardship and asks her if she bought a real diamond necklace to replace her necklace. Madame Loisel replies with pride in her eyes that the new necklace was very similar to the original, so she must not have realized the difference. Nevertheless, Madame Forestier is touched at the revelation and holds her friend's hand. Madame Forestier reveals to her friend that the necklace was not made of real diamonds and its price was not more than five hundred francs.

3.2.4 Character Sketches

You will now go through the delineation of characters in the story, *The Necklace*.

Mathilde Loisel: She is a pretty and charming girl who is born into a family of clerks, which she believes is a mistake of destiny. She never believes herself belonging to a humble background and feels entitled to receive all the luxuries of life. Unable to change her circumstances, she leads a life of constant rebellion and is always yearning for the riches that life can offer. She is married to a man who looks after her and loves her but love is of no significance to her due to his poor status of being a clerk. She is always dissatisfied despite her husband's efforts of pleasing her.

Whatever she actually possesses is irrelevant and insignificant for her, she hates her small apartment, its bare walls and ugly curtains pain her, she does not appreciate

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the little sweet compliments of her husband and she is not at all grateful for anything in her life. She keeps dreaming of magnificent halls, perfumed rooms and vast taprooms, decorated with exquisite pieces of furniture. She lives in a state of turmoil and is so overcome by jealousy that she does not even wish to visit her old schoolmate Madame Forestier who is a wealthy lady. While dining with her husband, she is not even mentally present there, so much so that she does not even notice how her husband is delighted to have the seemingly ordinary soup.

Her reaction to her husband's attempt at making her happy by arranging the invite for the ball is completely driven with rage and agony. She throws the envelope the table and starts weeping. She complains to her husband that she has nothing to wear, so she will not go to the party. However, she is clever enough to get the desired amount from her husband for a new dress. She is inconsiderate and does not acknowledge at any point how her husband gave her all the money that he had been saving to buy a gun. Her only concern after arranging the dress is the accessories that she would wear with the dress. That is another reason for her to be depressed, and she does not hesitate for a moment to borrow the jewellery from Madame Forestier. She seems so fascinated by looking at her reflection in the mirror while trying different pieces of jewelley at her friend's house. Finally, she asks for a diamond necklace and happily takes it away.

Her happiness knows no bound at the ball where she seems to celebrate her beauty and flaunt her borrowed wealth. That is the only moment in the story where Mathilde Loisel is truly joyful. She is completely immersed in that moment of being in the company of wealthy people and being admired by them. She believes herself to be an inseparable part of that momentary illusion. However, the illusions does not last very long, and so she is back in the real world but she must pay for that one moment of utter happiness.

On realizing that she has lost the borrowed diamond necklace, she is dumbfounded. She writes a letter of apology dictated by her husband to her friend. However, she takes the responsibility of her action and bravely plays her part in repaying the heavy debts.

Her destiny causes her to experience the real poverty of which she had complained all her life despite leading a comfortable life. Soon she realizes the hardships of life but her spirit does not deter her from working even harder. Her beauty is compromised and the ten arduous years make her look much older than her actual age. Yet she is proud of having paid off all the money with her hard work.

Monsieur Loisel: Monsieur Loisel is Mathilde's husband who loves her dearly and despite his limited means, tries his best to please her. Mathilde hates the fact that her husband is a mere clerk with meagre income and never cares much for his feelings. There is a remarkable difference in their level of emotional contentment. While he cherishes the small joys of life and happily accepts the fact that there are certain things beyond his reach, his wife is constantly dissatisfied and yearns for things beyond her reach.

In his attempt to please his wife, he manages to receive the invite to the ball with great difficulty. He expects her to be happy but he is stunned to see her weeping on account of being invited to the ball with high officials. However, he tries to understand her point that she wants a new dress. He suggests her to wear the one that she wears to the theatre, but she is not convinced. He asks her how much money she wants for the new dress. As she tells him the approximate amount, he silently sacrifices his wish to buy a gun as he had saved exactly the same amount for it. He tries to pacify yet another

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tantrum of his wife, to arrange the jewellery with the new dress by asking her to wear fresh flowers, but she refuses, then he suggests her to borrow it from her wealthy friend Madame Forestier. He is happy and contented to see his wife enjoying the ball. He lets her enjoy and goes to sleep in another room fully realizing that he has to go to office the next morning. After his wife has had her full, she comes to him at four o'clock in the morning, he offers her a shrug so that she does not catch cold. She refuses to wrap herself in an ordinary shrug when other women were wrapped in expensive furs. However, they reach home and his only concern is that he must not be late to work that morning.

As soon as he realizes that Mathilde has lost the diamond necklace that she borrowed from her friend, he ventures back in the cold night to search for it. He comes back with a long and pale face and tells his wife to write a letter of apology to her friend. He is courteous enough not to make other person uneasy. He tries hard to find a jewellery shop where he can find a similar necklace and when he finds one, he is taken aback to hear the price, which is double the fortune left by his father. He does not hold himself back and arranges for the money from various sources not even realizing whether he would be able to meet the financial demands. He is heavily indebted but does not lose hope and works for extra hours in the evening and at night for ten long years. Finally, he earns enough money and pays back his debts along with the interest. He proves to be a loving and caring husband who does not hold his wife accountable for her actions and always tries to protect her.

Madame Forestier: She is a rich lady who happens to be an old friend of Mathilde Loisel. Mathilde avoids visiting her friend as she does not want to appear impoverished in front of her wealthy friend. However, when Mathilde does go to her house to borrow some jewellery, she treats her kindly and offers her to choose whatever jewellery she pleases. Mathilde is jealous of her wealthy friend and keeps asking if she has some more. She tells her to look for more and try what suits her best. Mathilde chooses a diamond necklace and asks her hesitantly if she could take only that. She happily agrees and gives it away.

Mathilde loses the necklace in a party and replaces it with another similar diamond necklace, a real one. Despite receiving a letter of apology from her friend, Madame Forestier speaks to her friend coldly and conveys to her that she should have returned it sooner. She does not bother to open the box and check the necklace and does not realize for ten years that the necklace has been replaced.

However, she meets Mathilde in a park after ten years and does not recognize her as Mathilde looks much older than her age but she looks just the same as ten years ago. On being told by Mathilde of her ordeal of ten arduous years on account of the diamond necklace, she is awestruck. She is touched with emotion on hearing her story and holds Mathilde's hands. She reveals to her that her necklace was not made of real diamonds and did not cost more than five hundred francs.

3.2.5 Theme

The main theme of *The Necklace* is the futility of the fascinating world of illusion in which Mathilde loves to live. The life that she dreams of living does not match the reality of her situation. She is unwilling to part with the illusory world that gives her solace in her fanciful flight. She does not want to accept that her real world is completely different yet a happy one in which she has a comfortable house and a loving husband. Instead, she dreams of the unreachable and unhappy world of her imagination. She does not appreciate

the pleasures of reality and suffers endlessly for the want of luxuries of life. She lets herself believe that her beauty and charm make her worthy of being wealthy.

*The Necklace: Guy De
Maupassant*

In the beginning of the story, Mathilde thinks of all those things that she does not possess but feels entitled to have them. When she does not get what she wants, she feels tormented and humiliated. Although everything takes place in her mind, in reality, she fails to appreciate any aspect of her life, including a devoted husband. She constantly regrets that her beauty is being wasted without enjoying a luxurious life. She believes that she is spending a life well beneath what she deserves, so there is no reason to be happy.

Her belief is so firm that her joy knows no limit at the ball where for the first time in her life she has really stepped into the world that she always imagines. For her, happiness has a different meaning altogether, she is not happy because she has a loving husband, but she is happy because everyone in the party wants to dance with her. For her, happiness lies in the fact that she is wearing a beautiful dress and a diamond necklace, it does not matter to her that her husband has given her all his savings to buy that dress also, it is of least significance that the diamond necklace is borrowed from a friend. She does not even know whether the diamond is real or not, but she is happy like never before. The time spent at the ball is so precious to her that its memory does not fade even after ten years of hardships. She pays the price of that precious moment by spending the next ten years of her life in miserable conditions.

Structure

The Necklace illustrates the tightly knit ironic structure of a short story. Although it follows a standard plot of most stories, its integrated tone prevails throughout and provides it a unified structure. The beginning of Mathilde's married life is not so happy despite her loving husband, and she longs for what she has to pay in the end. Her beauty that she is so proud of fades due to her hardships for paying off the debts. Ironically, the necklace that she is so proud to wear leads her to lose her most precious asset—her beauty. The twist towards the end of the story shatters all the illusions and the reality is revealed. Mathilde gets the shock of her life that the necklace for which she actually wasted ten precious years of her life was not worth all her labour.

3.3 SUMMARY

- Henri Rene Albert Guy de Maupassant was born on 5 August 1850 to an affluent family at the Chateau de Miromesnil, in France.
- Maupassant was unhappy in school and escaped from the sadness by writing.
- Maupassant's place in French literature is evident from the fact that the leading intellectuals and writers of his age attended his funeral. His life is representative of the social and political changes France saw during the second half of the nineteenth century.
- Like his mentor Flaubert, Maupassant also believed that fiction should represent reality as much as possible.
- He wrote over 300 short stories. While most of them deal with realistic tales of everyday people, he was also skilful in dealing with supernatural elements in his stories.

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Check Your Progress

9. At what moment in the story do you find Mathilde truly joyful?
10. How did Monsieur Loisel react on realizing that his wife had lost the diamond necklace?

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- Mathilde Loisel was such a pretty and charming girl that it seemed she was mistakenly born in the family of clerks.
- Mathilde's constant sufferings upon thinking herself as being born for every luxury and delicacy that life can offer only elevated the level of her pain.
- She had an old schoolmate, Madame Forestier, who was quite affluent but she avoided visiting her as she would come back more depressed than ever, and wept whole day out of agony and regret.
- Mathilde's husband was expecting her to be ecstatic for being invited to the palace, but to his surprise, she threw the invitation card carelessly.
- Mathilde Loisel appeared sad and uneasy as the day of the ball drew closer, although her dress was ready. When husband asked her why she had been behaving strangely for the past three days, she replied she felt miserable for not having any jewellery and ornaments to wear with the dress.
- Mathilde said that she would not want to appear impoverished and it would be better not to go to the ball. He suggested her to wear flowers as they would look smart and not cost much, but failed to convince her. She asserted that she did not want to be humiliated by looking poor among other rich women.
- Mathilde borrowed a diamond necklace from her friend. Madame Forestier
- Madame Loisel was a great success on the night of the ball. She looked prettier than any other woman present in the ball. She looked more elegant and graceful than anyone else and danced all night.
- On returning home, Mathilde she found the diamond and reported the matter necklace was missing. Monsieur Loisel searched for the necklace everywhere to the police, went to the newspaper offices to offer a reward, to the cab companies and anywhere he felt hopeful. His efforts were in vain as he did not find the diamond necklace.
- Monsieur Loisel suggested his wife to write to Madame Forestier that she had broken the clasp of the necklace and was getting it mended. He dictated to her the words to be written.
- The Loisels went to different jewellers in search of a necklace that looked like the one they had lost, relying only on their memory of the necklace.
- The couple found a similar necklace in a shop at Palais Royal. Its price was forty thousand francs but the cost settled down to thirty six thousand francs. They made an arrangement with the shopkeeper and he agreed not to sell it for three days.
- Monsieur Loisel arranged the money somehow, borrowing some money, giving notes of hand, undertaking various agreements, doing business with money lenders and usurers. He mortgaged the rest of his life signing various documents without even realizing whether he could meet the terms and demands.
- After a period of ten years the Loisels were able to return the money they had borrowed along with its interest.
- One Sunday Madame Loisel suddenly saw her friend Madame Forestier.
- Mathilde told about the ordeal which she went through for having returned the diamond necklace which she had borrowed and eventually lost. Madame Forestier was shocked to know that they had suffered so much on account of that necklace.

- Surprised, Madame Forestier told Mathilde that her necklace was a piece of imitation jewellery and not real diamonds. It hardly cost five hundred francs.

3.4 KEY TERMS

- **Irony:** It is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words.
- **Waltz:** It is a dance in triple time performed by a couple, who turn rhythmically round and round as they progress around the dance floor.
- **Taproom:** It refers to a room in which alcoholic drinks, especially beer, are available on tap.
- **Monsieur:** It is a title or form of address used for or to a French-speaking man, corresponding to *Mr* or *sir*.

3.5 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Realism as a movement began in France in the mid nineteenth century.
2. Maupassant escaped unhappiness in school by resorting to writing. Writing meant the purging of emotions to him. Writing became his escape from reality as a child.
3. Mathilde Loisel was a pretty and charming girl mistakenly born in the family of clerks.
4. Mathilde Loisel was married to Monsieur Loisel — a clerk in the Ministry of Education.
5. Mathilde’s husband brought home an invitation from the Minister of Education to attend a party at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening. He had managed to receive the invitation with great difficulty as there were limited number of invites and everyone wished to go to the grand party.
6. Mathilde was furious at her husband’s suggestion about the dress as he asked her to wear the dress which she used to wear at the theatre.
7. Mathilde bluntly refused to wear flowers with the new dress. She said that there was nothing more humiliating than appearing poor in the middle of a lot of rich women.
8. Mathilde visited Madame Forestier’s house because she wanted to borrow jewellery to wear with the new dress.
9. Mathilde Loisel is truly joyful only once in the story. It is that moment when she goes to the ball in all her glory. She dances with rapture as if celebrating her beauty and charm.
10. Loisel did not panic and did not blame his wife for having lost his diamond necklace. He was dumbfounded for a moment but soon regained his senses and responded to the situation very calmly. He searched the clothes and then went back to the street from where he had just returned without complaining and teasing his wife.

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3.6 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the theme of the story *The Necklace*?
2. How does the necklace act as a symbol of irony in the story?
3. How does the truth about the necklace impact Mathilde's life?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Assess the characters of Madame Loisel and Monsieur Loisel. How are they different from each other?
2. Discuss *The Necklace* as an example of realist fiction.
3. 'Guy de Maupassant is reckoned as one of the fathers of modern short story'. Explain.

3.7 FURTHER READING

- Prasad, B. 2010. *A Background to the Study of English Literature*. India: Macmillan.
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UNIT 4 *THE BET*: ANTON CHEKOV

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 About the Author
- 4.3 *The Bet*: Text and Explanation
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Key Terms
- 4.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.7 Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the short story, *The Bet*, written by Anton Chekhov in 1889, a wager is made that changes the lives of two people. In the story, a wealthy banker hosts a party which is attended by a young lawyer, among other guests. During the party, some of the guests engage in a heated debate on the subject of capital punishment versus life imprisonment. While the banker supports death, the lawyer insists that it is better to live in any manner than to die. To settle the point, the banker offers the lawyer two million roubles to spend fifteen years in a cell. The lawyer agrees, but at the end of fifteen years, he strangely refuses to take the money. In this unit, you will study the short story, *The Bet* written by Anton Chekhov.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess Anton Chekhov's skills as a short-story writer
- Discuss the theme and characters of the short story *The Bet*

4.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A Russian short-story writer and playwright, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov is considered one of the greatest short-story writers in the world. Chekhov was born on 29 January 1860 in southern Russia. He was attracted to literature from a young age, and his first story appeared in a Moscow paper in 1880. During his student years, he wrote many short stories and sketches of Russian life for several periodicals. In 1888, his health began to weaken rapidly due to lung and heart complications, but he continued to produce short stories and plays. *The Steppe* and *Tedious Tales* — both depictions of Russian life — are known as his masterpieces. His four plays *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Sea-Gull* are considered **classics** of Russian literature. Chekhov died of tuberculosis on July 15, 1904, aged only 44.

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Fig 4.1 Anton Chekhov

4.3 THE BET: TEXT AND EXPLANATION

Check Your Progress

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:
 - (a) Anton Chekhov's first story appeared in a Moscow paper in _____.
 - (b) _____ and _____ are known as Chekhov's masterpieces.
2. State whether true or false:
 - (a) Chekhov's four plays, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Sea-Gull*, are considered as classics of Russian literature.
 - (b) Anton Chekhov is a French short-story writer.

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was pacing from corner to corner of his study, recalling to his mind the party he gave in the autumn fifteen years before. There were many clever people at the party and much interesting conversation. They talked among other things of capital punishment. The guests, among them not a few scholars and journalists, for the most part disapproved of capital punishment. They found it obsolete as a means of punishment, unfitted to a Christian State, and immoral. Some of them thought that capital punishment should be replaced universally by life-imprisonment. "I don't agree with you," said the host. "I myself have experienced neither capital punishment nor life-imprisonment, but if one may judge *a priori*, then in my opinion capital punishment is more moral and more humane than imprisonment. Execution kills instantly, life-imprisonment kills by degrees. Who is the more humane executioner, one who kills you in a few seconds or one who draws the life out of you incessantly, for years?"

"They're both equally immoral," remarked one of the guests, "because their purpose is the same, to take away life. The State is not God. It has no right to take away that which it cannot give back, if it should so desire."

Among the company was a lawyer, a young man of about twenty-five. On being asked his opinion, he said:

"Capital punishment and life-imprisonment are equally immoral; but if I were offered the choice between them, I would certainly choose the second. It's better to live somehow than not to live at all."

There ensued a lively discussion. The banker who was then younger and more nervous suddenly lost his temper, banged his fist on the table, and turning to the young lawyer, cried out:

"It's a lie. I bet you two millions you wouldn't stick in a cell even for five years."

"If you mean it seriously," replied the lawyer, "then I bet I'll stay not five but fifteen."

"Fifteen! Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions."

"Agreed. You stake two millions, I my freedom," said the lawyer.

So this wild, ridiculous bet came to pass. The banker, who at that time had too many millions to count, spoiled and capricious, was beside himself with rapture. During supper he said to the lawyer jokingly:

“Come to your senses, young man, before it’s too late. Two millions are nothing to me, but you stand to lose three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you’ll never stick it out any longer. Don’t forget either, you unhappy man that voluntary is much heavier than enforced imprisonment. The idea that you have the right to free yourself at any moment will poison the whole of your life in the cell. I pity you.”

Explanation: On a dark autumn night, an old banker is pacing up and down his study, thinking about a party he gave in the same season fifteen years ago. He recalls in his mind the events of the party on 14 November 1870. The guests included a number of scholars and journalists. Among such clever people, the party had a lot of interesting conversation. One of the topics of conversation was capital punishment. Most of the guests disapproved of capital punishment. They considered it immoral and unfit for a Christian State, and wanted it replaced by life imprisonment.

The banker held the opinion that capital punishment is more moral and humane than life imprisonment. According to him, execution killed instantly, but life imprisonment was a painfully slow death. The banker got into a lively discussion with a twenty-five-year-old lawyer who, given the choice, preferred life imprisonment to capital punishment. For him, to live was better any day than execution. At this, the banker grew furious and challenged the lawyer that he (the lawyer) would not survive confinement. The lawyer, quite sure of himself, bet on fifteen years of life imprisonment and the banker put two million roubles at stake on the bet.

In the opening scene, the old banker recalls this ridiculous bet. At that time, the banker was very rich and two million were nothing to him. At dinner towards the end of the party, the banker ridiculed the lawyer, asking him to rethink his position. He felt that voluntary imprisonment was much more difficult than enforced imprisonment of the state. He pitied the lawyer, and called him an ‘unhappy man’.

The Regret

And now the banker, pacing from corner to corner, recalled all this and asked himself:

“Why did I make this bet? What’s the good? The lawyer loses fifteen years of his life and I throw away two millions. Will it convince people that capital punishment is worse or better than imprisonment for life? No, no! all stuff and rubbish. On my part, it was the *caprice* of a well-fed man; on the lawyer’s, pure greed of *gold*.”

Explanation: This is a very important point in the story. The old banker recalls the night of the party, fifteen years ago, and is filled with lament. He questions himself, ‘Why did I make this bet?’ He acknowledges the fact that the bet would have served no purpose since it still would not have convinced people, as to which was worse, capital punishment or life imprisonment. It was ‘all stuff and rubbish’, since it took away fifteen years of a young lawyer’s life and the (then) rich banker would have thrown away two million for this wild bet. This ridiculous bet was only the proud impulsiveness of a spoilt rich man and the greed for money of the young lawyer.

The Terms

He recollected further what happened after the evening party. It was decided that the lawyer must undergo his imprisonment under the strictest observation, in a garden wing of the banker’s house. It was agreed that during the period he would be deprived

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of the right to cross the threshold, to see living people, to hear human voices, and to receive letters and newspapers. He was permitted to have a musical instrument, to read books, to write letters, to drink wine and smoke tobacco.

By the agreement he could communicate, but only in silence, with the outside world through a little window specially constructed for this purpose. Everything necessary, books, music, wine, he could receive in any quantity by sending a note through the window. The agreement provided for all the minutest details, which made the confinement strictly solitary, and it obliged the lawyer to remain exactly fifteen years from twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1870, to twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1885. The least attempt on his part to violate the conditions, to escape if only for two minutes before the time, freed the banker from the obligation to pay him the two millions.

Explanation: At the fag end of the party, 'it was decided that the lawyer must undergo his imprisonment under the strictest observation, in a garden wing of the banker's house'. The lawyer would be under constant scrutiny of the banker and he would not be allowed to cross the threshold. The lawyer was allowed to drink wine, smoke tobacco, keep a musical instrument, in his case, the piano and read and write as much as he wanted.

All that the lawyer had to do, in case he required anything, was send a note through the only window. The confinement of the lawyer was solitary, with no contact with the outside world. The stipulated time of confinement was from midnight on 14 November 1870 to midnight on 14 November 1885. If the lawyer left even two minutes before the time, the agreement would be null and the banker would no longer be obliged to pay two million to the lawyer.

Fifteen Years

During the first year of imprisonment, the lawyer, as far as it was possible to judge from his short notes, suffered terribly from loneliness and boredom. From his wing day and night came the sound of the piano. He rejected wine and tobacco. "Wine," he wrote, "excites desires, and desires are the chief foes of a prisoner; besides, nothing is more boring than to drink good wine alone," and tobacco spoiled the air in his room. During the first year the lawyer was sent books of a light character; novels with a complicated love interest, stories of crime and fantasy, comedies, and so on.

In the second year the piano was heard no longer and the lawyer asked only for classics. In the fifth year, music was heard again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him said that during the whole of that year he was only eating, drinking, and lying on his bed. He yawned often and talked angrily to himself. Books he did not read. Sometimes at nights he would sit down to write. He would write then a long time and tear it all up in the morning. More than once he was heard to weep.

In the second half of the sixth year, the prisoner began zealously to study languages, philosophy, and history. He fell on these subjects so hungrily that the banker hardly had time to get books enough for him. In the space of four years about six hundred volumes were bought at his request. It was while that passion lasted that the banker received the following letter from the prisoner: "My dear jailer, I am writing these lines in six languages. Show them to experts. Let them read them. If they do not find one single mistake, I beg you to give orders to have a gun fired off in the garden. By the noise I shall know that my efforts have not been in vain. The geniuses of all ages and countries speak in different languages; but in them all burns the same flame. Oh, if you knew my heavenly happiness now that I can understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. Two shots were fired in the garden by the banker's order.

Later on, after the tenth year, the lawyer sat immovable before his table and read only the New Testament. The banker found it strange that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred erudite volumes, should have spent nearly a year in reading

one book, easy to understand and by no means thick. The New Testament was then replaced by the history of religions and theology.

During the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an extraordinary amount, quite *haphazard*. Now he would apply himself to the natural sciences, then he would read Byron or Shakespeare. Notes used to come from him in which he asked to be sent at the same time a book on chemistry, a textbook of medicine, a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology.

He read as though he were swimming in the sea among broken pieces of wreckage, and in his desire to save his life was eagerly grasping one piece after another.

Explanation: In the first year of imprisonment, the lawyer suffered loneliness and boredom. He read light books, including comedies, romances and novels of crime and fantasy. He rejected wine and tobacco. Tobacco because it spoilt the air of his room and wine because it was better had with some company. The lawyer played the piano day and night. In the second year, the lawyer asked to read the classics.

In the fifth year of confinement, the lawyer asked for wine and the whole of that year he ate, drank and slept. He read nothing. He used to write something in the evenings, only to tear it up at night. He was often heard crying. In the sixth year, the lawyer read books of languages and read about six hundred volumes in a span of four years. He mastered six languages. He wrote a special message to the banker, in six different languages. The lawyer requested that if the language experts deemed the language correct, two shots be fired in the garden to let him know that his learning was perfect.

In the tenth year, the lawyer read only one book and this was the New Testament. In the fourteenth and fifteenth year of imprisonment, the lawyer attempted to reclaim the lost bits of his life and read myriad books on varied subjects. In the last two years, he read books on medicine, philosophy, natural sciences and Shakespeare.

The Last Night and Day

The banker recalled all this, and thought:

“Tomorrow at twelve o’clock he receives his freedom. Under the agreement, I shall have to pay him two millions. If I pay, it’s all over with me. I am ruined forever...”

Fifteen years before he had too many millions to count, but now he was afraid to ask himself which he had more of, money or debts. Gambling on the Stock-Exchange, risky speculation, and the recklessness of which he could not rid himself even in old age, had gradually brought his business to decay; and the fearless, self-confident, proud man of business had become an ordinary banker, trembling at every rise and fall in the market.

“That cursed bet,” murmured the old man clutching his head in despair....“Why didn’t the man die? He’s only forty years old. He will take away my last farthing, marry, enjoy life, gamble on the Exchange, and I will look on like an envious beggar and hear the same words from him every day: ‘I’m obliged to you for the happiness of my life. Let me help you.’ No, it’s too much! The only escape from bankruptcy and disgrace-is that the man should die.”

The clock had just struck three. The banker was listening. In the house every one was asleep, and one could hear only the frozen trees whining outside the windows. Trying to make no sound, he took out of his safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house. The garden was dark and cold. It was raining. A damp, penetrating wind howled in the garden and gave the trees no rest. Though he strained his eyes, the banker could see neither the ground, nor the white statues, nor the garden wing, nor the trees.

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Approaching the garden wing, he called the watchman twice. There was no answer. Evidently the watchman had taken shelter from the bad weather and was now asleep somewhere in the kitchen or the greenhouse.

"If I have the courage to fulfil my intention," thought the old man, "the suspicion will fall on the watchman first of all."

In the darkness he groped for the steps and the door and entered the hall of the garden-wing, then poked his way into a narrow passage and struck a match. Not a soul was there. Someone's bed, with no bed-clothes on it, stood there, and an iron stove loomed dark in the corner. The seals on the door that led into the prisoner's room were unbroken.

When the match went out, the old man, trembling from agitation, peeped into the little window.

In the prisoner's room a candle was burning dimly. The prisoner himself sat by the table. Only his back, the hair on his head and his hands were visible. Open books were strewn about on the table, the two chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner never once stirred. Fifteen years' confinement had taught him to sit motionless. The banker tapped on the window with his finger, but the prisoner made no movement in reply. Then the banker cautiously tore the seals from the door and put the key into the lock. The rusty lock gave a hoarse groan and the door creaked. The banker expected instantly to hear a cry of surprise and the sound of steps. Three minutes passed and it was as quiet inside as it had been before. He made up his mind to enter.

Before the table sat a man, unlike an ordinary human being. It was a skeleton, with tight-drawn skin, with long curly hair like a woman and a shaggy beard. The color of his face was yellow, of an earthy shade; the cheeks were sunken, the back long and narrow, and the hand upon which he leaned his hairy head was so lean and skinny that it was painful to look upon. His hair was already silvering with grey, and no one who glanced at the senile emaciation of the face, would have believed that he was only forty years old. On the table, before his bended head, lay a sheet of paper on which something was written in a tiny hand.

"Poor devil," thought the banker, "he's asleep and probably seeing millions in his dreams. I have only to take and throw this half-dead thing on the bed, smother him a moment with the pillow, and the most careful examination will find no trace of unnatural death. But first, let us read what he has written here."

The banker took the sheet from the table and read:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock midnight, I shall obtain my freedom and the right to mix with people. But before I leave this room and see the Sun I think it necessary to say a few words to you. On my own clear conscience and before God who sees me I declare to you that I despise freedom" life, health, and all that your books call the blessings of the world.

"For fifteen years I have diligently studied earthly life. True, I saw neither the earth nor the people, but in your books I drank fragrant wine, sang songs, hunted deer and wild boar in the forests, loved women.... And beautiful women, like clouds ethereal, created by the magic of your poet's genius, visited me by night and whispered to me wonderful tales, which made my head drunken.

In your books I climbed the summits of Elbruz and Mont Blanc and saw from there how the sun rose in the morning, and in the evening suffused the sky, the ocean and the mountain ridges with a purple gold. I saw from there how above me lightnings glimmered, cleaving the clouds; I saw green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, cities; I heard sirens singing, and the playing of the pipes of pan; I touched the wings of beautiful devils who came flying to me to speak of God.... In your books I cast myself into bottomless abysses, worked miracles, burned cities to the ground, preached new religions, conquered whole countries....

"Your books gave me wisdom. All that unwearying human thought created in the centuries is compressed to a little lump in my skull. I know that I am cleverer than you all.

"And I despise your books, despise all worldly blessings and wisdom. Everything is void, frail, visionary and delusive as a mirage. Though you be proud and wise and beautiful, yet will death wipe you from the face of the earth like the mice underground; and your *posterity*, your history, and the *immortality* of your men of genius will be as frozen slag, burnt down together with the terrestrial globe.

"You are mad, and gone the wrong way. You take falsehood for truth and ugliness for beauty. You would marvel if suddenly apple and orange trees should bear frogs and lizards instead of fruit, and if roses should begin to breathe the odor of a sweating horse. So do I marvel at you, who have bartered heaven for earth. I do not want to understand you.

"That I may show you in deed my contempt for that by which you live, I waive the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise, and which I now despise. That I may deprive myself of my right to them, I shall come out from here five minutes before the stipulated term, and thus shall violate the agreement."

When he had read, the banker put the sheet on the table, kissed the head of the strange man, and began to weep. He went out of the wing. Never at any other time, not even after his terrible losses on the Exchange, had he felt such contempt for himself as now. Coming home, he lay down on his bed, but agitation and tears kept him a long time from sleeping....

The next morning the poor watchman came running to him and told him that they had seen the man who lived in the wing climb through the window into the garden. He had gone to the gate and disappeared. The banker instantly went with his servants to the wing and established the escape of his prisoner. To avoid unnecessary rumors he took the paper with the renunciation from the table and, on his return, locked it in his safe.

Explanation: The banker, still pacing his study, recalls the events of the past fifteen years. He is worried that since the lawyer has honoured the terms of confinement, he will have to give him two million roubles. The banker is no longer as rich as he was when he made the bet. He has lost a lot of money through rash speculation and debts. Now, if he gives the lawyer two million roubles, he himself will go bankrupt. So, the banker makes a plan to kill the lawyer in his sleep. The banker unlocks the lawyer's room and sees a dim candle glowing in the dark. He sees the emaciated figure of the forty-year-old lawyer. He seems to be sleeping with his head on the table. The banker thinks this is the right time to kill him. As he comes closer, he sees a letter lying on the table and thinks of reading it first.

In the letter, addressed to the banker, the lawyer thanks him for the books that gave him wisdom. He, however, renounces the money that the banker owes him. He called the banker 'mad' in the letter, for having 'bartered heaven for earth'. Heaven was the supreme wisdom he gained from the books of the banker. In the books, the lawyer had 'conquered whole new countries' while sitting in the confinement of the banker's garden room. The two million roubles, which he thought of as paradise as a young lawyer, were now 'earth' or dirt to him. He holds the banker's way of life in contempt and has no desire whatsoever for the money. He wants to renounce the due amount by leaving five minutes before midnight, the completion of his fifteen-year confinement.

The banker is so moved by the letter that he cries and kisses the emaciated head of this 'strange man'. He still cannot understand the enlightenment of the lawyer, who willingly renounces two million roubles. The next day, the guards announce that the man has run away.

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Check Your Progress

3. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

(a) The debate was about capital punishment being better than _____.

(b) The banker felt that _____ imprisonment was more difficult than _____ imprisonment.

(c) The banker admits that the bet was a result of his impulsiveness and the lawyer's _____ for money.

(d) The lawyer was to be imprisoned in a _____ of the banker's _____.

(e) If the lawyer violated the conditions in any way, or tried to escape even two minutes before the stipulated time, the banker would be _____ from the obligation of paying _____ millions.

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Check Your Progress

4. State whether true or false:
- (a) The lawyer lay dead on the bed when the banker entered his room.
 - (b) The lawyer made his contempt for the banker's superficial world very clear and said that he did not want to even understand the banker.
 - (c) The lawyer left five minutes before the stipulated time so that he could win the bet.
 - (d) The lawyer had not desired for the two million roubles.
 - (e) In the tenth year, the lawyer read only the *New Testament*.

Important characters

- **The banker:** He is a relatively flat character. He is a vain, proud rich man, who could not understand the gravity of the step of the lawyer, calling him a 'strange man'.
- **The lawyer:** His character undergoes immense change over the course of the story. From a young lawyer, excited to gain two million roubles after fifteen years, he becomes a learned man from years of reading. He is able to renounce a big fortune, which to him is equivalent to dust, after the wisdom he gains during his confinement.

4.4 SUMMARY

- A Russian short-story writer and playwright, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov is considered one of the greatest short-story writers in the world.
- Chekhov was attracted to literature from a young age, and his first story appeared in a Moscow paper in 1880.
- *The Steppe* and *Tedious Tales* — both depictions of Russian life — are known as his masterpieces.
- His four plays — *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Sea-Gull* — are considered as classics of Russian literature.
- In the short story, *The Bet*, written by Anton Chekhov in 1889, a wager is made that changes the lives of two people.
- In the story, a wealthy banker hosts a party which is attended by a young lawyer, among other guests. During the party, some of the guests engage in a heated debate on the subject of capital punishment versus life imprisonment.
- On one hand, the banker supports death, the lawyer insists that it is better to live in any manner than to die.
- To settle the point, the banker offers the lawyer two million roubles to spend fifteen years in a cell. The lawyer agrees, but at the end of fifteen years he strangely refuses to take the money.
- Some characters that are greedy in their younger years, such as the lawyer, change after attaining wisdom. However, for someone like the banker, it does not happen.
- The banker cries and kisses the lawyer, since he really needs the money. The banker is thankful that he does not have to kill the lawyer to keep his money.
- In his final act of locking away the letter written by the lawyer, he proves to us that his character was incorrigible and vain till the end.

4.5 KEY TERMS

- **Caprice:** It is an impulsive change of mind.
- **Priori:** It refers to proceeding from a known or assumed cause to a necessarily related effect.
- **Rouble:** It is the Russian currency.

- **Capital punishment:** It implies death penalty.
- **Posterity:** It refers to the future generations of people.

4.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. (a) 1880 (b) *The Steppe* and *Tedious Tales*
2. (a) True (b) False
3. (a) Life imprisonment
(b) Voluntary; enforced
(c) Greed
(d) Garden; house
(e) Freed; two
4. (a) False
(b) True
(c) False
(d) True
(e) True

4.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What was the term which the lawyer agreed to spend in the banker's garden house?
2. How much money did the banker agree to pay to the lawyer at the end of the term?
3. Why did the lawyer reject wine and tobacco during the first year of his agreement?
4. How did the lawyer feel in the first year of his imprisonment?
5. What was the lawyer permitted to have during the term of his imprisonment?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the banker's party.
2. What were the terms and conditions of the bet between the lawyer and the banker?
3. What were the contents of the letter that the lawyer wrote on the last day of his confinement?
4. Prepare short notes on the following:
 - (a) The banker
 - (b) The lawyer
5. How do the two main characters in the story evolve over the course of fifteen years?

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4.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 *THE END OF THE PARTY:* GRAHAM GREENE

The End of the Party:
Graham Greene

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 About the Author
 - 5.2.1 Approach to Religion
 - 5.2.2 The Humanist and the Catholic
 - 5.2.3 Greene's Humanistic Religion: Contemporariness and Relevance
 - 5.2.4 *The End of the Party*: Text and Explanation
- 5.3 Summary
- 5.4 Key Terms
- 5.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.6 Questions and Exercises
- 5.7 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Graham Greene is one of the prominent writers of English literature. His works explore the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world. His appeal stretched beyond readers concerned with good and evil to embrace those who liked a good story. His writings depict the narrative skills of Robert Louis Stevenson. In addition, he had the talent for depicting local colour. His literary fame was acknowledged formally in 1966, when he was named by Queen Elizabeth II as a Companion of Honour. In 1986, he received one of the highest British honours, the Order of Merit. In his career, Greene wrote twenty-four novels, along with many short stories, essays and plays and two volumes of autobiography.

Although Graham Greene is best known for his novels yet *The End of the Party* has reckoned him as the master of short story in the twentieth century. In this short story, Greene utilizes subtle but eerie language of light to brighten the all-encompassing and overwhelming terror of his story's gloominess. *The End of the Party* features nine-year-old twins Peter and Francis Morton. The story begins with Francis waking from a dream foreboding his death. The twin brothers have been asked to attend a birthday party of a peer where they will play hide-and-seek. Francis will have to hide alone in the dark. Francis is afraid of darkness, something which his parent do not take seriously. Francis makes several efforts to avoid going to the party but in vain. The twin brothers attend the birthday party and subsequently, the children play the game of hide-and-seek. Unfortunately, the fear of darkness is so overwhelming for Francis that he dies. In this unit, you will study *The End of the Party* written by Graham Greene.

5.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Graham Greene is a versatile modern writer. He has written twenty-five novels and nearly all of them have been made into films. He has also published many books such as short stories, memoirs, travel books, play texts, essays and children's stories. For literary

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critics there has always been a problem in placing him. His work does not fit into their historical and generic categories: it zigzags across the boundaries they have marked between the 'popular' and the 'literary', between the 'modern' and the 'contemporary', between the English and the international novel.

In literature, as in life, Greene has been a 'loner' making a path for himself in areas ignored or untouched by others of his time. Greene's novels are about men in crisis, men under pressure and men on the run. His journalistic skills help him set them in a more contemporary context that is at once recognizable. He had an uncanny instinct for visiting obscure trouble spots around the globe, which he employed as locales of his novels, for example, Sierra Leone in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), Cuba in *Our Man in Havana* (1958) and Congo in *A Burnt out Case* (1961).

Greene was born on 2 October 1904 at Berkhamsted near London. He was educated first at Berkhamsted School and then at Balliol College, Oxford. He worked as sub-editor at *The Time* from 1926 to 1929. Greene was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1927 and married Vivien Dayrell Browning. His first novel *The Man Within* was published in 1929. He categorized some of his works as 'entertainments' to mark them off from his more serious fiction, which he entitled 'novels'.

Some of his work under the 'entertainment' category are *Stamboul Train*, *A Gun for Sale*, *The Confidential Agent* and *The Ministry of Fear*. He also wrote many novels and travel books between 1930 and 1940. Greene served as literary editor in *The Spectator* from 1940 to 1941. Thereafter, he did wartime service in Sierra Leone and travelled extensively around the world. *The Captain & the Enemy* (1988) was his last novel. He died in 1991.

Greene always kept his distance from literary politics, neither belonging to any group or movement, and neither seeking nor receiving the endorsement of temporarily fashionable schools of criticism. However, every writer necessarily draws on literary tradition, however selectively, and Greene is no exception. In childhood and youth, his imagination was deeply affected by reading historical romances like Marjorie Bowen's *The Viper of Milan* and the adventure stories of writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Rider Haggard and John Buchan. Later, he came under the spell of Joseph Conrad's more profound and pessimistic tales of the outposts of the empire.



Fig 5.1 *Graham Greene*

Indeed, there is one quality above all others that makes Graham Greene's fiction both unique and valuable; it is his capacity for evoking the sense of place in a way that is as vivid and immediate as a newsreel and at the same time resonant with moral and metaphysical suggestion of a haunting kind. This is what critics have called 'Greenland'. It is essentially a feat of style, a combination of artfully selected details, striking figures of speech and subtly cadenced syntax.

The Heart of the Matter (1948) has the setting of the British colony of Sierra Leone in West Africa where Greene himself had served as an intelligence officer in the War. In this novel, Greene portrays the poignant and tragic downfall of a Catholic policeman, Major Scobie, who is unable to decide between hurting his wife, his mistress and God. So, he commits suicide. Nonetheless, Greene reminds us in one of his characteristic authorial asides, 'Only the man of goodwill carries always in his heart this capacity for damnation,' and the ultimate fate of Scobie's soul is left open. Thus, *The Heart of the Matter* is Greene's imaginative exploration of Catholic metaphysics, which he initiated with *Brighton Rock* (1938), pursued with another novel *The Power of the Glory* (1940), carried forward in *The End of the Affair* (1951) and maybe climaxed with *A Burnt-out Case* (1961).

This series of novels brought Greene international recognition as a major novelist, but also gave him the less than flattering label of 'Catholic novelist.' Greene preferred to describe himself as 'a novelist who happened to be a Catholic' and even 'Catholic agnostic.' Greene was especially interested in a number of French Catholic writers – Leon Bloy, Charles Peguy and Francois Mauriac, who had pursued this paradox to extreme conclusions.

So even when the Catholic in Greene seems to overpower the creative writer in him, his approach remains rather liberal, practical and humanitarian in nature. Greene looks at religion from the perspective of the seedy, the corrupt and the most troubled among human beings. He probes deep into the basic function of religion in relation to the individual and tries to give it a human face.

5.2.1 Approach to Religion

Graham Greene and his contemporaries in British fiction like Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and others, between the two World Wars and later, have been concerned with the gradual loss of the benevolent social values, which guided society earlier. The period between the two World Wars was also a period of man's quest for some satisfactory political ideology or the other, for reorganizing society in order to face the deep economic malaise and the onrush of technology.

An important feature of Greene's art is that he presents his ideas on religious matters with a difference. Catholicism, as it appears in his novels, is not merely a public system of religious code and dogmas. Nor is it body incorporate of faith needing exposition. It is, in fact, a privately worked out system of ideas and concepts, a source of impulses and a vast storehouse of rich symbols, which is thus, in some ways, vital to him as an artiste. As Greene does not draw a stern line demarcating the sinners and the saints in fixed categories, his perspective is that of a humanist. For his protagonist, the religious code does not symbolize any stifling of the natural feeling and emotions. Rather, it allows for free display of man's deep-rooted internal dilemmas to which Greene lends a patient ear.

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5.2.2 The Humanist and the Catholic

Graham Greene is a prolific novelist and his interests range from pure thrillers and deeply religious and spiritual content to works with secular themes. His novels attempt to depict life in its panoramic variety. They are concerned with basic human situations that have perennial significance.

In his novels, Greene has largely striven to restore the religious sense and the sense of importance of the human act to the English novel. No other writer since Charles Dickens has so successfully combined immense popularity with complexity and craftsmanship. Greene's keen sense of involvement in the cause of the needy and the underprivileged and his staunch criticism of the monolithic and rigid religious code make him an advocate of humanism. Graham Greene was a Catholic convert, but he considered his conversion to be 'an intellectual conviction and not an emotional one.' However, this conversion made the theme of good and evil a recurring and predominant one within the framework of Greene's own notion of man as weak and helpless in the face of the circumstances he is placed in.

Greene may easily fall into the category of 'bad Catholic'. The more piously orthodox Catholic disclaim that their religion has anything in common with Greene's. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Greene grafted alien theological concepts on to the English novel without straining either the beliefs or the form. It is here that Greene's brand of Catholicism plays its unique and pragmatic role. Greene's development as a novelist has provoked equally strong reactions from both his fellow Catholics and his non-Catholic readers. It is doubtful whether anyone has ever written about him without using the word 'seedy'. His mingled air of shabbiness and salvation is indeed unique. No other writer in the present times has articulated evil with such drive and technique.

Graham Green's vigorous concern with evil, despair, adultery and physical love appear rather unpalatable and distasteful to his Catholic brethren, to whom he appears to expose 'all the beauty and horror of the flesh'. To the non-Catholics, his exaggerated treatment of squalor and sin appear as artistically irrelevant. However, critics on both sides undermine the fact that for this Catholic convert; Catholicism did not hand down some readymade solution to the problems. In order to testify his new-found faith, he had to carry to the extreme point both what he believed to be the human capacity for love, pity, fear and despair, as also God's capacity for showing mercy.

Varied themes of pursuit, betrayal, violence and suicide are explored by Greene in his novels to convey the message that violence is symbolic of the struggles going on at all time within man's soul and the externalization of this idea shows that 'today our world seems peculiarly susceptible to brutality.' Greene was struck by Cardinal John Henry Newman's view of a world full of injustice, corruption and sin where truth is crucified and virtue is defeated. What Newman observed as the (original sin) provided Greene with a basic framework of moral perception, but the treatment that Greene gives to his own worldview is contemporary. Modern-day situations are analysed by Greene but on account of his Catholic background, they acquire a metaphysical aspect. His moral vision that centres on the sinful and the depraved man also includes the idea of efficacious grace and piety, which any sinner can hope for despite holding a non-conformist and ambivalent stance in life.

Graham Greene's conversion to the powerful and prestigious Catholic Church was supposed to achieve a restraining and moderating influence on his inherent ambivalence. It suggested the recovery of self through faith. Religion was called upon to

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do what public school discipline and psychoanalysis had failed to do in his childhood. With his background of being a lonely, bored and suicidal child, Roman Catholicism was not likely to achieve the desired results. Greene remained resolutely himself. Instead of making him tame and subdued, the conversion created a highly complex situation. It unleashed a war between experience and dogma, reality and myth, turning his rebellious and inquisitive mind even more curious than before. Indeed there were some signs of a sense of belonging and spiritual assurance bestowed upon him by his new faith, but Greene was unable to harmonize the contemporary reality with the orthodoxy of belief.

The abundance of Catholic themes and symbols permeating his novels is one of the benefits he derived from being a Catholic convert. However, Greene eschews the clichés and claptraps of Catholicism and speaks from his personal experience. He subverts theology into his human worldview and seeks to explore the human predicament within the Catholic framework. This is not to suggest that Catholicism has ready-to-serve answers to the questions posed by Greene. In the words of David Pryce-Jones, the Catholic symbols of sin and evil appeal to Greene because they evoke the real world of man. They have been superimposed on a personal vision, which existed before conversion and which Greene has described in *The Lost Childhood*. Theology for Greene has been no easy release, no diversion of earlier compassion into easily accepted doctrinal morality. As Greene mostly takes up the underdog and the weak as his protagonists, he uses Catholicism with an earthly basis, divesting sin and evil of its purely supernatural trappings. He considers sin as something natural and humane, rather than endowing it with strict eschatological codification as something deplorable and demoniac. To a convert like Greene, 'the Catholic doctrine could add no more than an outward form and suitable grammatical clothing.'

There is an admixture of pointed polarity and an inevitable complementarity between Greene's Catholicism and his work. He does not use his faith to promote individual anarchism through his rebellious and inquisitive protagonists. He does not use it as an excuse to go against what the scriptures state. Rather, his brand of Catholicism guides the depraved and oppressed man through a labyrinth of not very pleasant experiences of life towards an ideal, which is not necessarily God, to live by as in the case of Henry Scobie in the present novel. Just as Greene's conversion to Catholicism was largely a revolt against his Anglican upbringing and against a monotonous and depressing routine of childhood days, with the mechanical arrivals and departures at school, so also the emotional depravity felt by the sensitive child along with his awareness of a ruthless world, indifferent and callous to his sensitivities, represented by the school as a microcosm of that world, was responsible for the growth of the humanist inside him. Greene himself had been looking for something humane, flexible and compassionate.

When humanists think of freedom of inquiry and tolerance, civil liberties and the rights of man, they think of the Church as an obscurantist and oppressor and of the freethinkers as bearers of enlightenment and campaigners for emancipation. Christianity has been hostile to humanism largely due to the belief that it undermines the basis of morals. Humanists are disposed to reverse the argument. They maintain that the Christian ethic is basically defective. It has denied man's natural, social tendencies and encouraged a self-centred preoccupation with one's own virtue and one's own salvation.

Therefore, Christianity was in principle irreconcilable with humanism. An attempt at reconciliation was made when Rome adopted Christianity for its military and political purpose. However, with the ascendance of the Church, free inquiry was suppressed and the elements of humanist tradition—political freedom and personal independence—were

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trampled. With this background analysis of humanism versus Christianity, it would be a cumbersome effort to prove Graham Greene a Christian humanist. A Christian humanist may mean a Christian who gives full value to human life in this world and allows it a relative autonomy but he does so because according to his belief it is God's world and a God-given autonomy. The contrast here is with a fundamentalist preoccupation with salvation or with another worldly focus of interest. For the Christian the realm of independence is a realm of obedience since he has chosen the rule of faith. For the humanist there is no such rule and he begins and ends by being human and he shares with all others the human situation.

Following the same line of argument, the genre 'Catholic novel', attributed to Greene, also appears a contradictory term. The development of the novel is bound up with increasing democratization, with a degree of improvement in the education and status of women and with the whole liberal bourgeois ethos of the modern world.

Greene is not just a Catholic novelist indulging in ontological exercises through his stories. He is above all a humanist whose concerns are much varied and profound than of a mere theologian. He is also one of those pragmatic thinkers who have voiced the need for Christianity to mould its modes and methods of revolution. As Christianity stands today, it lags behind in the present day changing circumstances of a fast-growing, complex life. Greene sees the visible mundane world as an extension towards the spiritual one. Greene's humanistic concerns prevent him from adopting an enthusiastic, close-minded and sectarian outlook.

5.2.3 Greene's Humanistic Religion: Contemporariness and Relevance

Graham Greene's religious vision gives a contemporary, pragmatic and humane view of the world around. He uses his Catholicism as a 'point of transcendence' from which his culture can be placed and criticized. It paradoxically remains at the heart of the experience of being a Catholic, to be able to preserve a certain freedom or at least a tension with the church as an institution and an awareness of its imperfections. On the other hand, the sacredness of the church is protected by emphasizing its prophetic and providential functions. Greene made a cult of what he called 'disloyalty' and declared it to be essential for a Catholic writer. Throughout his career he displayed an overpowering awareness of the tension between the individual and the institutional church. His most famous 'Catholic' novels insistently raise the question of escape clauses and the fallibility of the institutional rules.

Greene explores in his novels a world of corrosion and decay, beleaguered and besieged by evil, apparently God-forsaken but finally redeemed by God. This world, though private, is not exclusive. Its lineaments are of our world and we recognize it as an externalization of our own world. The contemporary appeal of Greene's works shows that he is not just a period-writer constrained by the concerns of his own times. His awareness is certainly more acute and more arresting than of writers like Evelyn Waugh (1903) and C. P. Snow (1905).

Greene's disloyalty to his faith was largely responsible for bringing forth the modernist within him. In fact, the concept of disloyalty was an integral component of Greene's life-long experiences. He belonged to a middle class family having its own pretensions and fixed limits beyond which his puritan father, Charles Greene, and strict mother, Marion Greene, would never let him go. However, Graham Greene had a special

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interest in knowing about the distant and the unfamiliar. Besides, nothing could be outside the writer's mill. All could be used because all was about life. It was Greene's disloyalty to the strict discipline of school and family that prompted him to use rogues, spies, smugglers and criminals as characters. In *Why Do I Write?* (1948) Greene stated that as a novelist he was writing fiction, not propaganda and defended his right to be 'disloyal' to the church. He felt that as an artist, he must be allowed to write 'from the point of view of the black square as well as from the white.'

Uncertainty seems to be the driving force for Greene. He is, therefore, particularly attracted to characters who inhabit a spiritual borderland and who embodies some form of paradox, such as the catholic agnostics and the sinful saints. French Catholic philosopher and theologian, Jean Guitton finds that Greene habitually sees grace operating through sin and the worst sins—sacrilege and suicide—function as the means to grace. Grace comes 'not through the exercise of good, but through the experience of evil.' This explains the special attention and consideration that Greene shows for the sinner.

Graham Greene displays a variety of interests in his novels. The financial depression, the international capitalist monopolies, war-scare, the cold war—all these forms the multi-dimensional milieu of Greene's fiction. His characters live under an unholy amount of stress in such a world. They were all prey to some weakness and were often tortured by a universe they could not cope with. All of them were men divided against themselves, painfully aware not only of their personal failures and the ubiquitous malaise of society but also of their inner guilt and sin. Many of these characters were men on the run, pursued not only by their enemies but also by the unforeseen consequences of their choices made in their moments of crises.

A hero created by Graham Greene was both the betrayer as well as the betrayed. He faced a gamut of problems—crime and sin, guilt, flight and probable destruction. The freedom of Greene's protagonists was severely limited by their own compulsive actions and reactions and by chance encounters and happenings. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Greene supports determinism of some kind. However, tainted and complicated the lives of his characters may be, they were not denied the free will to lead an unconstrained and iconoclastic lifestyle.

The drama of good and evil in Greene's novel works itself out on the human plane through the realities of sin, suffering, death and grace. There is a pervasive sense of the implications of the doctrine of original sin in Greene's thought. The 'original sin' into which man is born creates certain theoretical problems, which are different from the 'actual sin', which man perpetrates for himself. Then again the question still has to be asked why God permits any kind of sin at all. If the recognition of sin in its various forms is indispensable, then there is a sense in which sin itself can be regarded as useful.

There is, therefore, perhaps, a way directly rather than by the mystery of providential grace, through sin to God. Dostoyevsky in his compassion for the peasantry of his time, saw the sinful actions of many Catholic followers, as the result of situational compulsions, but always done with pure intentions. Huysmans way 'down and out' means down into sin and out into grace. This idea also finds elaboration in Greene's novel. At the beginning of the *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene uses Charles Peguy's startling assertion that: 'The sinner is at the very heart of Christianity. No one is such an expert in Christianity as the sinner: no one, that is, except the saint.' Greene presents evil as something that limits and negates humanity and thereby has an irreducible element of mystery. Only when that mystery is recognized is there any possibility of coming to understand the underlying design of providence. For if the existence of evil has always

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been a stumbling block to the idea of God, it has also suggested the need for a saviour to deliver mankind.

It is possible that Greene's desire to go to the remote parts of Africa and Latin America and his choice of the harrowed and the depraved protagonists was an endeavour to seek out the primitive, unspoilt and unassuming aspect of human life.

Greene's basic commitment is essentially to human life as he himself admits in his report of his first journey to Africa in 1935. He regards this journey as pivotal as it was here that he discovered amidst some very real terrors, a thing 'I thought I had never possessed; a love of life.' After an attack of malaria, he found, 'I had discovered in myself, a passionate interest in living.' As a creative writer, he imparts to his work, what R. W. B. Lewis calls a 'solid sense of this earthly life?' In his novels, the human world appears in all its diverse forms.

Graham Greene's modernism with its liberal and resilient approach does not serve as an alibi for the criminal and the sinner to flout rules of law and scriptures. Nor does he use his brand of Catholicism to sermonize or proselytize. He also does not arrive at some simple, deducible logic as conclusion of his novel. Contrarily, his approach is rather ambivalent. He is not a supporter of individual anarchism, depicting the individual wilfully debunking social and religious norms, and getting away with them. Greene, as a sensitive writer, living in troubled times of history (1930s), analyses the actions of his protagonists as reactions to certain internal and external factors. Scobie's tensions are further heightened in the seedy, sordid and combustible atmosphere of the West African Colony. Thus, Greene's vision is not just theological and ecclesiastical but also has a broad, social and modern angle too.

Greene's modernist approach inspired him to pluck evil out of its isolation and to place it in the context of a world, which had produced it. Even in his new-found faith in Catholicism, Greene feels attracted to the church because of its belief in Hell. 'It gives something hard, non-sentimental and exciting.' Therefore, although the echo of the 'eternal fall' resounds in all his work, he does not overlook the other factors involved. Greene has progressively come to regard evil as a natural concomitant of the world and advocates a relentless struggle against it. His modern ideology has led him to the inevitable conclusion that sinners and criminals are not born but made by the world.

Greene's choice of locale also reflects his ingrained humanism. Since he is concerned with the harrowed and the necessitous members of society, the hot, sweltering colony of Sierra Leone interests him as a background milieu. It is easy to talk about the luxurious and easy-going life of the satisfied, rich man but a deep insight is required to give a correct and realistic picture of the nightmarish actualities of the life of the poor. Greene's prowess as a journalist helps him to depict an accurate and authentic picture of the background scene. However, his presentation is not just a modernist, disinterested report on the matter. The humanist in him observes the milieu and its complexities with keenness and compassion.

An aspect that reflects Greene's interest in contemporary issues was his sympathy for the new enthusiasm in the church for social justice. This idea entrusts the church with more than just the spiritual, other-worldly duties. Greene also showed appreciation for the worker-priest movement that started in France towards the end of World War II, whereby, in an attempt to bring the church near the secularized, industrial population,

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certain priests went to work full-time in secular posts and shared the lives of the working people. The new church is a purified and simplified one, a church of the dispossessed. This is a church built perforce on humanitarianism, compassion and mutual forgiveness of each vice, a church whose only 'power and glory' are weakness and poverty through which God can work. This church does not strictly categorize human action as either sacred or profane but accepts human frailties in a humane spirit. To belong to this reformed church, Greene feels, is to experience a blessedness that is already a participation in the beginning of heaven on earth.

For many Catholics, Graham Greene being one of them, the new era has brought a considerable relaxation in the institutional structure of the church. Structures once seen as essential, permanent and absolute have come to be regarded as secondary. Father Austin Brierley in David Lodge's *How Far Can You Go?* prophesizes 'a time when the whole elaborate structure of priests and dioceses and parishes would melt away.' Edward Schillebeeckx, a mainstream Catholic theologian, says that no more than a provisional identification is possible in our time between believers and the institutional church.

Greene's observation of human nature shows his human realism. For Greene, human nature is not black and white but black and grey. He believes in relativity and not absolutism of morals. Religious code has to have the elasticity to give allowance to human endeavour as also to provide succour and relief to another human being. Despite the pervasiveness of the theme of sin and suffering in his work, Greene's concern with its alleviation is equally omnipresent. He takes sides with whosoever tries to eradicate suffering from the lives of human beings. It may be the sceptical Major Scobie who readily gives up his life to save his dear ones from suffering.

5.2.4 *The End of the Party*: Text and Explanation

Peter Morton woke with a start to face the first light. Rain tapped against the glass. It was January the fifth.

He looked across a table on which a night-light had guttered into a pool of water, at the other bed. Francis Morton was still asleep, and Peter lay down again with his eyes on his brother. It amused him to imagine it was himself whom he watched, the same hair, the same eyes, the same lips and line of cheek. But the thought palled, and the mind went back to the fact which lent the day importance. It was the fifth of January. He could hardly believe a year had passed since Mrs Henne-Falcon had given her last children's party.

Francis turned suddenly upon his back and threw an arm across his face, blocking his mouth. Peter's heart began to beat fast, not with pleasure now but with uneasiness. He sat up and called across the table, "Wake up." Francis's shoulders shook and he waved a clenched fist in the air, but his eyes remained closed. To Peter Morton the whole room seemed to darken, and he had the impression of a great bird swooping. He cried again, "Wake up," and once more there was silver light and the touch of rain on the windows.

Francis rubbed his eyes. "Did you call out?" he asked.

"You are having a bad dream," Peter said. Already experience had taught him how far their minds reflected each other. But he was the elder, by a matter of minutes, and that brief extra interval of light, while his brother still struggled in pain and darkness, had given him self-reliance and an instinct of protection towards the other who was afraid of so many things.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the important feature of Greene's art on religion?
2. List some of the themes explored by Greene in his novels.

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"I dreamed that I was dead," Francis said.

"What was it like?" Peter asked.

"I can't remember," Francis said.

"You dreamed of a big bird."

"Did I?"

The two lay silent in bed facing each other, the same green eyes, the same nose tilting at the tip, the same firm lips, and the same premature modelling of the chin. The fifth of January, Peter thought again, his mind drifting idly from the image of cakes to the prizes which might be won. Egg-and-spoon races, spearing apples in basins of water, blind man's buff.

"I don't want to go," Francis said suddenly. "I suppose Joyce will be there ... Mabel Warren." Hateful to him, the thought of a party shared with those two. They were older than he. Joyce was eleven and Mabel Warren thirteen. The long pigtails swung superciliously to a masculine stride. Their sex humiliated him, as they watched him fumble with his egg, from under lowered scornful lids. And last year ... he turned his face away from Peter, his cheeks scarlet.

"What's the matter?" Peter asked.

"Oh, nothing. I don't think I'm well. I've got a cold. I oughtn't to go to the party."

Peter was puzzled. "But Francis, is it a bad cold?"

"It will be a bad cold if I go to the party. Perhaps I shall die."

"Then you mustn't go," Peter said, prepared to solve all difficulties with one plain sentence, and Francis let his nerves relax, ready to leave everything to Peter. But though he was grateful he did not turn his face towards his brother. His cheeks still bore the badge of a shameful memory, of the game of hide and seek last year in the darkened house, and of how he had screamed when Mabel Warren put her hand suddenly upon his arm. He had not heard her coming. Girls were like that. Their shoes never squeaked. No boards whined under the tread. They slunk like cats on padded claws.

When the nurse came in with hot water Francis lay tranquil leaving everything to Peter. Peter said, "Nurse, Francis has got a cold."

The tall starched woman laid the towels across the cans and said, without turning, "The washing won't be back till tomorrow. You must lend him some of your handkerchiefs."

"But, Nurse," Peter asked, "hadn't he better stay in bed?"

"We'll take him for a good walk this morning," the nurse said. "Wind'll blow away the germs. Get up now, both of you," and she closed the door behind her.

"I'm sorry," Peter said. "Why don't you just stay in bed? I'll tell mother you felt too ill to get up." But rebellion against destiny was not in Francis's power. If he stayed in bed they would come up and tap his chest and put a thermometer in his mouth and look at his tongue, and they would discover he was malingering. It was true he felt ill, a sick empty sensation in his stomach and a rapidly beating heart, but he knew the cause was only fear, fear of the party, fear of being made to hide by himself in the dark, unaccompanied by Peter and with no night-light to make a blessed breach.

"No, I'll get up," he said, and then with sudden desperation, "But I won't go to Mrs Henne-Falcon's party. I swear on the Bible I won't." Now surely all would be well, he thought. God would not allow him to break so solemn an oath. He would show him a way. There was all the morning before him and all the afternoon until four o'clock. No need to worry when the grass was still crisp with the early frost.

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Anything might happen. He might cut himself or break his leg or really catch a bad cold. God would manage somehow.

He had such confidence in God that when at breakfast his mother said, "I hear you have a cold, Francis," he made light of it. "We should have heard more about it," his mother said with irony, "if there was not a party this evening," and Francis smiled, amazed and daunted by her ignorance of him.

His happiness would have lasted longer if, out for a walk that morning, he had not met Joyce. He was alone with his nurse, for Peter had leave to finish a rabbit-hutch in the woodshed. If Peter had been there he would have cared less; the nurse was Peter's nurse also, but now it was as though she were employed only for his sake, because he could not be trusted to go for a walk alone. Joyce was only two years older and she was by herself.

She came striding towards them, pigtailed flapping. She glanced scornfully at Francis and spoke with ostentation to the nurse. "Hello, Nurse. Are you bringing Francis to the party this evening? Mabel and I are coming." And she was off again down the street in the direction of Mabel Warren's home, consciously alone and self-sufficient in the long empty road.

"Such a nice girl," the nurse said. But Francis was silent, feeling again the jump-jump of his heart, realizing how soon the hour of the party would arrive. God had done nothing for him, and the minutes flew.

They flew too quickly to plan any evasion, or even to prepare his heart for the coming ordeal. Panic nearly overcame him when, all unready, he found himself standing on the doorstep, with coat-collared turned up against a cold wind, and the nurse's electric torch making a short trail through the darkness. Behind him were the lights of the hall and the sound of a servant laying the table for dinner, which his mother and father would eat alone. He was nearly overcome by the desire to run back into the house and call out to his mother that he would not go to the party, that he dared not go. They could not make him go. He could almost hear himself saying those final words, breaking down for ever the barrier of ignorance which saved his mind from his parents' knowledge. "I'm afraid of going. I won't go. I daren't go. They'll make me hide in the dark, and I'm afraid of the dark. I'll scream and scream and scream."

He could see the expression of amazement on his mother's face, and then the cold confidence of a grown-up's retort. "Don't be silly. You must go. We've accepted Mrs Henne-Falcon's invitation."

But they couldn't make him go; hesitating on the doorstep while the nurse's feet crunched across the frost-covered grass to the gate, he knew that. He would answer: "You can say I'm ill. I won't go. I'm afraid of the dark." And his mother: "Don't be silly. You know there's nothing to be afraid of in the dark." But he knew the falsity of that reasoning; he knew how they taught also that there was nothing to fear in death, and how fearfully they avoided the idea of it. But they couldn't make him go to the party. "I'll scream. I'll scream."

"Francis, come along." He heard the nurse's voice across the dimly phosphorescent lawn and saw the yellow circle of her torch wheel from tree to shrub. "I'm coming," he called with despair; he couldn't bring himself to lay bare his last secrets and end reserve between his mother and himself, for there was still in the last resort a further appeal possible to Mrs Henne-Falcon. He comforted himself with that, as he advanced steadily across the hall, very small, towards her enormous bulk. His heart beat unevenly, but he had control now over his voice, as he said with meticulous accent, "Good evening, Mrs Henne-Falcon. It was very good of you to ask me to your party." With his strained face lifted towards the curve of her breasts, and his polite set speech, he was like an old withered

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man. As a twin he was in many ways an only child. To address Peter was to speak to his own image in a mirror, an image a little altered by a flaw in the glass, so as to throw back less a likeness of what he was than of what he wished to be, what he would be without his unreasoning fear of darkness, footsteps of strangers, the flight of bats in dusk-filled gardens.

“Sweet child,” said Mrs Henne-Falcon absent-mindedly, before, with a wave of her arms, as though the children were a flock of chickens, she whirled them into her set programme of entertainments: egg-and-spoon races, three-legged races, the spearing of apples, games which held for Francis nothing worse than humiliation. And in the frequent intervals when nothing was required of him and he could stand alone in corners as far removed as possible from Mabel Warren’s scornful gaze, he was able to plan how he might avoid the approaching terror of the dark. He knew there was nothing to fear until after tea, and not until he was sitting down in a pool of yellow radiance cast by the ten candles on Colin Henne-Falcon’s birthday cake did he become fully conscious of the imminence of what he feared. He heard Joyce’s high voice down the table, “After tea we are going to play hide and seek in the dark.”

“Oh, no,” Peter said, watching Francis’s troubled face, “don’t let’s. We play that every year.”

“But it’s in the programme,” cried Mabel Warren. “I saw it myself. I looked over Mrs Henne-Falcon’s shoulder. Five o’clock tea. A quarter to six to half past, hide and seek in the dark. It’s all written down in the programme.”

Peter did not argue, for if hide and seek had been inserted in Mrs Henne-Falcon’s programme, nothing which he could say would avert it. He asked for another piece of birthday cake and sipped his tea slowly. Perhaps it might be possible to delay the game for a quarter of an hour, allow Francis at least a few extra minutes to form a plan, but even in that Peter failed, for children were already leaving the table in twos and threes. It was his third failure, and again he saw a great bird darken his brother’s face with its wings. But he upbraided himself silently for his folly, and finished his cake encouraged by the memory of that adult refrain, “There’s nothing to fear in the dark.” The last to leave the table, the brothers came together to the hall to meet the mustering and impatient eyes of Mrs Henne-Falcon.

“And now,” she said, “we will play hide and seek in the dark.”

Peter watched his brother and saw the lips tighten. Francis, he knew, had feared this moment from the beginning of the party, had tried to meet it with courage and had abandoned the attempt. He must have prayed for cunning to evade the game, which was now welcomed with cries of excitement by all the other children. “Oh, do let’s.” “We must pick sides.” “Is any of the house out of bounds?” “Where shall home be?”

“I think,” said Francis Morton, approaching Mrs Henne-Falcon, his eyes focused unwaveringly on her exuberant breasts, “it will be no use my playing. My nurse will be calling for me very soon.”

“Oh, but your nurse can wait, Francis,” said Mrs Henne-Falcon, while she clapped her hands together to summon to her side a few children who were already straying up the wide staircase to upper floors. “Your mother will never mind.”

That had been the limit of Francis’s cunning. He had refused to believe that so well-prepared an excuse could fail. All that he could say now, still in the precise tone which other children hated, thinking it a symbol of conceit, was, “I think I had better not play.” He stood motionless, retaining, though afraid, unmoved features. But the knowledge of his terror, or the reflection of the terror itself, reached his brother’s brain. For the moment, Peter Morton could have cried aloud with the fear of bright lights going out, leaving him alone in an island of dark surrounded by the gentle lappings of strange footsteps. Then he remembered

that the fear was not his own, but his brother's. He said impulsively to Mrs Henne-Falcon, "Please, I don't think Francis should play. The dark makes him jump so." They were the wrong words. Six children began to sing, "Cowardly cowardly custard," turning torturing faces with the vacancy of wide sunflowers towards Francis Morton.

Without looking at his brother, Francis said, "Of course I'll play. I'm not afraid, I only thought ..." But he was already forgotten by his human tormentors. The children scrambled round Mrs Henne-Falcon, their shrill voices pecking at her with questions and suggestions.

"Yes, anywhere in the house. We will turn out all the lights. Yes, you can hide in the cupboards. You must stay hidden as long as you can. There will be no home."

Peter stood apart, ashamed of the clumsy manner in which he had tried to help his brother. Now he could feel, creeping in at the corners of his brain, all Francis's resentment of his championing. Several children ran upstairs, and the lights on the top floor went out. Darkness came down like the wings of a bat and settled on the landing. Others began to put out the lights at the edge of the hall, till the children were all gathered in the central radiance of the chandelier, while the bats squatted round on hooded wings and waited for that, too, to be extinguished.

"You and Francis are on the hiding side," a tall girl said, and then the light was gone, and the carpet wavered under his feet with the sibilance of footfalls, like small cold draughts, creeping away into corners.

"Where's Francis?" he wondered. "If I join him he'll be less frightened of all these sounds." "These sounds" were the casing of silence: the squeak of a loose board, the cautious closing of a cupboard door, the whine of a finger drawn along polished wood.

Peter stood in the centre of the dark deserted floor, not listening but waiting for the idea of his brother's whereabouts to enter his brain. But Francis crouched with fingers on his ears, eyes uselessly closed, mind numbed against impressions, and only a sense of strain could cross the gap of dark. Then a voice called "Coming", and as though his brother's self-possession had been shattered by the sudden cry, Peter Morton jumped with his fear. But it was not his own fear. What in his brother was a burning panic was in him an altruistic emotion that left the reason unimpaired. "Where, if I were Francis, should I hide?" And because he was, if not Francis himself, at least a mirror to him, the answer was immediate. "Between the oak bookcase on the left of the study door, and the leather settee." Between the twins there could be no jargon of telepathy. They had been together in the womb, and they could not be parted.

Peter Morton tiptoed towards Francis's hiding-place. Occasionally a board rattled, and because he feared to be caught by one of the soft questers through the dark, he bent and untied his laces. A tag struck the floor and the metallic sound set a host of cautious feet moving in his direction. But by that time he was in his stockings and would have laughed inwardly at the pursuit had not the noise of someone stumbling on his abandoned shoes made his heart trip. No more boards revealed Peter Morton's progress.

On stocking feet he moved silently and unerringly towards his object. Instinct told him he was near the wall, and, extending a hand, he laid the fingers across his brother's face.

Francis did not cry out, but the leap of his own heart revealed to Peter a proportion of Francis's terror. "It's all right," he whispered, feeling down the squatting figure until he captured a clenched hand. "It's only me. I'll stay with you." And grasping the other tightly, he listened to the cascade of whispers his utterance had caused to fall. A hand touched the book-case close to Peter's head and he was aware of how Francis's fear continued in spite of his presence. It was less intense, more

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bearable, he hoped, but it remained. He knew that it was his brother's fear and not his own that he experienced. The dark to him was only an absence of light; the groping hand that of a familiar child. Patiently he waited to be found.

He did not speak again, for between Francis and himself was the most intimate communion. By way of joined hands thought could flow more swiftly than lips could shape themselves round words. He could experience the whole progress of his brother's emotion, from the leap of panic at the unexpected contact to the steady pulse of fear, which now went on and on with the regularity of a heart-beat. Peter Morton thought with intensity, "I am here. You needn't be afraid. The lights will go on again soon. That rustle, that movement is nothing to fear. Only Joyce, only Mabel Warren." He bombarded the drooping form with thoughts of safety, but he was conscious that the fear continued. "They are beginning to whisper together. They are tired of looking for us. The lights will go on soon. We shall have won. Don't be afraid. That was someone on the stairs. I believe it's Mrs Henne-Falcon. Listen. They are feeling for the lights." Feet moving on a carpet, hands brushing a wall, a curtain pulled apart, a clicking handle, the opening of a cupboard door. In the case above their heads a loose book shifted under a touch. "Only Joyce, only Mabel Warren, only Mrs Henne-Falcon," a crescendo of reassuring thought before the chandelier burst, like a fruit-tree, into bloom.

The voice of the children rose shrilly into the radiance. "Where's Peter?" "Have you looked upstairs?" "Where's Francis?" but they were silenced again by Mrs Henne-Falcon's scream. But she was not the first to notice Francis Morton's stillness, where he had collapsed against the wall at the touch of his brother's hand. Peter continued to hold the clenched fingers in an arid and puzzled grief. It was not merely that his brother was dead. His brain, too young to realize the full paradox, wondered with an obscure self-pity why it was that the pulse of his brother's fear went on and on, when Francis was now where he had always been told there was no more terror and no more—darkness.

Explanation

In *The End of the Party*, Graham Greene tries to portray a vivid setting to highlight the idea of Francis' (the younger twin) phobia for darkness. This almost inexplicable (apart from a fleeting mention) but enduring fear becomes the central conflict in the story which overwhelms both the siblings. The fear simply escalates from the beginning till we reach the end of the story. Sensory images are used liberally so that the reader can relate to the multiple sights, sounds and emotional outbursts that the two brothers undergo during the course of the narration. Greene dabbles into symbolism as well to provide foreshadowing of the fate that awaits the boys during the final scene of the story. All of these measures are utilized to provide the reader with a literary purpose in this particular work of literature. Also, it is organized into a typical narrative method used by short stories, with an apparent chronological order being implemented. It is also noted that he employed a secondary pattern that carries many attributes of description used for binding the setting of the fictional piece with the characters together.

As a literary function, the story incorporates scenery development, internal and external conflict within the younger brother, Francis, appeal of the senses to help readers relate to the twins' own senses. Moreover, symbolism is used to deliver a revelation of things to emerge for the two brothers. There is also a central theme of anxiety of being in the dark that encompasses the younger brother throughout the story. The scenes that are outlined in the play are extremely descriptive. Not just the settings but the characters, including their private conversations (which are constantly exchanged between characters), also help in developing the personalities of the twin brothers over the course

of the story. At the very outset, the short-story writer had provided vivid and graphic details on how he can set the scene. We see that the older twin views the bedroom as soon as he wakes up to the chirping noise of the early morning that was full of rain on that eventful day. We soon realize that the conversation carries the story forward as both the siblings are constantly engaged in conversations among themselves as well as other individuals. Based on these verbal exchanges the story unfolds for the readers.

It must be mentioned here that Graham Greene has described his short stories as ‘scraps’, and ‘escapes from the novelist’s world’. His short story, *The End of the Party*, which appears to be an exception on the surface level delves into the intense matters of faith, death, fear, along with human relationships. These are the common tropes that one comes across in many of his novels. Most of his works are woven into dark and supernatural tales. Chronologically speaking *The End of the Party* is one of Greene’s earlier short stories. This one first came out in *Nineteen Stories* (1947). However, currently it is included in *Twenty-One Stories* (1954), and *Complete Short Stories* (2005) anthologies.

The beautiful narrative revolves around twin brothers—Peter and Francis Morton. They share a disconcertingly close bond. The twins silently feel and experience each other’s reality as well as fears. In the story, Peter is projected as the stronger twin who always tries to protect his weak and anxious brother, Francis. Graham Greene tires to play around with the complicated nature of relationships that exists between the twins. They live through the strange juxtaposition of loyalty and repulsion that probably extends to being a ‘double identity’. Once the brothers are invited to an annual birthday party where they are expected to play hide-and- seek. Needless to say, Francis is unimaginably afraid of the dark. Then again, coupled with an unpleasant experience that had taken place the previous year, Francis is filled with utter fear at the very thought of joining the party. At the very outset, one can feel a sense of menace. In addition, this feeling unfortunately, lingers throughout the story. Many a times, Greene’s use of foreshadowing, his infinite references to darkness, death, bats or birds, appears a bit too repetitive. May be a little less usage of the device would have made the story all the more effective.

The idea of a ‘thing’, which also happens to be power, appears to be almost prophetic in the story *The End of The Party*. One gets a feel of this when Francis comes across a dream where death arrives like a big bird that is all set to pounce in the darkened house. It appears as if the dream appears to be a premonition of death before him. Unfortunately, the dream does not hold any significance to the adults. It appears as if the unemotional adults are swaggering like hens and chickens inside the dark room enjoying a game of hide-and-seek that unfortunately is a real terror for someone like Francis. As has been mentioned in *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations* by Robert O. Evans: ‘Like the bush villagers, the ancient joke of “frightening the child with what had frightened them” governs their unconscious actions. The spiritual terror that leads to death and a powerful realization of the essence of death are but impersonal games to the grownup, civilized world, as impersonal as the nurse’s cold torch making a beam through the darkness towards Francis’s death. But after death, the power of his terror, conveyed like an electric impulse, to his elder twin’s hand, overcomes all seedy civilization, all set programs at the birthday party.’ This story also reminds the readers of Greene’s *England Made Me* (1935) where again we come across twins where they have the power of ‘conveying their awe for death’.

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Check Your Progress

3. How has Graham Greene used symbolism as a literary device in *The End of the Party*?
4. What kind of relationship do the twin brothers—Peter and Francis Morton—share in the short story?

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5.3 SUMMARY

- Graham Greene is a versatile modern writer. He has written twenty-five novels and nearly all of them have been made into films.
- Greene's novels are about men in crisis, men under pressure and men on the run. His journalistic skills help him set them in a more contemporary context that is at once recognizable.
- Greene himself always kept his distance from literary politics, neither belonging to any group or movement, and neither seeking nor receiving the endorsement of temporarily fashionable schools of criticism.
- An important feature of Greene's art is that he presents his ideas on religious matters with a difference.
- Graham Greene is a prolific novelist and his interests range from pure thrillers and deeply religious and spiritual content to works with secular themes.
- Graham Greene's conversion to the powerful and prestigious Catholic Church was supposed to achieve a restraining and moderating influence on his inherent ambivalence.
- There is an admixture of pointed polarity and an inevitable complementarity between Greene's Catholicism and his work.
- Graham Greene's religious vision gives a contemporary, pragmatic and humane view of the world around.
- Graham Greene's modernism with its liberal and resilient approach does not serve as an alibi for the criminal and the sinner to flout rules of law and scriptures.
- In *The End of the Party*, Graham Greene tries to portray a vivid setting to highlight the idea of Francis' (the younger twin) phobia for the darkness.
- As a literary function, the story incorporates scenery development, internal and external conflict within the younger brother, Francis, appeal of the senses to help readers relate to the twins' own senses.
- Graham Greene described his short stories as 'scraps', and 'escapes from the novelist's world'.

5.4 KEY TERMS

- **Memoir:** It is a historical account or biography written from personal knowledge or special sources.
- **Newsreel:** It is a short film of news and current affairs, formerly made for showing as part of the programme in a movie theatre.
- **Proselytize:** It implies conversion or an attempt to convert someone from one religion, belief or opinion to another.
- **Psychoanalysis:** It refers to a system of psychological theory and therapy that aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind.
- **Foreshadow:** It is defined as to give a hint beforehand that something is going to happen.

5.5 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

The End of the Party:
Graham Greene

NOTES

1. An important feature of Graham Greene’s art is that he presents his ideas on religious matters with a difference. Catholicism, as it appears in his novels, is not merely a public system of religious code and dogmas. It is, in fact, a privately worked out system of ideas and concepts, a source of impulses and a vast storehouse of rich symbols, which is thus, in some ways, vital to him as an artist.
2. Some of the themes explored by Greene in his novels are as follows:
 - Pursuit
 - Betrayal
 - Violence
 - Suicide
3. In *The End of the Party*, Greene dabbles with symbolism to provide foreshadowing of the fate that awaits the boys during the final scene of the story. Symbolism is used to deliver a revelation of things to emerge for the two brothers.
4. The twin brothers—Peter and Francis Morton—share a disconcertingly close bond. The twins silently feel and experience each other’s reality as well as fears.

5.6 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Graham Greene.
2. What was Greene’s conversion to the powerful and prestigious Catholic Church supposed to achieve?
3. Mention the prominent works written by Graham Greene.
4. What excuse does Francis make for not attending the birthday party?
5. What is Francis afraid of?

Long-Answer Questions

1. ‘Graham Greene is a versatile modern writer.’ Discuss.
2. Do you agree that the narration of the story, *The End of the Party* is descriptive? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How does the dream seen by Francis act as a premonition of his eventual death?

5.7 FURTHER READING

- Marie-Françoise, A. 1983. *The Other Man: Conversations with Graham Greene*. London: Bodley Head.
- Bergonzi, B. 2006. *A Study in Greene: Graham Greene and the Art of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bosco, M. 2005. *Graham Greene’s Catholic Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNIT 6 LITERARY TERMS

Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Unit Objectives
- 6.2 Simile
- 6.3 Metaphor
- 6.4 Alliteration
- 6.5 Assonance
- 6.6 Personification
- 6.7 Hyperbole
- 6.8 Epithet
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- 6.9 Epigram
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- 6.18 Pun
- 6.19 Summary
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- 6.21 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 6.22 Questions and Exercises
- 6.23 Further Reading

NOTES

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama and essays.

There is no authorized list of such words. Words that are used frequently for the purposes described above come to be recognized as literary terms. Literary terms are essential to a complete understanding of literature. Let us take the example of paradox. A paradox is a seemingly true statement or group of statements that lead to a contradiction or a situation which seems to defy logic or intuition. Some statements cannot in any way be stated to be truths and continue being categorically self-contradictory. For example, Wordsworth's line 'The child is father of the man' in *The Rainbow* and Shakespeare's 'the truest poetry is the most feigning' in *As You Like It* are notable literary examples.

Another literary term generally used is assonance. Assonance reflects itself in the end of verse lines when the same vowel sound appears followed by different consonant sounds. It produces an imperfect rhyme. For example, *live-thin, rope-doll*. The use of assonance is rare in English literature. It was popular in old French poetry and still remains a preferred form in Spanish poetry. In this unit, you will study some of the common literary terms.

UNIT OBJECTIVES

NOTES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand what are literary terms
- Give examples of simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, personification, hyperbole, epithet, epigram, synecdoche, iron, antithesis, imagery, oxymoron, onomatopoeia, paradox, metonymy and pun.

6.2 SIMILE

Simile is a figure of speech where two seemingly unlike objects are compared. The comparison is usually introduced by words such as ‘like’ or ‘as’. Similes are not just restricted to literature and figures of speech. They are found in everyday oral conversation as well. Similes are easily identified even in music and popular culture.

Everyday examples:

- As blind **as** a bat. (Meaning: one who cannot see clearly)
- As busy **as** a bee. (Meaning: one who is extremely busy)
- Sly **as** a fox. (Meaning: someone who is extremely clever and cunning)
- Sweet **as** honey. (Meaning: one who is extremely likable)

Literary Examples:

1. *O my Luve's **like** a red, red rose*

That's newly sprung in June;

O my Luve's **like** the melodie

That's sweetly played in tune. (A Red, Red Rose by Robert Burns)

In this example, the narrator suggests that his love is similar to a fresh red rose which blossoms in the spring season. Hence, a simile is used to highlight the beauty of the beloved.

2. 'I would have given anything for the power to soothe her frail soul, tormenting itself in its invincible ignorance **like** a small bird beating about the cruel wires of a cage.'

(Lord Jim by Joseph Conrad)

In these lines, the pains and agonies of the soul are being compared with a bird that is put in a cage, while beating itself against the cruel and torturous wires of the cage and longs to lead a free life.

3. *My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;*

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

(Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare)

This is an example of incorporating negative simile. The speaker instead of directly saying how beautiful the mistress is, focuses on aspects of beauty which are absent in the mistress. The speaker insists that the lips of the beloved are not as red as coral, nor is her skin as pure as snow.

6.3 METAPHOR

Metaphor is a figure of speech. It creates an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things or objects which are extremely different from each other. Yet there are some characteristics which are common to both the objects that are being compared and that becomes the basis of comparison. The word metaphor is derived from Greek word 'meta' meaning 'beyond' and 'phero' meaning 'I carry'. A metaphor should be highly suggestive. As mentioned in *Elements of English Rhetoric and Prosody*: 'A metaphor ...differs from simile only in form and not in substance...A metaphor is usually more lively and more pleasing mode of illustration than a simile.' However, it should be kept in mind that a metaphor should not be far stretched.

Everyday examples:

- My brother was boiling mad. (Meaning: My brother was very angry.)
- The assignment was a breeze. (Meaning: The assignment was too easy.)
- Her voice is music to his ears. (Meaning: Whenever he hears her voice he feels happy.)
- The skies of his future began to darken. (Meaning: The coming times are going to be hard for him.)

Literary examples:

1. Mrs Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time **craning over garden fences**, spying on the neighbours. (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J. K. Rowling)

In these lines, the author has used a metaphor to compare Aunt Petunia or Petunia Dursley to a crane. Crane is a kind of bird that is graceful, yet at the same time, it is very powerful and has a very versatile neck. As the story progresses, the readers realize that she uses her long neck to get information about her neighbours.

2. 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.'
(*As You Like It* by William Shakespeare)

Here, Shakespeare has likened the world to a drama stage wherein all human beings are merely actors on the stage.

3. *Every rose has its thorn,*
Just like every night has its dawn,
Just like every cowboy sings his sad, sad song,
Every rose has its thorn. (*Every Rose has Its Thorn* by Poison)

The lyrics used by the music group Poison is referring to a popular metaphor. Just as the flower that is extremely beautiful and delicate, this woman also possesses an aspect that can really hurt. The metaphor of the heartbreak that is felt can be compared with the way heart break is narrated in traditional westerns.

6.4 ALLITERATION

When two or more stressed syllables of a certain word group begins with similar consonant sounds or with vowel sounds alliteration takes place. We say something alliterates when the initial sounds of a word are repeated in immediate succession.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

1. Define a simile.
2. Give an example of a metaphor.

NOTES

It is believed that the function of alliteration is to highlight the beauty of a language within a specific context. It can also be used to unite words or concepts by means of repetition. Several times, alliteration follows rhythmic patterns. As can be seen from numerous examples, alliteration does not always begin with consonants but more or less they are usually the stressed syllables. Scholars suggest that alliteration is less common than rhyme, yet they always gain our attention because alliteration emphasizes certain aspects of the text that might not have been underscored otherwise.

Everyday examples:

One of the most common everyday use of alliteration takes place in tongue twisters. One popular use is given as follows:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Literary Examples:

We come across alliteration most frequently in poetry. This figure of speech appears again and again in every form of poetry ranging from the simplest of poems to the most complex verse patterns.

The following are some of the popular examples from literature:

1. *The fair breeze blew,*

The white foam flew,

And the forrow followed free.

(*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by S. T. Coleridge)

In this example, one can easily identify the repetition of the sounds in 'breeze/blew,' 'foam/ flew,' and 'forrow/ followed /free'. Let us not ignore the alliterative sounds produced from 'first' and 'burst' and 'silent sea'.

2. '... neither of those can feel stranger and stronger emotions than that man does, who for the first time finds himself pulling into the charmed, churned circle of the hunted sperm whale.'

(*Moby Dick* by Herman Melville)

When we consider the words spoken in these lines, we realize that Melville not only accentuates the sound that the words offer, but also he infuses alliteration involving the words 'charmed' and 'churned' to produce a sense of intense tension as the narrator undergoes his first ride on a whaleboat, which incidentally happens to be too close to the massive animal (whale). Through alliteration, Melville manages to suggest a thing or two about the character of Ishmael.

6.5 ASSONANCE

The figure of speech, assonance, appears when two or more words close to one another reiterate the same vowel sound yet it begins with non-identical consonant sounds. Assonance differs from alliteration in the sense that alliteration deals with the repetition of the similar consonant sounds while in assonance it is the vowel sound.

Literary examples:

1. *He gives his harness bells a shake*

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

(*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost)

In this example, vowels appear successively to create an impact of assonance.

2. 'Poetry is old, ancient, goes back far. It is among the oldest of living things. So old it is that no man knows how and why the first poems came.' (*Early Moon* by Carl Sandburg)

When we look at the following passage, we realize that the use of assonance in a way sets the mood of what the writer intends to suggest.

Notice how the long vowel 'o' in this example helps to focus on the idea of something being old and mysterious.

3. *I wandered lonely as a cloud*

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze

(*Daffodils* by William Wordsworth)

In these lines, William Wordsworth employs assonance to create an internal rhyme in his poem *Daffodils*.

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6.6 PERSONIFICATION

Personification is another figure of speech. In personification an object, an idea or an animal is laced with human-like qualities. The inanimate or non-human objects are sketched in such a way that we feel as if they have the ability to behave like human beings. Let us for example, consider the usage 'The sky weeps'. Here, we are attributing the sky with the ability to cry, which is a quality that humans or animals possess. Hence, we can suggest that the 'sky' in this example has been personified.

Everyday examples:

- Look at my BMW! Isn't **she** a beauty?
- Time and tide **waits** for none.
- The fire **swallowed** the entire forest.

The words in bold suggest the personified words and helps us associate actions of inanimate objects with our own emotional state.

Check Your Progress

3. What is alliteration?
4. Give one example of assonance.

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Literary examples:

1. '... away to the woods—away back into the sun-washed alleys carpeted with fallen gold and glades where the moss is green and vivid yet. The woods are getting ready to sleep—they are not yet asleep but they are disrobing and are having all sorts of little bed-time conferences and whisperings and good-nights.'
(*The Green Gables Letters* by L. M. Montgomery)

In this example, the absence of activity in the forest has been identified and personification takes place through the words that hint that the forest is getting ready to sleep. It seems as if the forest is busy in bedtime chatting and is expressing 'good-nights', each of which is common in human society.

2. 'When well-appareled April on the heel
Of limping winter treads.'
(*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)
One comes across two examples of personification in these lines. The month of April is projected as dressed up and the winter season limps. Here, Shakespeare personifies April (month) and the winter (season) by attributing them with two distinct human characteristics.

6.7 HYPERBOLE

The word hyperbole is derived from a Greek word *hyperbol* which means 'over-casting'. It is a figure of speech which highlights an exaggeration of ideas. This is usually employed for the purpose of emphasis. It is a device that we use (at times unconsciously) in our everyday conversation. Let us for example, say, you want to convey something gross/surprising/unbelievable and you probably land up saying, 'I saw it with my **own** eyes'. Obviously, 'own' is an exaggeration. Hyperbole is usually an unexpected exaggeration to authenticate a certain real situation.

However, we must not confuse hyperbole with other figures of speech like simile or metaphor. Though there is comparison involved in all three figures of speech but unlike simile and metaphor, hyperbole more or less underpins a humorous effect that is created by an overstatement.

Everyday examples:

- She is as **heavy** as an **elephant**!
- I am **dying** of shame.

Literary examples:

1. 'Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.'
(*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare)
In these lines, Macbeth, the protagonist of the play, experiences the unbearable agony of his conscience after successfully murdering the king. Macbeth cannot forgive himself and regrets his sin. He is sure that even the biggest and most vast ocean cannot wash the blood (of murder) from his hands. The effective use of hyperbole in these lines only accentuates the gravity of the crime and the misery of Macbeth.

2. *I'll love you, dear, I'll love you*

Till China and Africa meet,
 And the river jumps over the mountain
 And the salmon sing in the street,
 I'll love you till the ocean

Is folded and hung up to dry (As I Walked One Evening by W. H. Auden)

In this example, the poet has used hyperbole. The meeting of China and Africa, singing of salmon in the street, the jumping of the river over the mountain and the ocean being folded and hung up to be dried are impossibilities which can never take place.

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6.8 EPITHET

Epithet is a figure of speech that is descriptive in nature. It is used to describe a place, a thing or a person in manner so striking that it helps in making the qualities of that person, thing or place more pronounced than they actually exist.

By incorporating epithets, writers manage to describe the characters and settings more clearly. They convey multi-layered meanings to the text. As epithet is a literary tool, it helps in delineating the character and hence, makes it easier to understand. By using epithets, the novelists, essayists and poets develop concrete images in lesser words. Along with this, the metaphorical use of epithets turns each piece of writing into a colourful and rich work.

Literary Examples:

1. *Here of a Sunday morning*

My love and I would lie,
 And see the coloured counties,
 And hear the larks so high

About us in the sky. (Brendon Hills by A. E. Housman)

In these lines, the word 'coloured' is an epithet that is used to describe the lovely and pleasant spring season in those places where the poet desires to enjoy the company of his beloved.

2. 'God! he said quietly. Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: a great sweet mother? The snot-green sea. The scrotum-tightening sea! I must teach you. You must read them in the original. Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother....' (*Ulysses* by James Joyce)

In the given lines, Joyce incorporates many epithets to portray the sea. The epithets used are: snot-green sea, a great sweet mother and scrotum-tightening sea.

6.8.1 Transferred Epithet

Transferred epithet is a figure of speech in which an epithet or adjective is transferred from a person or object to which it actually belongs to another object or person to create a heightened effect.

Check Your Progress

5. Give one example of personification.
6. What does the word *hyperbol* mean in Greek language?

NOTES

Everyday example:

He is our only **ray** of hope.

The word 'ray' is associated with light. However, here it is used to connect with hope and convey a certain sense of desperation.

Literary examples:

1. *The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.* (*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* by Thomas Gray)
2. 'You don't really criticize any author to whom you have never surrendered yourself. . . . Even just the bewildering minute counts; you have to give yourself up.' (T. S. Eliot, Letter to Stephen Spender, 1935)

In the first example, 'weary' has been removed from 'the ploughman' and has been added to the 'way'; in the second case, 'bewildering' has been associated with time instead of any human being.

6.9 EPIGRAM

Epigram is a figure of speech which suggests a sharp opinion with antithetical ideas placed side by side to induce surprise or shock.

Everyday examples:

- The child is father of the man.
- Art lies in concealing art.

Both the statements point towards something serious and underline a hidden meaning while using a language that might appear antithetical.

Literary Examples:

1. *To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.* (Auguries of Innocence by William Blake)
In these lines, the poet has mentioned about his existential and religious ideas.
2. 'Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly.'

'There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.' (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde)

Oscar Wilde, the twentieth century writer was known for his skilful use of epigrams. Like his other literary works, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is also filled with numerous epigrams. If you take a close look this example suggest some hard hitting facts under a veil of humour.

6.10 SYNECDOCHE

Synecdoche is a combination of two words 'syn' and 'ekdoche'. It literally means 'the understanding of one thing by another'. In this figure of speech, a part of the whole is

Check Your Progress

7. What is an epithet?
8. Define an epigram.

substituted for something else or vice versa. At times, even an abstract concept is replaced with a more concrete one and vice versa.

Everyday examples:

- The rank and file streamed out of the city to see the sight. (Meaning: Rank and file implies the designation and post of people.)
- There is a mixture of the tiger and the ape in his character. (Meaning: The sentence implies the characteristics of tiger and ape whereas it only suggests the name of the animals.)
- Kalidasa is the Shakespeare of India. (Meaning: Greatness of one writer is established by name of another.)
- He gave the beggar a few coppers. (Meaning: Instead of saying coin, the material with which the coin is made, that is, copper is mentioned.)

Literary examples:

1. *The western wave was all a-flame.*

The day was well was nigh done!

Almost upon the western wave

Rested the broad bright Sun;

(*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by S. T. Coleridge)

In this example, the 'western wave' is a synecdoche because it talks about the sea by using the name of one of its components (wave).

2. 'At midnight I went on deck, and to my mate's great surprise put the ship round on the other tack. His terrible whiskers flitted round me in silent criticism.' (*The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad)

In this example, the friend of the narrator is described by just one word — 'whiskers'.

6.11 IRONY

In this figure of speech, the real meaning of the words is exactly the opposite of what is literally conveyed. Irony is used by writers in all forms of writing such as fiction, non-fiction, verse and so forth.

Literary Examples:

1. 'Here, under leave of Brutus, and the rest,
(For Brutus is an honourable man)

I come to speak in Caesar's funeral.' (*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare)

In these lines, the use of the word, 'honourable' is ironical because the speaker does not consider Brutus as honourable.

2. *Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,*

Nor any drop to drink. (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge)

In these lines, the poet ironically expresses the fact that there is so much water everywhere but not a single drop to drink.

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Check Your Progress

9. Give one example of the use of irony.
10. Give two examples of the use of synecdoche.

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6.12 ANTITHESIS

The word antithesis is a combination of two words ‘anti’ (against) and ‘thesis’ (placing). In this figure of speech, a word or idea is set against another so that what is said creates a heightened effect through the use of contrasting words.

Everyday examples:

- Man proposes, God disposes.
- United we stand divided we fall.
- Speech is silver, silence is golden.

In each of these examples, contrasting words are placed against each other so that a more significant idea can be expressed.

Literary examples:

‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.’ (*A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens)

The use of contrasting words brings out the antithetical ideas and highlights the difficult and conflicting times that Dickens’ is narrating in his literary work.

6.13 IMAGERY

Imagery is the use of figurative language which helps to represent objects, ideas and actions in such a way that it entices our physical senses.

Literary examples:

1. *Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;*

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(*To Autumn* by John Keats)

In this example, use of auditory imagery by Keats is evident. The sounds produced by the animals intensely excite our sense of hearing. The bleating of lambs, the chirping of crickets, the twitters of swallows and the whistles of the robin becomes as lively as one can expect.

2. ‘It was a rimy morning, and very damp. I had seen the damp lying on the outside of my little window... Now, I saw the damp lying on the bare hedges and spare grass,... On every rail and gate, wet lay clammy; and the marsh-mist was so thick, that the wooden finger on the post directing people to our village—a direction which they never accepted, for they never came there—was invisible to me until I was quite close under it.’ (*The Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens)

In this example, Pip, the protagonist of the novel, uses various images to describe a particular damp morning. The frequent use of the words ‘damp’ and ‘wet’ makes us feel uneasy and empathize with the poor boy who is suffering in cold. The dense ‘marsh-mist’ helps the readers in delineating the scene of mourning in a marshland and makes the scene vivid before the readers.

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6.14 OXYMORON

In an oxymoron, two words or phrases which have exactly opposite meanings are brought together to create a ludicrous or serious effect.

Everyday examples:

- Musical discord
- Noiseless noise

Literary examples:

1. *The shackles of love straiten'd him*

His honour rooted in dishonoured stood

And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true (*Lancelot and Elaine* by Tennyson)

In these lines, the use of oxymoron is apparent in shackles-straiten'd, honour-dishonour, faith-unfaithful, falsely-true.

2. ‘The bookful blockhead ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always list'ning to himself appears.’

(*An Essay on Criticism* by Alexander Pope)

In this example, Pope introduces oxymoron to develop wit in his *An Essay on Criticism*. Combinations like ‘bookful blockhead’ and ‘ignorantly read’ are used to describe a person who definitely reads a lot yet that reading is of no use because the individual neither understands the real meaning of what he reads nor utilizes his reading to enhance his personality.

6.15 ONOMATOPOEIA

Onomatopoeia is a word that phonetically mimics or resembles the sound of the thing it describes. By using this literary device, a writer makes his writing more expressive and the description more impactful. Let us say for example, ‘The gushing stream flows in the forest’. This line appears more powerful and has a larger impact than just, ‘The stream flows in the forest.’ When the reader reads those words, he can almost hear the ripples of the ‘gushing stream’ and that makes the usage more effective.

Onomatopoeia makes sure that the reader can ‘hear’ the precise word that is being spoken about; hence, making sure that the reader is completely part of the fictional world that is created with the use of words.

Check Your Progress

11. Define antithesis.
12. State the use of imagery as a literary term.

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Everyday examples:

- The **buzzing** bee flew away.
- The sack fell into the river with a **splash**.
- The books fell on the table with a loud **thump**.
- He looked at the **roaring** sky.
- The **rustling** leaves kept me awake.

Literary examples:

1. 'Hark, hark!

Bow-wow.

The watch-dogs bark!

Bow-wow.

Hark, hark! I hear

The strain of strutting chancicleer

Cry, '**cock-a-diddle-dow!**' (The *Tempest* by William Shakespeare)

These lines are spoken by the character, Ariel in the play, *The Tempest*.

2. 'I'm getting married in the morning!

Dingdong! the bells are gonna chime.'

(*Get Me to the Church on Time* by Lerner and Loewe)

'He saw nothing and heard nothing but he could feel his heart pounding and then he heard the *clack* on stone and the leaping, dropping *clicks* of a small rock falling.'

(*For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway)

Each of the above examples, use sound producing words so that it is easy for the reader to establish a sensory association with the text.

6.16 PARADOX

Paradox is a figure of speech in which a statement (or continuous statements) is made that appears to be impossible as well as contradictory. Paradox, through its very usage invariably confuses the readers, but only to a certain extent. Paradox can be self-referential, at times, contradictory and many a times round about.

Everyday examples:

- I always lie. (Meaning: In case, someone always lies and if that is true, then by confessing it, the individual no longer remains a liar.)
- Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die. (Meaning: how can death die?)

Literary examples:

1. 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.'
(*Animal Farm* by George Orwell)
2. 'The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;
What is her burying grave, that is Rainbow in her womb;'
(*Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare)

Check Your Progress

13. Give examples of the use of onomatopoeia.
14. Give examples of oxymoron.

6.17 METONYMY

Metonymy is a figure of speech where the name of a thing is replaced by the name of something else with which there is a close association. Metonymy should not be confused with synecdoche because synecdoche refers to an object by the name of one of its components. A car can be called a 'wheel', where the component of car (wheel) implies the whole car. Whereas in metonymy, the word used to describe one thing for other has a close association with that thing, like, 'crown' would imply power.

Metonymy is not metaphor. Metaphor relies on resemblance between two things that are different in nature. Metonymy, on the other hand, develops strong relationship on the equation between two ideas. For example, 'The White House is concerned about terrorism', here the White House symbolizes US government.

Everyday examples:

- India has decided to keep check on population. (India refers to the government.)
- The pen is mightier than the sword. (Pen implies the power of written words and sword refers to military/ political.)
- Let me give you a hand. (Hand implies help.)

Literary examples:

1. *As he swung toward them holding up the hand*

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling.

(*Out, Out* by Robert Frost)

In these lines, the expression 'The life from spilling' is a metonymy because it refers to the spilling of blood. This establishes a link between life as well as blood.

2. But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the sea

That came in Neptune's plea,

He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,

What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain? (*Lycidas* by John Milton)

In these lines, John Milton introduces 'oat' for a musical instrument which is created out from an oak-stalk. Hence, 'oat' turns into the song that the poet is trying to compose sitting next to the ocean.

6.18 PUN

Pun is a figure of speech that plays on the words which has an underlying meaning and creates a humorous effect. This effect is created by using a word that implies two or more meanings. Pun relies on similar sounding words that have different meanings to produce desired effect.

Everyday examples:

- Why do we still have troops in Germany? To keep the Russians in **Czech**.
- A horse is a very **stable** animal.

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Literary examples:

1. *When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done for I have more.*

That at my death Thy Son / Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore

And having done that, Thou hast done;

I fear no more.

(*A Hymn to God the Father* by John Donne)

In these lines, the poet is creating a pun with his own name, that is, Donne and with the name Anne More who is his wife. Moreover, instead of sun he uses son.

2. 'They seemed to think the opportunity lost, if they failed to point the conversation to me, every now and then, and stick the point into me' (*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens)

In these lines, Pip, seems to be playing with the word—point.

6.19 SUMMARY

- Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama and essays.
- Literary terms are essential to a complete understanding of literature.
- Simile is a figure of speech where two seemingly unlike objects are compared. The comparison is usually introduced by words such as 'like' or 'as'.
- Metaphor is a figure of speech which creates an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things or objects which are extremely different from each other.
- When two or more stressed syllables of a certain word group begins with similar consonant sounds or with vowel sounds alliteration takes place.
- Assonance appears when two or more words close to one another reiterate the same vowel sound yet it begins with non-identical consonant sounds.
- Personification is another figure of speech. In personification an object, an idea or an animal is laced with human-like qualities.
- The word hyperbole is derived from a Greek word *hyperbol* which means 'over-casting'. It is a figure of speech which highlights an exaggeration of ideas.
- Epithet is a figure of speech that is descriptive in nature. It is used to describe a place, a thing or a person in manner so striking that it helps in making the qualities of that person, thing or place more pronounced than they actually exist.
- Transferred epithet is a figure of speech in which an epithet or adjective is transferred from a person or object to which it actually belongs to another object or person to create a heightened effect.
- Synecdoche is a combination of two words 'syn' and 'ekdoche'. It literally means 'the understanding of one thing by another'.
- Irony is used by writers in all forms of writing such as fiction, non-fiction, verse and so forth.
- The word antithesis is a combination of two words 'anti' (against) and 'thesis' (placing).

Check Your Progress

15. Define metonymy.
16. Give one example of the use of paradox.

- Imagery is the use of figurative language which helps to represent objects, ideas and actions in such a way that it entices our physical senses.
- In an oxymoron, two words or phrases, which have exactly opposite meanings, are brought together to create a ludicrous or serious effect.
- Onomatopoeia is a word that phonetically mimics or resembles the sound of the thing it describes.
- Paradox is a figure of speech in which a statement (or continuous statements) is made that appears to be impossible as well as contradictory.
- Metonymy is a figure of speech where the name of a thing is replaced by the name of something else with which there is a close association.
- Pun is a figure of speech that plays on the words which has an underlying meaning and creates a humorous effect.

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6.20 KEY TERMS

- **Assonance:** It takes place when two or more words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound but start with different consonant sounds.
- **Hyperbole:** It is a figure of speech which involves an exaggeration of ideas with the objective of emphasis.
- **Transferred epithet:** It is a figure of speech in which an epithet or adjective is transferred from a person or object to which it actually belongs to another object or person to create a heightened effect.
- **Synecdoche:** It is a literary device in which a part of something represents the whole or it may use a whole to represent a part.
- **Onomatopoeia:** It is a word that phonetically mimics or resembles the sound of the thing it describes.

6.21 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Simile is a figure of speech where two seemingly unlike objects are compared. The comparison is usually introduced by words such as 'like' or 'as'.
2. An example of a metaphor is as follows:
'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players'. (*As You Like It* by William Shakespeare)
3. When two or more stressed syllables of a certain word group begins with similar consonant sounds or with vowel sounds alliteration takes place. We say something alliterates when the initial sounds of a word are repeated in immediate succession.
4. An example of assonance is as follows:
'Poetry is old, ancient, goes back far. It is among the oldest of living things. So old it is that no man knows how and why the first poems came.'
(*Early Moon* by Carl Sandburg)
5. An example of personification is as follows:
'When well-appareled April on the heel
Of limping winter treads.'
(*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare)

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6. *Hyperbol* is a Greek word meaning over-casting.
7. An epithet is a figure of speech that is descriptive in nature.
8. An epigram is a figure of speech which suggests a sharp opinion with antithetical ideas placed side by side to induce surprise or shock.
9. An example of the use of irony is as follows:
 'Here, under leave of Brutus, and the rest,
 (For Brutus is an honourable man)
 I come to speak in Caesar's funeral.' (*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare)
 In these lines, the use of the word, 'honourable' is ironical because the speaker does not consider Brutus as honourable.
10. Two examples of the use of synecdoche are as follows:
 - The rank and file streamed out of the city to see the sight. (Meaning: Rank and file implies the designation and post of people.)
 - There is a mixture of the tiger and the ape in his character. (Meaning: The sentence implies the characteristics of tiger and ape whereas it only suggests the name of the animals.)
11. The word antithesis is a combination of two words 'anti' (against) and 'thesis' (placing). In this figure of speech, a word or idea is set against another so that what is said creates a heightened effect through the use of contrasting words.
12. Imagery is the use of figurative language which helps to represent objects, ideas and actions in such a way that it entices our physical senses.
13. Examples of the use of onomatopoeia are as follows:
 - The **buzzing** bee flew away.
 - The sack fell into the river with a **splash**.
 - The books fell on the table with a loud **thump**.
14. Examples of oxymoron are: musical discord and noiseless noise.
15. Metonymy is a figure of speech where the name of a thing is replaced by the name of something else with which there is a close association.
16. An example of the use of paradox is as follows:
 I always lie.

6.22 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are literary terms?
2. What is the difference between an epithet and transferred epithet?
3. Give examples of the use of antithesis, onomatopoeia and paradox.
4. What is pun? Give examples.

1. Differentiate between assonance and alliteration. Give examples.
2. Discuss the use of personification and hyperbole in Robert Burns's poem, *A Red, Red Rose*.
3. 'Synecdoche literally means the understanding of one thing by another.' Explain.
4. Explain the differences between oxymoron and antithesis.

6.23 FURTHER READING

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INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE - II

[English Elective - II]

**BA
Second Year
BENG - 202(E)**



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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

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| Unit-III | Drama Oliver Goldsmith: <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> | Unit 3: Oliver Goldsmith: <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> (Pages 47-68) |
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INTRODUCTION

English literature is a broad term used in many educational settings. It refers to the body of work written or spoken in the English language. It includes prose, poetry, and oral traditions. Literature symbolizes people, culture and tradition. It guides us towards a world full of experience and helps us evolve ourselves through its literary journey. It speaks to us in its various forms such as short story, poetry, drama, prose, fiction and so forth.

Drama has existed ever since man started recording history. It essentially is a story presented by various actors on stage before an audience. Drama is an organic form and a genre of art that comes closest to the human need for expressions. It is the only art form that engages the body as well as the mind and explores all the potential of the human condition in expression. Whenever there is a birth, marriage or death, there is drama—in all places and at all times. From the elaboration of ceremony in worship to the solemnity of ritual in death, there is drama. As William Shakespeare in his play *As You Like It* puts it, ‘All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players.’

Percy Bysshe Shelley once said, ‘Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.’ Poetry is an expression of the poet’s soul like all art is a representation of the artist’s soul. Poetry can be transcendental, topical, lyrical, romantic, serious, religious, or even morbid in nature. It can have as many shades as there are souls on this earth. Poetry is one of the most sublime arts. It is literature in its purest form, and is written in verse or metre. It mostly involves the use of poetic devices such as metaphors, similes and alliteration. One of its distinguishing characteristics is that it uses language aesthetically. Poets observe what is happening around them and use their imagination to express their feelings and emotions in their poetry. Every age has its poetical genius. While the Renaissance had Shakespeare and Milton to boast of, the 18th century had Pope and Dryden. On the other end of the poetic spectrum, we find poets who had romantic concerns like William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, P. B. Shelley and Byron. These Romantic poets shared a common love for nature. But what is common among all poets is that they all represent and register the noblest ideas of their age in their poetry.

Someone has rightly said that writing good prose presents a bigger challenge than writing good poetry. This is because while the latter has a set pattern that can be followed, prose requires the writer to set or create his own pattern. In simplest terms, prose can be defined as the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure that is seen in poetry. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. Prose is used in essays, novels, short stories, newspaper reports, magazine columns, etc.

Short stories owe their popularity to their brevity. These stories can be read without breaks, in a single sitting. A short story can be read even on a short journey because it does not require too much time. No matter how busy you are, you would always have the time to read a short story. In fact, a short story, even with its limited length, is able to achieve what a novel does. This is the very reason why it is more

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challenging to write a short story than a novel. The author cannot afford to devote pages and pages introducing the main theme or the main characters. He has to make the story interesting, without sounding abrupt and achieve a lot more using fewer words. In addition, short stories are easier to understand and assimilate.

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This book, *Introducing English Literature - II*, has been written in the self-instructional mode (SIM) and is divided into five units wherein each unit begins with an 'Introduction' to the topic followed by an outline of the 'Unit Objectives'. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and an organized manner, interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the understanding of the students. A 'Summary' along with a list of 'Key Terms' and a set of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation.

UNIT 1 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: *JULIUS CAESAR*

Selected Passages for
Explanation: *Julius
Caesar*

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Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part I
- 1.3 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part II
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 1.7 Questions and Exercises
- 1.8 Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The play *Julius Caesar* has been written by William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan Age. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599. It was the premier show of the newly rebuilt Globe Theatre. It was not published during Shakespeare's lifetime. Appeared seven years after Shakespeare's death in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents. Most of the historical information for the play was taken from North's translation of the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch. In this unit, you will be able to analyse selected passages from Shakespeare's famous play *Julius Caesar*.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse selected passages from Shakespeare's famous play *Julius Caesar*
- Assess the themes of the play *Julius Caesar*
- Evaluate the biographical sketches of characters like Julius, Cassius, Brutus, etc.

1.2 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART I

1. 'Stand you directly in Antonius' way
When he doth run his course.'

Explanation

It is February 15, the Feast of the Lupercal. Rome is not only celebrating the festival of Lupercal, but also rejoicing the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators,

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accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. They then ran through the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal will soon be blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too, since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives curt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his dictates.

2. 'Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous...

He reads much, He is a great observer, and he looks Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music. Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort

As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit That could be moved to smile at anything. Such men as he be never at heart's ease Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, And therefore are they very dangerous.'

Explanation

These lines are spoken by Caesar in Act I, Scene II. Caesar and Antony have just come back from the games. Caesar sees Cassius, Brutus and Casca whispering to each other. He looks at Cassius and speaks these lines.

Caesar finds Cassius dangerous because he has soaring unfulfilled desires and ambitions which make him 'lean' and 'hungry'. Caesar says Cassius is envious of those who are greater than him. He is also very observant who penetrates through men's mind. He can see the hidden motives of men's actions. He is not interested in games and music. He does not smile much and whenever he does, it is to scorn or mock himself. People like Cassius are never at peace, they are restless when they see someone in higher position than themselves.

The lines draw a character sketch of Cassius, one of the Roman senators and main conspirators. Whatever Caesar has observed in the character of Cassius is true. He is jealous of Caesar because he believes he is no less than him. However, it is Julius Caesar, with all his infirmities, who enjoys power and the highest position in Rome. Cassius, personality clearly disturbs mighty Caesar.

From his insights into Cassius, it is evident that Caesar himself is an acute observer who can look through the deeds of men. Though, he voices his apprehensions about Cassius, but in his self-conceit, Caesar refuses to be intimidated by someone like him.

3. 'Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time. He put it the third time by; and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted, and clapped their chopt hands, and threw tip their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar; for he swounded and fell down at it.'

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Explanation

Brutus has pulled Casca out from the crowd. They asked him for the reasons for loud cheering sounds the crowd made. Casca narrates the events that took place off stage to Brutus and Cassius. Casca tells Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed it to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since the crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar feigned fainting since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On gaining senses, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if he stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure.

The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it. The crowd so cheered Caesar's refusal of the crown that he had no choice, but to continue to refuse. Caesar was angered with the crowd's reaction and to win back their sympathy he suffered an epileptic fit. Many from the crowd immediately showed sympathy towards Caesar. Casca expresses his concern over the events that have just transpired. The incident reveals Caesar's ambition to become the king of Rome and we also get a glimpse of people's mind. The general public has mixed opinions about Caesar, while Brutus, Cassius and Casca clearly do not wish him to be any more powerful.

4. 'Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see Thy honourable mettle may be wrought From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet That noble minds keep ever with their likes; For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Caesar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus. If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius, He should not humour me. I will this night, In several hands, in at his windows throw, As if they came from several citizens,

Writings, all tending to the great opinion That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at. And after this let Caesar seat him sure, For we will shake him, or worse days endure.'

Explanation

These line have been spoken by Cassius. Brutus and Cassius have been contemplating on the political situation of Rome and the repercussions of Caesar becoming the king. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. On one hand he loves Caesar,

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on the other, he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar, Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts in the above lines. Brutus is a noble man, but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Meeting Brutus often will help him retain his position on Caesar and not be influenced by anyone into changing his decision. Caesar dislikes Cassius, but likes Brutus. Cassius too knows of this bond of affection between Brutus and Caesar. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they have come from the citizens of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The lines reveal the character of both Brutus and Cassius. Though, Brutus leads the conspirators, but it is Cassius who plays the major role in influencing Brutus into assurance. In Cassius' words, Brutus is a noble Roman. His love for Caesar and Rome is strong, but he is going through a tumultuous phase. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. Cassius fears that his emotions for Caesar may overcome his loyalty to Rome if the connivance of Cassius is explicitly portrayed by the dramatist. He is sure to assassinate Caesar and will not let Brutus change his mind.

5. 'She dreamt to-night she saw my statue,

Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,

Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans

Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it. And these does she apply for warnings and portents

And evils imminent, and on her knee Hath begged that I will stay at home to-day.'

Explanation

Caesar is with his wife Calpurnia in his house. Calpurnia stops him from going to the Senate. Decius comes to take Caesar with him to the Senate. He instructs Decius to inform the Senate that he will not attend the meeting today. Decius asks for the reason behind not going to the senate. Since, Caesar does not want to give any untrue reason for his absence, he relates Calpurnia's dream to Decius.

In the dream, Calpurnia has seen Caesar's statue. The statue has innumerable spouts like a fountain and blood is flowing from the spouts. Many blood thirsty Romans come near to the body smiling and wash their hands in the stream of royal blood. Calpurnia interprets the dream as a bad omen and a warning to Caesar. She has come down on her knees and begs Caesar to stay at home.

The scene foreshadows the impending death of Caesar. The dream and other portents foretell the death of someone of eminence. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. It is the ides of March and the soothsayer had asked Caesar to beware on this day in Act I, Scene II. His conspirators will murder him and wash their hands in his blood. Decius cleverly reinterprets the dream and convinces Caesar to accompany him to the Senate by appealing to his vanity. The manipulation of

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facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play. Decius' ironic interpretation of the dream also foreshadows Caesar's eventual rise to eternal fame.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Though, Calpurnia appears less submissive as compared to her first appearance in public, she is unable to persuade her husband to listen to her request to stay at home. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him to not to go. As for Caesar, he maintains his public image in his private life too. He is dictatorial in her relationship with his wife as he is with his subjects and other senators.

1.3 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART II

6. 'I could be well moved, if I were as you; If I could pray to move, prayers would move me: But I am constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks, They are all fire, and every one doth shine; But there's but one in all doth hold his place.
So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men, And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one That unassailable holds on his rank, Unshaked of motion; and that I am he,
Let me a little show it, even in this — That I was constant Cimber should be banished And constant do remain to keep him so... '
- 'Et tu, Brute?— Then fall, Caesar!'

Explanation

Caesar speaks these lines in Act III, Scene I, after being stabbed many times by many conspirators who had decided to assassinate Julius Caesar. The whole conspiracy was led by Brutus. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.

The other conspirators were Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Decius, Cimber, Brutus, Trebonius.

Metellus Cimber approaches Caesar and asks for the reinstatement of his brother as a Roman citizen. Caesar's arrogance reaches astounding proportions as he refuses Cimber's plea based on his distaste for flattery and his power to remain constant. One by one each conspirator moves towards Caesar and encircle him. Having endured twenty-two stab wounds, Caesar is still standing. His wounds are splashing blood, which is the half fulfilment of Calpurnia's dream. It is the twenty-third wound inflicted by Brutus, the man he loved and trusted, that causes Caesar's life force to vanish. He echoes 'And you too, Brutus?' and falls dead to the floor.

The words are an expression of betrayal as well as shock. With the pathos of faithlessness, the last words also help to swing the sympathy of the audience back to Caesar. Caesar did not fall with the first twenty-two wounds by the other conspirators, but the last one proved fatal to his emotions. The dagger stabbed into his body by Brutus stunned him, he falls on the ground expressing his shock in the three words 'you too, Brute?'

Check Your Progress

1. When was the play *Julius Caesar* first performed?
2. Mention Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality in the play *Julius Caesar*.
3. What is one of the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

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7. 'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Caesar...

He was my friend, faithful and just to me; But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honourable man.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome, Whose ransoms did the general
coffers fill. Did this in Caesar seem ambitious? When that the poor have cried,
Caesar hath wept;

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man. You all
did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, Which he
did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And sure he is an honourable man. I speak
not to disprove what Brutus spoke, But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause.

What cause withholds you then to mourn for him? O judgment, thou art fled
to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason! Bear with me. My heart is
in the coffin there with Caesar, And I must pause till it come back to me.'

Explanation

These lines are spoken by Antony in Act III, Scene II. Brutus has just addressed the citizens of Rome to tell them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requested them to be patient until the end of his speech, and to believe him because of his honour and respect. Brutus' love for Caesar was no less than any of his friend. He weeps for Caesar who loved him, he honours Caesar for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave, no one will be vile to not love his country. He killed Caesar for his ambition. Brutus ends his speech saying that he killed his best friend for the good of Rome. In the meantime, Antony has come with the dead body of Caesar to give him an honourable funeral.

Antony speaks rhetorically. He has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and the good is often buried with their bones. Same will be with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions. It is by the permission of Brutus, an honourable man that he speaks. In a few minutes, Antony starts praising Caesar, a faithful friend and always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. If this is ambition then ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercal, three times Caesar was presented with a kingly crown, and every time he refused. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says he was ambitious. Here, he stands not to refute Brutus, but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now

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stopped them from mourning for him? He cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies, he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Romans come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg a hair of his for memory.

The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend. Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech, he stirs the crowd to a frenzy. He ensures the downfall of the conspirators with his speech. He uses poetry to move the people of Rome to act violently against the conspirators. To win the confidence of the crowd, Antony addresses them as friends and assures them that his intention is only to bury Caesar with honour and respect. During his speech, Antony quotes Brutus who gave Caesar's ambition as a reason for his death. In his speech, Antony rhetorically and forcefully refutes Brutus' claims that Caesar was ambitious. Keeping in mind the instructions of Brutus, he reminds the crowd that Brutus and the other conspirators are honourable men. He alternates ironic references to Brutus' honour and nobility with evidences to prove that Caesar was not ambitious, as Brutus claims. By using irony, Antony does not violate the instructions of Brutus. Simultaneously, he proves that Caesar was not as ambitious as Brutus claims to justify his murder. He influences the crowd to understand the subtext of the funeral speech and completely tears down Brutus' argument that Caesar was ambitious.

Antony was wise in the choice of his words. He manipulated the crowd to move to frenzy. He paid attention to the effect of his words on the crowd. The moment he understood that he has undone Brutus, he passionately weeps for his beloved friend. His heart is full of intense grief. The crowd becomes silent and sympathizes with Antony. His genuine feelings and passionate words stir up the crowd, the mob has turned into a violent force, who rush to look for the murderers of Caesar. Antony successfully maneuvered the things to seek retribution. The blood thirsty crowd solicits revenge.

The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners prove to be a great force in the turn of events. Antony uses his rhetorics to switch their allegiance to Caesar and punish the conspirators, leading to a civil war in Rome.

8. 'This was the noblest Roman of them all. All the conspirators save only he Did what they did in envy of great Caesar; He only, in a general honest thought And common good to all, made one of them. His life was gentle, and the elements So mixed in him that Nature might stand up And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'

Explanation

Antony speaks these lines on the death of Brutus. Brutus tells his friend Strato that it is impossible for them to win the battle against the triumvirate. He tells him about the appearance of Caesar's ghost that appeared to him at night. He asks Strato to

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hold his sword and runs into it and dies. Strato tells Octavius, no one, but Brutus alone could conquer Brutus. No other man gains honor by killing Brutus.

Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus, on the other hand, is troubled by Caesar's threat to the republican freedom of Rome. He did not want Rome to have a tyrannical rule of kings and dictators. It was his political choice to save the republic that entails his moral choice to kill Caesar. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. He was gentle and noble, and the goodness was so balanced in his personality that nature itself will stand up to the world to say that Brutus was a noble soul.

9. 'This dream is all amiss interpreted; It was a vision fair and fortunate. Your statue spouting blood in many pipes, 85 In which so many smiling Romans bathed, Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck Reviving blood, and that great men shall press For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance. This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.'

Explanation

These lines have been spoken by Decius. Decius has come to Caesar house to escort him to the Senate. Caesar tells Decius to inform the senate that he will not come. To say he cannot come will be false and dare not come will be falser. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells Calpurnia does not want him to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an evil omen and a warning. Calpurnia begged him on her knees to stay home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a good omen. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the Senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the Senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. In an aside, Trebonius says so near will he be that Caesar's best friends would have been further. Caesar, ironically, wants to go as friends together with the group to the Senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the Senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end.

Check Your Progress

4. What was Brutus' reason for killing Caesar?
5. What is the role of the mob in the play *Julius Caesar*?

1.4 SUMMARY

- Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of the festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood.
- The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public.
- The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and give curt orders.
- The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown.
- The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend.
- Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech he stirs the crowd to a frenzy.
- The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics.
- In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey.

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1.5 KEY TERMS

- **Lupercal:** Lupercalia was a very ancient, possibly pre-Roman pastoral festival, observed in the city of Rome on February 15, to avert evil spirits and purify the city, releasing health and fertility.
- **Februa:** In ancient Roman religion, Februus, whose name means 'purifier', was the god of purification. Februus is possibly named in honor of the more ancient Februa, (also Februalia and Februatio), the spring festival of washing and purification.
- **Heir:** An heir apparent or heiress apparent is a person who is first in line of succession and cannot be displaced from inheriting by the birth of another person.

1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599.
2. In Casca's view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it.

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3. The manipulation of facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play.
4. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.
5. The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances.

1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Who is the protagonist in the play *Julius Caesar*? Is it Caesar who dies well before the end but whose power and name continue on? Or is it Brutus, the noble man, who falls because of his tragic flaws?
2. *Julius Caesar*, a play about statehood and leadership, is one of the most quoted of Shakespeare's plays in modern-day political speeches. Why do you think this play about conspiracy and assassination might appeal to politicians today?
3. Consider Brutus's actions. Is he right to join the conspiracy against Caesar?
4. Think about Caesar the mortal man as opposed to Caesar the public figure. How does he continue to wield power over events even after he is dead?
5. How does Cassius trick Brutus into joining the conspirators?
6. After an ominous dream, Calpurnia begs Caesar to stay away from the Senate and, at first, he agrees. What changes his mind?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss inflexibility in the play *Julius Caesar*, focusing on Caesar and Brutus. How is each man inflexible?
2. Discuss friendship in the play. Consider Caesar and Brutus, Caesar and Antony, Brutus and Cassius, Antony and Octavius, or any other pairings. Are these true friendships or merely political alliances forged for the sake of convenience and self-preservation?
3. As Caesar's appointed successor, how does Octavius carry on the great general's legacy? Consider his use of language and commands as well as the ways in which the other characters regard him and refer to him.
4. Describe the encounter between Brutus and Caesar's ghost.
5. Explain the significance of Antony's final speech, beginning with the line, 'This was the noblest Roman of them all'.

1.8 FURTHER READING

- Griffin, Miriam (Ed.). 2015. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. United States: John Wiley & Sons.
- Thomson, Peter. 1992. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. United Kingdom: Psychology Press.
- Bergeron Moore, David. 1996. *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*. United States: Associated University Press.

Selected Passages for
Explanation: *Julius
Caesar*

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UNIT 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:

JULIUS CAESAR

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

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Structure

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

The play *Julius Caesar* is one of the famous tragedies written by Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* is the story of an assassination, that is, the murder of a public figure. This play explores the ethical, political and psychological turmoil that surrounds such an event—the assassination of a public figure. This event highlights the chaos prevalent in the twentieth century history as well. In this unit, you will be introduced to the life and prominent works of William Shakespeare. Moreover, you will get to study his play *Julius Caesar* and analyse the major themes and literary devices of this play.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare
- Assess the plays written by Shakespeare
- Summarize the play *Julius Caesar* act-wise
- Analyse the themes and literary devices of the play *Julius Caesar*

2.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557. Mary was the daughter

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of a prosperous farmer, and earned him a house, fifty acres of land and money in the form of dowry. In 1564 William Shakespeare was born. Nothing much is known about Shakespeare's early life until 1582 when, as records suggest, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, daughter of Richard Hathaway. The date on Anne's tombstone indicates that she was older to the poet by eight years.

By the 1590s Shakespeare had already been known as an actor and plagiarist as confirmed by Robert Greene's pamphlet 'Greenes Groatsworth of Witte: Bought with a Million of Repentaunce'. In 1593 *Venus and Adonis* was published; it was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. But the dedication does not imply any connection between the poet and the patron. *The Rape of Lucrece* was published in 1594, again dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, indicating that he first achieved his literary distinction through his references. By 1594–95 he was already a part of Lord Chamberlain's Company as an actor. In the following years, Shakespeare's name was registered in some financial ambiguities. But by 1598 Shakespeare seems to have emerged successfully in the professional front as his quarto editions of *Richard II* and *Love's Labour Lost* appear that year and there is mention of his acting in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*.

In the meantime, Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright was increasing so much so that in contemporary literature references to his works are abundant. John Webster in the acknowledgement to *The White Devil*, 1612, has shown his gratitude to his predecessors and a few contemporary artists including Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company. But his investment in real estate in Stratford and London brought him substantial fortune.

With the accession of James I after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the situation improved even more. James I's inclination towards the arts turned out to be a boon for Shakespeare as well as Lord Chamberlain's Company. The Revels Accounts of the Company identify Shakespeare as one of the prominent actors. The recognition ushered by the court added to Shakespeare's fame. Jonson mentions Shakespeare playing a role in *Sejanus* in 1603. But later his name does not appear among actors, suggesting that sometime after Queen Elizabeth's death he gave up acting.

Seven years after Shakespeare's death in April 1616, Heming and Condell, his former colleagues from the theatre, collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six of his plays.

2.2.1 Shakespeare's Plays

Though it is slightly problematic to provide for specific dates for composition, publication and performance of Shakespeare's plays due to lack of information, yet for the sake of convenience certain dates have been accepted as standard. Below is a list of his works and corresponding dates of their performance and publication.

- 1592: March 3, *Henry VI Part I* produced. First printed 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part II* first performed. First print 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part III* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1594: January 24 *Titus Andronicus* first performance. First print 1594
- 1594: December 28, Confirmed performance of *The Comedy of Errors*

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- 1593–94: *Taming of the Shrew* first performed. First print 1623
- 1594–95: *Two Gentlemen of Verona* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1594–95: *Love's Labour Lost* first performed. First print 1598
- 1594–95: *Romeo and Juliet* first performance. First printed 1597
- 1595–96: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* first performed. First print 1600
- 1596–97: *The Merchant of Venice* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part I* first performed. First print 1598
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part II* first performance. First printed 1600
- 1598–99: *Much Ado About Nothing* first performed. First print 1600
- 1598–99: *Henry V* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1599–1600: *As You Like It* first performed. First print 1623
- 1600–01: *Julius Caesar* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1601: February 7 First Recorded production of *Richard II*. First printed 1597
- 1600–01: *Richard III* first Recorded performance. First print 1597
- 1600–01: *Hamlet* first performed. First printed 1603
- 1600–01: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* first performance. First print 1602
- 1602: February 2 First Recorded production of *Twelfth Night*. First printed 1623
- 1602–03: *All's Well That Ends Well* first performed. First print 1623
- 1604: February 7 First Recorded production of *Troilus and Cressida*. First printed 1609
- 1604: December 26 First performance of *Measure for Measure*. First print 1623
- 1604–05: *Othello* first performed. First printed 1622
- 1606: December 26 First recorded performance of *King Lear*. First print 1608
- 1605–06: *Macbeth* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1606–07: *Antony and Cleopatra* first performed. First print 1623
- 1607–08: *Coriolanus* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1607–08: *Timon of Athens* first performance. First print 1623
- 1608–09: *Pericles* first performed. First printed 1609
- 1611: November 1 First Recorded production of *The Tempest*. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *Macbeth* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1611–12: *Cymbeline* First recorded performance. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *The Winter's Tale* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1612–13: *Henry VIII* first performance. First print 1623
- 1612–13: *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. First printed 1634

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Check Your Progress

1. When was William Shakespeare born?
2. When was *Venus and Adonis* published?
3. What did Shakespeare do in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*?
4. Who published Shakespeare's First Folio?
5. When was the first theatre built in England?
6. When did John Heywood live?
7. Name the first English comedy.

2.2.2 Drama in England

In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600. The roots of drama in England are associated with religious ceremonies. In the earlier days, Latin was the official language of the church and of official proceedings. Latin was not understood by the common people.

As the presentations in drama became more elaborate, the stage also changed. It first moved to the churchyard, then to the fields, and finally to the streets and open spaces in the towns. The change in location was supported by changes in the language used. Latin was passé. Vernacular was used. Unlike priests who performed in Miracle Plays, now laymen participated. The attitude towards these productions changed. Priests were no more permitted to take part in plays. The content of the drama too had taken a leap where the subject matter was no longer restricted to the sacred scriptures or lives of holy people.

Moving on from Morality Plays, Interludes emerged; a feature that was common to both Miracle Plays and Interludes was the Vice, a character who appeared under the garb of hypocrisy and deceit and whose job was to have fun mainly at the expense of the devil. The Vice is significant because some of its features are found in the fools of the later dramas.

John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and Interludes continued to exist in the seventeenth century. But gradually it moved towards disappearance and a new movement came. With the emergence of Renaissance, the literary scenario was filled with new ideas especially from Italy and the classical world.

In drama, one can find a confluence of foreign material and local essence. Like the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister* by Udall was adapted from the plot of *Miles Gloriosus* composed by Plautus to suit the taste of an English audience. It was around this time that Shakespeare appeared on the literary scene.

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF THE PLAYS

Let us go through the classification of Shakespeare's plays.

- (i) **The Early Comedies:** *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat. Over all, the style is not that of a mature Shakespeare.
- (ii) **The English Histories:** These plays display the rapidly maturing art of Shakespeare and his concern with the contemporary desire for stable government. The history plays like *Richard II*, *Henry IV* (2) and *Henry V* are remarkable for memorable characters like Falstaff and the mingling of low life with chronicle history.
- (iii) **The Mature Comedies:** To this group belong *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. The plays are full of vitality; contain many comic situations and the most popular of Shakespeare's comic characters like Beatrice and Benedick, Sir Toby Belch and Touchstone who are full of warmth and humanity.

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- (iv) **The Sombre Plays:** Also called ‘Problem Plays’ or ‘Bitter Comedies’, these plays show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life. *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* fall in this category.
- (v) **The Great Tragedies:** *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are the great tragedies of Shakespeare and mark the climax of his dramatic art. They are supreme in the realms of literature because of their intensity of emotion, psychological insight and powerful style.
- (vi) **The Roman Plays:** Though written at fairly wide intervals, they follow the lines of the tragedies and are based on North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*. *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* belong to this group.
- (vii) **The Last Plays:** *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* are the last plays, marking a befitting end to the career of the greatest dramatist in the English literary canon with their predominant note of reconciliation and forgiveness.

2.3.1 Features of the Plays

The features of Shakespearean plays are as follows:

- (i) **Originality:** Though the plots of his plays were largely borrowed (in keeping with the tradition of the age) with his Midas touch, he turned them into gold — impinging on them the mark of his originality by interweaving plot within plot as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, by making history glow with the spirit of his imagination in *Macbeth* and by giving each of his plays a uniqueness which has made them immortal in literature.
- (ii) **Characters:** Shakespeare’s forte lay in characterization and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature. His characters, irrespective of their historical or romantic background, have a sure touch of humanity that makes them plausible, keeping them within the range of the audience’s sympathy. Regarding Shakespeare’s rich gallery of portraits, Edward Albert says: ‘...the villain Iago is a man of resolution, intelligence and fortitude; the murderer Claudius (in *Hamlet*) shows affection, wisdom and fortitude; the peerless Cleopatra is narrow, spiteful, and avaricious; and the beast Caliban has his moments of ecstatic vision.’ Looking at his versatility, one cannot help but exclaim like Hamlet ‘What a piece of work is man!’

Another significant feature of Shakespeare’s characterization is his objectivity and though many have tried, none has achieved his ability to remain neutral to heroes (Hamlet, Othello and Lear) and villains (Claudius, Iago, Goneril and Regan) alike. Each of the characters, from the king to the clown, has a philosophy of his own. As Hamlet says:

*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
And Macbeth confesses in a soliloquy:
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale*

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*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
signifying nothing.*

For the melancholic philosopher Jacques in As You Like It:

All the world's a stage

And all the men and women merely players.

And finally as Prospero points out: *We are such stuff As dreams are made on,
and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.*

- (iii) **Metre:** The blank verse polished by Marlowe attains a brightness and shine in the hands of Shakespeare. He shows more range and variety than any other artist who dabbled in the use of the blank verse. The soliloquies of the great tragedies are a testimony to this fact, whether it is Macbeth

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

Or, Hamlet's *To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them?*

- (iv) **Style:** Besides his dramatic gift, Shakespeare was essentially a poet. The beautiful songs interspersed in his plays show his poetic genius. His style reveals a consummate craftsmanship and is a combination of versification and rarity of images with accompanying music. Such a style moves easily into the highest flights of poetry as in *Twelfth Night*:

*That strain again! It had a dying fall:
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.*

*Iago's remark on seeing Othello already destroyed by jealousy
Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dest yesterday.*

shows the beauty of the rhythm that brands Iago as an infernal villain.

Shakespeare is, undoubtedly, a universal poet and dramatist. In Ben Jonson's words, he 'was not of an age, but for all time.' His genius has stood the test of time and his plays trace the drama of human life with its share of joys and sorrows. As Legouis points out:

Free of every theory, accepting all of life, rejecting nothing, uniting the real and the poetic, appealing to the most various men, to a rude workman as to a wit, Shakespeare's drama is a great river of life and beauty. All who thirst for art or truth, the comic or the tender, ecstasy or satire, light or shade, can stop to drink from its waters, and at almost every instant of their changing moods find the one drop to shake their thirst.

Check Your Progress

8. Name some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' category?
9. What are 'The Sombre Plays'?

2.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Julius Caesar is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents.

The majority of Shakespeare's information about the people and events in *Julius Caesar* was taken from the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* translated in English by Sir Thomas North. North rendered the French translation of Plutarch's work into English.

Julius Caesar, the play, deals with actual historical events in Rome and explores the political and social issues. Political questions are central to the play. The play deals with the values of Roman Republicanism.

2.4.1 Act I

Let us look at the scene-wise summary of the play.

Act I, Scene I: A Street in Rome

The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than doing their daily work. The men receive indirect and condescending answers by the crowd, especially the cobbler. Eventually, Flavius and Marullus learn that the men are out to pay tribute to Caesar, who has had a recent victory on Pompey's sons. The feast of Lupercal has been combined with the celebration of Julius Caesar's victory over Pompey. The feast of Lupercal, a festival of fertility, was held on 15 February to honour Lupercus, god of flocks and herds. The commoners are rejoicing in the festivities by taking a holiday, dressed in their best clothes.

The tribunes chastise the tradesmen for their swift reversal of loyalties, from Pompey to Julius Caesar. They rebuke these commoners for showering praises on Caesar and rejoicing in his victory. They curse the revellers to be punished by gods and become nostalgic about Pompey and his glory. Flavius tells them to go and shed tears in river Tiber to mourn the victory of Caesar. Flavius and Marullus advise them to leave, which they do, seemingly feeling guilty. In order to lessen the celebrations in the honour of Caesar, Marullus and Flavius move around removing decorations from his statues and vandalizing anything that pays homage to Julius Caesar.

The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place. This scene reveals that there is a strong force, even within the government, that is against Caesar and afraid of his becoming too powerful. This conflict of interests further unfolds in the next scene when a full conspiracy against Caesar begins to take shape. It is evident that the officials do not want him to become politically stronger. Otherwise, they will have more to fear. The scene also demonstrates that the tribunes, while determined to avoid being controlled by a tyrant, are themselves behaving like tyrants.

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The mob is established as a character that has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with the help of rhetoric. When the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. When berated by the tribunes, the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners will prove to be a great force in the turn of events in the play.

Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story was taking place, hence, making it easy for the audience to connect with his work.

Act I, Scene II: A Public Place

Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators, accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong. He gives the same order to Antony to which he gives his slavish acceptance saying whatever Caesar says will be performed. Amongst all the sounds of trumpets, a soothsayer warns Caesar to be cautious on ides of March, that is, the 15 March. Brutus repeats the warning of the soothsayer. Caesar dismisses the warning calling the soothsayer a dreamer.

All exit to witness the race, Brutus and Cassius stay. Brutus expresses his disinterestedness to enjoy the games, saying he lacks the vivaciousness and jest for life and its merriments like Antony. Cassius complains of Brutus' indifferent behaviour towards him which Brutus attributes to the conflicting emotions that he has been experiencing off late. No friend of Brutus, which includes Cassius, should be affected by it.

Cassius asks Brutus if he can see his own face to which Brutus replies that a person can see himself only through reflection in other things. Cassius insists on acting as a mirror to Brutus to show him what he himself does not know. He expresses his sadness on the ignorance of Brutus of his own worth which other respected Romans, except Caesar, praise. Admired by many for his great value, they wish to be guided by Brutus in these troubled times.

The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king. Getting a hint from Brutus, Cassius manipulatively confirms from him about his intentions on Caesar being the king of Rome. Brutus clearly remarks, though he loves Caesar, he does not want him to become the king of Rome since that would not be in the common good of the country. He wishes to hear only about the welfare of people of Rome. He declares his intentions to look at honour and death indifferently if they bring no good to Rome. He loves honour more than he fears death. He declares his unwillingness to live under the oppression that threatens them. Cassius calls it a virtue.

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Sensing the coldness of Brutus towards Julius Caesar, embittered Cassius launches a fierce verbal attack on Caesar. He begins with pointing at the physical infirmities of Caesar and narrates incidents from the past. Once upon a time, Caesar challenged Cassius to swim across river Tiber when the wild river roared. At this moment, when Caesar was nearly drowned he cried for help and it was Cassius who saved his life. Now, Cassius has to bow before Caesar who has become a god and Cassius is still a wretched man. Once in Spain, Caesar shook with fever, the colour of his lips was lost and his eyes, whose glances awed the world, had lost their lustre. He groaned in pain and the tongue that motivates the Romans who make his speeches immortal in their books, had cried for a drink to cure him. Calling Caesar a coward, Cassius remarks everyone is born as free as Caesar and he does not wish to stand in awe of someone whom he thinks is no better than him.

Cassius is amazed that such a feeble man Caesar should command the respect of the entire world and keep all the honour to himself. He believes that Caesar just strides a narrow world like a colossus and petty men like him honour him for his petty deeds. The fault is not in Caesar but in people who honour him. They have themselves chosen to be accepted as subordinates. Brutus and Caesar are just names, and when put together, it is Brutus who sounds fairer and weighs heavier than Caesar. There is no reason then why should Caesar's name be honoured more than Brutus. Caesar is not as great as he is thought to be. It is shameful time for Rome who has lost the breed of noble people. No age in history of Rome has had just one famous man.

More cheers, shouts and trumpets offstage worry Brutus. He believes the cheers indicate choice of people to heap more praise on Caesar.

Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome. Brutus does not seem to be suspicious of Cassius' intentions. He is aware of the state of affairs in Rome and has already thought of the things Cassius talks about. Brutus is just reluctant to express himself on the political life of Rome at the moment. He assures Cassius that he will consider his words, listen to him patiently in future too, and will answer the issues later. Brutus feels ashamed of calling himself a Roman in these hard times. He is worried about the future of Rome if Caesar becomes the king. Cassius is glad to have been able to penetrate Brutus' mind and opinion on Caesar becoming a king.

After the games are over, Caesar returns with his attendants. Brutus notices anger on the faces of Caesar and Cicero and a pale look on Calpurnia's face.

Caesar warns Antony to be wary of Cassius. He suggests it is desirable to have fat people, who sleep well at night to be around him. Sleek headed, lean and hungry people like Cassius, who think too much are generally dangerous. Antony speaks for Cassius calling him a well-respected and noble Roman. Caesar gives his opinion of Cassius. He reads too much, is a close observer, and seems to understand the thinking of men. He loves no plays like Antony, hears no music, and he seldom smiles. And when he does, he smiles as if he mocks himself and scorns the spirit that could be moved to smile at anything. Such men are never at heart's ease when they see someone greater than themselves. That is why they are considered dangerous men. Such people should be feared. Caesar himself is not afraid of anyone. He asks Antony to come on his right side since his left ear is deaf.

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Brutus pulls Casca out of the crowd when the train passes. Casca informs Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses it as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar is feigning unconsciousness since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On regaining his consciousness, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure. Cicero too spoke but in Greek and Casca did not understand anything but people who understand Greek shook their heads and smiled at one another. Another important news is that Marullus and Flavius have been deprived of their tribuneship and exiled for pulling down the banners in Caesar's honour and praise.

As Casca leaves, Brutus comments that Casca who used to be clever and witty in his school days, has grown up into being excessively blunt. Cassius comments Casca has put up this rude behaviour so that people may be able to assimilate his mocking remarks. He has the potential to perform any bold and noble enterprise.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts. Brutus is a noble man but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Caesar dislikes Cassius but likes Brutus. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they come from the citizen of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The political situation outlined in Act I Scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king. It is a larger group of Roman elites, holding eminent positions in the politics of Rome, who despise Caesar. It is easy to sense an impending doom on the future of Rome with conspiracy brewing against Caesar. The huge crowd, both acknowledging and disclaiming Caesar, show that he has both friends and foes in the country.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives abrupt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his orders.

The action points to Antony's strong physicality which is contrasted with Caesar's infirmities. Marc Antony, also known as Marcus Antonius, was related to Julius Caesar from his mother's side. He was the right hand of Julius Caesar, a loyal supporter in all his political pursuits. Antony shows his total commitment to Caesar.

The Act reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. Cassius too is aware of this bond of affection

existing between Brutus and Caesar. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Since one can see one's face only in the reflection, Cassius, becomes a mirror to Brutus and tries to show what Brutus is capable of. The mirror as a reflection of the moral nature of man was a common literary device in Renaissance literature.

The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar. More than holding a mirror to the virtues of Brutus, Cassius, in his magnificent description of the times he saved Caesar's life, accounts of himself as the heroic figure. His words are charged with jealousy and contempt. In his attempt to disregard Caesar, Cassius insists on his physical disabilities. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar; Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision. Caesar is precise in his judgment of Cassius' personality that he is a jealous man with sardonic humour, and one should be wary of people with such malicious disposition.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercalia, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

Act I, Scene III: A Street in Rome. There is a heavy storm with thunder and lightning.

Casca complains to Cicero about not having seen such a storm dropping fire ever before. It seems either a war is going on among gods in heaven, or the world has angered the gods so much that they have sent destruction upon mankind. He grumbles of having seen some portents about their country. Cicero, not disturbed by the storm, remarks that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience.

Cassius does not hesitate to interpret things after his fashion. For him the storm is a fearful warning from heaven about the turbulent political situation in Rome. Cassius utilizes this opportunity to manoeuvre Casca to join him in the conspiracy. Cassius considers it to be a pleasant night for an honest man. He advises Casca to cast aside his fear and see the impatience of heaven through these natural happenings. He relates them with the turbulent political situation in Rome. Heaven has made nature an instrument of warning against unpropitious future. Indirectly referring to Julius Caesar, Cassius calls him more dreadful than this night, not mightier than himself. As Casca announces the crowning of Caesar as the king of Rome next day in the Senate, Cassius vows to commit suicide, thus, liberating himself from the bondage of the tyrant and forcing the tyrant to accept defeat. Making a rhetorical speech, Cassius remarks no one can hold the strength of the spirit. No tyrant can keep someone by force. He accuses the Romans of being Romans only in flesh and blood and not in spirit and action. Their actions are not manly. It is not Caesar, but the Roman citizens, who are responsible for the crippling condition of Rome. The Romans, like trash, have accepted to the rule of as base a person as Caesar. Casca is one of them, adds Cassius. Cassius successfully manipulates the situation and

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incites Casca into declaring his support for the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. Cassius says that the plan intends to do something honourable and dangerous, as bloody, fiery and terrible as the appearance of the sky and the night. Some noble-minded Romans, Pompey supporters, have already agreed to help him in executing his plan and only waiting for his further orders now.

Cinna, who is already a part of the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar, joins Casca and Cassius. He also mentions the portents he has seen. He insists that Brutus be on their side because people have a very high opinion of Brutus and their designs will be considered virtuous and worthy if Brutus joins them. To win Brutus, Cassius asks Cinna to execute a plan. He gives Cinna fabricated letters and directs him to keep one at his side table, one at the statue of old Brutus and throw one at Brutus' window. After which Cinna should join them at Pompey's Porch where other conspirators Decius, Brutus and Trebonius are already present. Cassius takes Casca with him to visit Brutus, whom he believes, has submitted his three parts to them already and the next conversation will win over the entire man Brutus on their side.

The fury and unnaturalness of the prodigies that accompany the storm are described with its vivid details. It points to the supernatural significance of these events. Shakespeare's plays, particularly tragedies, project a close relationship between the heavens, the natural world, and the human society. Disturbances in the heaven produce unnatural phenomena in the world of nature and political turmoil in the state. Any disorder or impending doom in the state would be mirrored in the natural world and in the heavens. The intimate relationship between these different realms of existence is conveyed through the imagery. It links the natural world with the political state of Rome. The unnatural portents reflect on the political upheaval planned by the conspirators. The storm conveys a sense of tumult and impending violence. But Cicero's wise and calm opinion that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience leaves the interpretation of the scary night open to judgment.

2.4.2 Act II

This section deals with Act II of the play.

Act II, Scene I: Brutus in his Garden

Brutus, in his garden, contemplates on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar. Though, he does not have any personal cause to kill him. Caesar wants to be crowned the ruler of Rome. But his nature is like that of a snake. A crown will give him a sting making him more dangerous. Greatness is abused when it separates remorse from power. Caesar's feelings never take over his reason. Lowliness is young ambition's ladder. Once Caesar achieves his ambition of ruling over Rome, he will turn his back on those who have helped him to reach that position. He will scorn those at the lower rungs. Caesar is a serpent's egg who must be killed before hatching because once hatched it will be deadly.

Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters before. He promises to help Rome. Lucius confirms that next day is ides of March that is 15 March. Since Cassius first spoke against Caesar, Brutus has not slept. The time between the thought of a dreadful action and the first step taken to implement it is like a nightmare. Spirit and body are in conflict during that period and the condition of man is like that little kingdom that suffers the nature of a revolt.

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Lucius announces the arrival of a few men, one of them is Cassius while the others have hidden their faces. The other conspirators are Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, and Trebonius. Brutus tells himself, these people are plotters. In an aside, he says that conspiracy does not seek any dark place to hide; it hides in smiles and friendliness.

Cassius introduces each person to Brutus mentioning how each one of them respects Brutus and desires he had the same opinion of him that is shared by every noble Roman. Cassius wants Brutus to swear by his promise. A Roman shall do as he says or die for his words. Oaths are for priests, cowards, and suffering souls who welcome wrongs. The thought of taking oaths will stain the virtue of cause and the strength of spirits. Even if one of them breaks the promise, every drop of blood spilled by a Roman is tainted.

The group wants to include Cicero in their conspiracy. His experience will help them in giving a good opinion. People would know that his judgment ruled their hands. And the wild youth of Rome will be overshadowed by his age and dignity. Brutus declines the proposal to include Cicero since he never follows anything that other men have begun. Cassius proposes to kill Marc Antony too since he is much loved by Caesar. He could hurt them later upon the death of Caesar. Brutus disagrees to the proposition to kill Antony since he is just a limb of Caesar. If the head (Caesar) is cut off then the limb (Antony) will become useless. He cannot do anything more than being Caesar's right hand. The conspiracy is against the spirit, ways, actions and beliefs of Caesar, and not the person. If they can kill that spirit there would be no blood. But Caesar must bleed for it. Brutus explains that murder should be done boldly and not out of anger. Brutus wants to kill Caesar with respect. It should be a sacrifice and not cold-blooded murder. This will make the cause seem necessary, and commoners will call them cleansers, not murderers. Cassius insists on killing Antony as he would be dangerous for them because of the love he has for Caesar. Brutus find no reason to fear him because for all his love for Caesar, all he can do is kill himself or die of his grief. Since he enjoys sports and happy company, he will not kill himself. Trebonius opines Antony will only laugh at the murder of Caesar in future.

Cassius is in doubt about Caesar's appearance in the Capitol next day. Lately, he has been superstitious at the unusual terror of this night and the warning of the seers which may keep him from the Capitol today. Decius takes the charge to bring Caesar out of his house. Decius knows the art of taming Caesar. He intends to bring Caesar to the designated spot of murder by the eight hour.

Metellus suggests to include Ligarius in the group since he too hates Caesar. It was Caesar who scolded him for speaking well of Pompey. Brutus agrees to include Metellus in their conspiracy. He also instructs the group to behave like actors and warns not to reveal their purpose through their faces.

Brutus and his wife Portia are in a conversation. Portia is worried about her husband's health. She has noticed Brutus not being himself lately and is anxious to know the cause of his grief. Brutus agrees to reveal the secrets of his heart.

Ligarius has come to meet Brutus and he addresses him as the soul of Rome, a brave son of honourable parents who has revived his spirits. Personally, Brutus feels sick of the conspiracy, it weighs heavy on his heart. Ligarius follows Brutus even without knowing the true intention.

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The scene shows the psychological disorder in Brutus' mind. The political confusion in Rome is paralleled by the confusion in Brutus' mind, and both are mirrored in the tumult of the storm. Brutus' thoughts are guided by his strong sense of duty. He abhors tyranny so much that he is prepared to kill the man whom he loves to prevent him from inflicting the slightest punishment to Rome. At the same time, he is perturbed about this decision which is evident in his attempts to justify the murder of Caesar and the description of his state of mind. He is rationally persuaded that he should kill Caesar, but is instinctively recoiling from the deed. Brutus' stand is further cleared as to why he does not want Caesar to be the king of Rome.

The internal conflict is evident by the outer conflict. The darkness outside suggests the darkness that will veil Rome. The storm is used to display the condition of Brutus' mind and heart. Oscillating between his friendship for Caesar and his commitment to the values of Rome, Brutus finally decides to kill Brutus. The outside turmoil presents the turmoil existing in the minds of other people. The storm and the ill omens are signs of disharmony in heaven as well as on the earth. It may also be interpreted as an indication of God's unacceptance of the plan to kill Caesar.

Cassius is able to win Brutus on their side. Most of the conspirators have personal motives and vendetta behind killing Caesar. Only Brutus wants him to be killed because of the good of Rome. The conspirators, except for Cassius underestimate the bond and the strength of Antony to react after the assassination of Caesar. Cassius alone could foresee what he is capable of. But others dismissed him as a mere frolicking person than a giant political force. It is he who will change the mind of the crowd with his rhetoric and turns them against the conspirators.

Brutus is also aware of the evil of conspiracy. It has to be covered even at night. The reference to Erebus in this Act was, in Greek mythology, to the dark underground passage to Hell. It was born of Chaos. Chaos was the primordial void that existed before order was created in the universe and from which all things, including the gods, proceeded. Immediately following the reference, Cassius and the other conspirators emerge from the dark, chaotic night and take their places in the dark and chaotic history of Rome that will follow the death of Caesar.

The scene of Brutus and his wife Portia in their garden is significant because we see Brutus first time in his private space. Brutus is gentle with his servant and respectful to his wife. He expresses concern over Portia's health. Brutus is a man who can feel deeply about people and their situations. He chooses to deny those feelings in public in an effort to maintain his honourable and stoic image. It is through Portia we come to know how much Brutus has changed.

Portia is a strong woman. She is proud of her lineage. She is not afraid to confront her husband demanding to know why he is so troubled. Portia does not allow Brutus to cover his activities with evasive stories about ill health. Portia reminds Brutus of her heritage and by association hopes to convince Brutus that she is stronger than the majority of wives. To prove her fearlessness, constancy, and equality, she shows Brutus the wound she has made on her thigh. The ability to suffer silently was highly prized as a Roman virtue and, by wounding herself, Portia seeks to prove herself constant and worthy of Brutus' trust. Brutus, in one of his most sincere and heartfelt responses tells Portia that she is a true and honourable wife. She is the one who can understand the true feelings of his heart.

Act II, Scene II: Caesar's House

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream. Caesar commands the priest to make sacrifices to appease the gods and wants to hear the news of the success of the sacrifices. He urges to go out but his wife stops him because of the omens in which Calpurnia has never believed before. Calpurnia describes the omens. She heard that a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.

According to Caesar, nothing that the gods have planned can be avoided and these omens can be for anyone as much as for him. However, comets are seen and the heavens themselves blaze forth only for the death of princes, not for the death of beggars. The omens foreshadow the calamity to strike a royal personage and not a commoner. Caesar is adamant to go, for he believes cowards die many times before their deaths while the valiant dies only once. Men do not fear death since death is a necessary end; it will come when it is destined. The servant also comes with the news from the priests that Caesar should not go out of his house since they did not find the heart in the beast upon its sacrifice. Caesar says he would be a beast without a heart if he stayed at home out of fear. Cowardice is not Caesar. Danger and Caesar are like two lions from the same litter, and he is more dangerous than danger itself. So Caesar shall go to the Capitol. According to Calpurnia, Caesar's wisdom has been overcome by his confidence. She suggests him to send Antony to inform the senate that he is unwell. Just when Caesar agrees to his wife's request, Decius comes in to take him to the Senate.

Caesar tells Decius to inform the Senate that he will not come. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells the Senate that Calpurnia does not want Caesar to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an omen. Calpurnia begs him on her knees to stay at home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a positive sign. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. Caesar, ironically, wants to depart with the group to the senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true.

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Caesar's personality is further revealed. He cannot be accepted as a coward, no matter what may come. He can easily be manipulated in the name of courage and mettle. He is flattered by Decius. Caesar does want the crown and immediately wishes to go on listening to Decius about the senate's decision to offer him the crown today. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end. Others look happy but not Brutus. He is pained by the whole conspiracy; however, he does not express his feelings of pain explicitly. He comes across as a tormented soul.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Caesar puts on the same public image even in his privacy with his wife. Frightened Calpurnia is agitated by Caesar's refusal to acknowledge the premonitions of gods. For the first time, she accuses him of letting his wisdom be destroyed by his pride. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him not to go.

The sighting of a comet was considered to be the sign of death of a monarch. In July (the month of Caesar's birth) of 44 BC, four months after Caesar's death, a comet, so bright that it could be seen during the day, was observed for seven days in the skies above Rome. Octavius Caesar utilizes the phenomenon to encourage the myth of Caesar's deification. The beast was without a heart. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. His conspirators will murder him.

Act II, Scene III: Between Caesar's House and the Senate

Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends. There is but one mind in all these men and it is bent against Caesar. He has to look around if he fears death because feeling safe makes a conspiracy easier. He prays for his well-being. Artemidorus' heart aches that virtue cannot remain devoid of envy's reach. If Caesar reads it he may live, if not, the fates are working with the traitors. This scene informs that others are also aware of the conspiracy. The effort of Artemidorus confirms that Caesar does have his supporters and well-wishers who want him to be saved.

According to Plutarch, Artemidorus was a professor of rhetoric. He had taught and was associated with many of Brutus' confidants. Therefore, he knew of the plot against Caesar. Artemidorus, listing the conspirators by name, has put his information in a letter that he intends to convey to Caesar as he approaches the Capitol. His attempt to save Caesar illustrates that Caesar has supporters as well as enemies, and, for the first time in the play, the conspirators are referred to as traitors.

Act II, Scene IV: Before Brutus' House

In this scene, Brutus shares the secret of Caesar's assignation with Portia. She is anxious to hear news from the Capitol. She is also afraid that in her nervousness she might reveal the secret and put her husband into danger. Burdened with the secrets, she has become hysterical to such an extent that she hears noises. Portia sees the soothsayer and asks him where he is going. The soothsayer is on his way to the Capitol to warn Caesar to guard himself, only if Caesar pays heed to his warning. The reappearance of the soothsayer at this point increases the tension. Portia, overcome by the emotional turmoil of the day, becomes unconscious. She

blames her polite nature for her weakness. She offers prayers for the success of her husband and exits from the scene.

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

The scene brings forth another trait of Brutus that he is faithful towards his wife. He had promised to disclose everything that keeps him awake. Brutus has indeed kept his promise to reveal all his secrets to his wife. Portia calls upon constancy to help her guard the secret. She does not want her heart and tongue to have contrary interests. Portia's condition reveals her anxiety. She finds it difficult to keep the secret in her bosom.

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2.4.3 Act III

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act III.

Act III, Scene I: Outside the Capitol

This scene takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience. Trumpets sound. Caesar, Antony, Brutus, and all the other conspirators enter the stage.

Caesar mockingly tells the soothsayer that the ides of March has come; soothsayer retorts that it has not passed yet. Artemidorus, giving the letter to Caesar, insists he should read it right away as it concerns him. Caesar does not read it. Popilius wishes Cassius good luck for the farewell. Cassius is troubled thinking their plan has been discovered. Brutus asks him not to worry. Trebonius takes Antony away with him.

Inside the Senate, Metellus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog. Caesar praises himself saying he does not act unjustly and will not change his mind without a just cause. The laws are the same for all. Brutus speaks in the favour of Metellus' brother Publius Cimber, and requests that he should be called back. Cassius joins them in begging for Publius. Caesar eloquently praises himself and says that he is as constant as the northern star, which is unlike all other stars in the sky. The skies are filled with million sparks. All are fire and everyone does shine, but only one holds its place. The world is the same, all men are flesh and blood but only one keeps his strong position and does not move. While all men kneel, Casca is the first one to stab Caesar, others follow him and Brutus is the last one to stab Julius Caesar. Julius' last words are 'Even you, Brutus' as he dies falling on the ground.

Cinna shouts 'Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead.' According to Brutus, Caesar's death symbolizes that ambition's debt is paid. They request the senate to stay calm. They ask Publius to stop if any of Caesar's friends tries to harm them. Brutus does not want anyone else except the conspirators to pay for it or get hurt if at all. Antony flees to his house, stunned men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run as if the world was coming to an end. Cassius says by cutting off twenty years of Caesar's life they have cut off so many years of anticipatory death. Brutus calls upon the murderers to bend and fill their hands with Caesar's blood up to the elbows, and smear their swords as well with his blood. He asks them to walk in the marketplace, waving their blood drenched daggers over their heads, and loudly screaming 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!' Cassius remarks they will be remembered in history as men who gave liberty and freedom to Rome.

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Antony's servant brings his message for Brutus. Brutus is noble, wise, brave, and honest. Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving. Brutus feared, loved and honoured him. If Brutus will let Antony come to him in safety, and tell why Caesar deserved to die, he will show Brutus' due respect and love for him. He will follow Brutus in his new role, with all true faith. Calling Antony wise and valiant, Brutus sends the servant to tell Antony to come and meet him and all his questions will be answered.

Antony enters and seeing the body of Caesar says mighty Caesar lies so low, all his conquests, glories, triumphs, has shrunk to this small size. Antony says he is unaware of the intentions of Brutus and the other conspirators. If they intend to kill him then there is no better hour than Caesar's hour of death and no weapons worth half as much as their swords made rich with the noblest blood. There will not be any better time and place to die than next to Caesar and by those bloody hands which still stench and smoke.

Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity. Just as fire drives out fire so does pity drives out pity. The murderers are full of pity for the wrongs suffered by Rome which has ultimately resulted in the assassination of Julius Caesar. But for Antony, there is just kind love and respect. Cassius adds that Antony will have a strong say in the selection of the leaders of Rome. Antony shakes each bloody hand in alliance, saying he can be seen either as a coward or a flatterer. It would grieve Caesar's spirit, more than his death. He expresses his love for Caesar. Antony extols Caesar's courage and asks for making peace with his murderers. Antony remarks that Caesar is laid on the ground like a deer struck by many princes.

Cassius doubts Antony's intentions as Antony offers his friendship but demands the reason for killing Caesar. He wants to know in what ways Caesar would be dangerous. Brutus says, listening to the reasons for killing Julius Caesar, even his son would be satisfied. Antony wants his friend's body to be brought to the market place so that he can speak at his funeral. Cassius asks Brutus if Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral can deeply move the people. Brutus decides to be the first one to speak on Caesar's funeral listing the reasons for his assassination. Brutus makes it clear to Antony that he may praise Caesar but will not speak a word against him and his friends. Antony agrees. All exit except Antony. Antony cries with a saddened heart. He asks for forgiveness for being meek and gentle with Caesar's murderers. Calling Caesar a piece of earth, his ruins be that of the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times. He curses the hands that killed this noble blood. A curse shall fall upon the limbs of men. Antony predicts a violent civil war that will shake Italy. Blood and cruelty will become common. Caesar's spirit, eager for revenge, will cry havoc.

Antony gets the information that Octavius Caesar is on his way as Julius Caesar had sent him a letter to come to Rome. Octavius is camping just 20 miles from Rome. Octavius' servant sees the dead body of Caesar and cries. Antony commands the servant to report about the turmoil in Rome and cautions him it is dangerous for him to stay here. Antony asks the servant to help him to take Caesar's body to the marketplace. He decides to make a speech and see what is the reaction of the common public to this act of assassination.

Act III, Scene II: In the Marketplace

Brutus addresses the citizens of Rome and tells them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requests them to be patient until the end of his speech. He requests them

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to judge him wisely. Brutus' love of Caesar was no less than a friend. He weeps for Caesar whom he loved and respected for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar any less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave; no one will be vile not to love his country. Antony comes with the body of Caesar. Brutus informs the citizens that Antony was not involved in killing Caesar, but does benefit from it. He, like all the citizens of Rome, shall have a place in the ruling of their country. Brutus ends his speech saying just as he killed his best friend for the good of Rome; he will have the same dagger for himself when it shall please Romans to require him dead. Citizens praise Brutus and some shout to give honour to Caesar. While others are elated that Rome is rid of Caesar, the tyrant.

Antony starts the funeral speech. He says that he has come to bury Caesar and not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and their good deed is often buried with their dead body. The same will happen with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions.

Rhetorically, Antony starts praising Caesar as a faithful friend who was always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. Yet Brutus says that Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercalia, Caesar was presented with the kingly crown three times, and every time he refused. Here he stands not to refute Brutus but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now stopped them from mourning for him? Antony cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies; he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Roman come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg one strand of his hair for memory. Refusing to read the will, Antony claims that the crowd will be moved by it and he will wrong the honourable men Brutus and his friends who killed Caesar. Citizens call them traitors, murderers, and villains and urge Antony to read the will. He asks the citizens to make a ring around Caesar's corpse. He shows them the marks where he has been stabbed by Brutus and his allies. Brutus' cut was the unkindest of all because Caesar dearly loved him. All of them cry looking at Caesar's corpse drenched in blood. Now they shout out for revenge. Antony says he is not here to steal their hearts. He is not a fine speaker as Brutus.

Moreover, if these wise and honourable men have killed Caesar then there must have been a good reason. He does not want to stir their feelings. He would let the wounds talk for them. But if he were Brutus and Brutus were Antony, there would be an Antony who would stir the spirits of nation until every wound of Caesar would cry out, and move the very stones of Rome to rise in mutiny. As the citizens are ready to go and kill Brutus, Antony stops them to hear the will. It grants every Roman citizen 75 drachmas. He has also left all his walks, his private arbors, and new-planted orchards along the Tiber river for the Roman citizens and their heirs to enjoy forever. This was Caesar. Such men rarely come to earth to rule. Citizens exit with the body of Caesar.

A servant brings the news of the arrival of Octavius at Rome who waits at Caesar's house along with Lepidus. Brutus and his friends have fled Rome like madmen.

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This scene reveals information about Antony more than anyone else. The fear of Cassius that if Antony is left alive he will avenge Caesar comes true. Antony emerges as a strong politician who has the ability to turn the tide in his favour with his words. He is a loyal friend of Caesar and loved him dearly. With his heart set on taking revenge on the murderers of Caesar, he commands the attention of the crowd, convinces them that Caesar was not as ambitious as he was thought to be, aroused the sentiments of the crowd, turns them into a blood thirsty and violent mob, who kills Cinna the poet in their rage. The mob here displays its tendency of being persuaded easily through words alone.

Act III, Scene III: Street in Rome

Cinna, the poet, had a dream that he feasted with Caesar. It indicates that Cinna feels that what has happened to Caesar will also happen to him, that is, he will be killed. He will share the same fate as Caesar. He does not want to wander outside but something pulls him not to be on the street. Cinna encounters a hysterical mob. They demand to know his name. As soon as he says his name is Cinna they do not wait to listen his complete answer. He is mistaken to be Cinna the conspirator and is murdered.

The wild crowd incited by Antony's passionate funeral speech is looking for revenge. Innocent Cinna, the poet becomes a victim of the mob's mentality that overpowers reason completely. The incident sets the stage for civil strife in Rome.

2.4.4 Act IV

This section give an overview of the summary of Act IV.

Act IV, Scene I: A House in Rome. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus

The triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will. Antony makes it clear that all the conspirators should die, including Lepidus' brother and Publius, Octavius' sister's son. Antony sends Lepidus to fetch Caesar's will. Antony calls Lepidus an unimportant man, fit to be sent on errands and is not sure to share power equally with Octavius and Antony. Octavius mocks Antony for taking advice from Lepidus as to who will be punished. Antony says he took advice to lay these honours on this man to ease the burden of some of the blame which Lepidus will carry as a donkey carries groaning gold and sweating under the load, either led or driven, as they point the way. And once he takes their treasure where they want, they will take down his load and turn him out like a donkey, to shake his ears and graze in the pastures. Though, Octavius says Lepidus has proven himself and is a brave soldier. Antony compares Lepidus to his horse who has also proven his worth for which he is given hay. He is a creature whom Antony has taught to fight, to turn, to stop, to go ahead. His body is controlled by Antony's spirit. Lepidus is just like that; fit to be thought of as a property. Antony informs Octavius of Brutus and Cassius raising armies and suggests to act in the right away. They need to prepare for war by gathering their most trusted friends to form armies.

The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans—Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius

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opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together. They both exhibited power struggles and their differences openly, but remained united in their purposes. The scene exhibits the futility of the motivations of Brutus to kill Caesar. Instead, Rome experienced civil war, differences between the senators, and battles. Not harmony but discord is witnessed by Rome.

Act IV, Scene II: An Army Camp, near Sardis

Brutus is camping with his army in Sardis. He has sent for Cassius. Lucilius tells Brutus that Cassius received him politely but not with the same warmth and friendliness as he showed him in the past. Brutus replies when love begins to decay, it becomes forced ceremony. There are no tricks in plain and simple faith. But hollow men are like horses before a race. They promise spirit and make a brave show, but during the race, they break down, hence, failing in the test.

Cassius arrives and accuses Brutus of doing him wrong. To which Brutus says if he cannot wrong his enemies how can he do wrong to his brother. Brutus stops him from any argument in front of the army. The army should see only their love; else their morale will be affected. Cassius can vent his anger in Brutus' tent.

The relationship between Brutus and Cassius has declined over the period. The issue of friendship once again comes to the fore. Brutus clearly indicates that friendship between the two has deteriorated.

Act IV, Scene III: In Brutus' Tent

Cassius complains that Brutus publicly accused Lucius Pella of taking bribes. Since Cassius knows him, he writes a letter speaking for his side, but Brutus ignores him. Brutus accuses Cassius of having an itching palm and of selling honours for gold, to men who do not deserve them. A heated argument ensues between them and Brutus says he killed Caesar for justice and he will not let Cassius do any fraud. Brutus also says that he will not raise gold and money by evil means. He will not behave with his friends like Cassius did. Cassius feels Brutus has split his heart. He questions Brutus' definition of friendship. A friend should accept the faults of his friend rather than highlight them. But Brutus has made Cassius' faults look greater than they are. Cassius accuses him of not loving him while Brutus says it is his faults that he does not support.

Heartbroken Cassius does not mind young Octavius and Antony comes and takes revenge upon Octavius alone. Cassius is weary of the world as he is hated by the one he loves like his brother. This brother (Brutus) scolded him like a slave, listed all his faults and threw back at him. He weeps and offers his dagger to Brutus, tells Brutus to kill him. Cassius tells him to strike him like he did Caesar. The more he hated Caesar, the more he loves him. Commenting on Cassius' anger Brutus compares it with a flint that bears spark. They make peace.

Brutus says he is sick with grief. Portia, his wife is dead. She was depressed and swallowed burning coals. Cassius and Brutus agree that Octavius and Antony have made themselves very strong. Others join them for wine and war strategy.

Antony and Octavius are heading towards Phillipi with their mighty army. Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus have put hundred senators to death and seized their property. Antony also ordered the killing of Cicero and Octavius supported it. Brutus wants to march towards Phillipi while Cassius does not want to do that. Cassius shows disagreement but Brutus listens to none. Finally, Cassius agrees.

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Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar in his tent, which terrifies him. The ghost calls himself the evil spirit of Brutus and tells him that he will meet him at Phillipi. He sends his servant with a message for Cassius to leave with his forces early morning and he will follow them.

The clash between Brutus and Cassius is indeed a clash between idealism and realism. The clash highlights the issues of ethics and morality. Cassius is a realist who understands that an army cannot be maintained without huge amount of money. This sum cannot be raised ethically; therefore, Cassius resorted to bribery. In times of need it should be considered deprived. Brutus, living up to his ethics, does not subscribe to Cassius under any circumstance. He condemns bribe taking, it is corruption. It is ironical because for all his idealism and ethics, Brutus led the group of conspirators into killing Caesar.

The argument between Brutus and Cassius becomes a childish quarrel. Brutus belittles and intimidates Cassius. Throughout the argument, he asserts his moral and ethical superiority. His ego increases as the scene progresses and he resembles Caesar evermore in being a dictator. The disintegration of the argument also shows the decline of Cassius' personality who appeared confident and unruffled while conspiring a murder. Brutus eclipsed Cassius with his arrogance and conceit. It is the same Cassius who manipulated Brutus, Casca and others. The emotional side of Cassius is foregrounded. He renounces his own better judgment to please Brutus. He displays his love and friendship for Brutus and feels betrayed. He is dejected and subdued.

The short episode of the poet and his earnest advice to love and be friends carries deeper overtones. The original motive behind killing Caesar is completely lost. The promise of holding up to the ideals of republic in Rome is crushed. No one is seen holding the flag of love for Rome and Romans, love for freedom, love between friends, love for the country, and love of the Roman ideals. The poet, doing justice to his job, lays bare the truth. It is only ambition, for which Caesar was assassinated, that steers the politics of Rome. Rome is on the verge of annihilation. Brutus dismisses the poet as an empty and vulgar fool, thereby disregarding everything that he endorsed.

The appearance of the ghost is not a figment of Shakespeare's imagination. It has been taken from Plutarch's *Lives*. The ghost identifies itself as the evil spirit of Brutus. The ghost can be taken as the manifestation of Brutus. It may be the guilty conscience of Brutus or his troubled mind. From the beginning, we have been introduced to the internal conflict in Brutus on the conspiracy to kill Caesar. The mayhem that Rome witnesses, subconsciously troubles him more for being the cause of chaos and immoral act of murder. The ghost may also be taken as the ghost of Caesar fulfilling Antony's prophecy that the ghost of Caesar will appear, as an omen of Brutus' death.

2.4.5 Act V

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act V.

Act V, Scene I: The Plain of Philippi

The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle. A messenger brings the news of arrival of the enemy forces. Antony commands Octavius to fight from the left. First Octavius refuses and finally agrees. Octavius

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is being referred to as Caesar by Antony. He asks for Antony's instruction to attack but Antony wants Brutus' army to attack first. Brutus inquires is it for verbal combat they have stopped, since good words are better than bad strokes. Antony mocks at Brutus for his good words delivered with bad strokes. He means the hole that he made in Caesar's heart, crying 'Long live! Hail, Caesar!'

Cassius tells Antony that the strength of his blows is yet unknown. But his words, at Caesar's funeral, robbed the bees of their honey. He compares Antony's words with honey; they were eloquent to move people into frenzy. Angrily, Antony takes on Brutus and Cassius, calls them villains, who in the guise of being friends, licking Caesar's feet and with flattery, attacked Julius Caesar and killed him. Cassius reminds Brutus of the advice he had given to kill Antony alongside Caesar. If Cassius' words were respected, Antony would not have stung them with his words on the battlefield. Octavius insults Brutus and Cassius saying neither will have the honour to kill Octavius. He draws his sword and vows to avenge thirty three wounds inflicted on Julius Caesar. Brutus tells Octavius that he will not die at the hands of traitors unless he brings them along. Octavius remarks he will not die by Brutus' sword. Offended Brutus tells young Octavius, if he had been from a noble family like Brutus himself he would not have got a better death than to die at Brutus' hands. Octavius was just twenty-one year old at this time. Cassius insults both Caesar and Antony, calls Octavius a peevish school boy worthless of the honour to die with the sword of Brutus and Antony. Antony and Octavius leave challenging Brutus and his company.

Cassius says everything is at stake now. While Brutus and Lucilius talk apart, Cassius tells Messala that it is his birthday. He wants Messala to be a witness to the battle that was fought against his will just as Pompey fought a battle with Julius Caesar at Pharsalia against his better judgment and was defeated. This refers to the Epicurean way of life. Epicurus was a Greek philosopher and Cassius as a believer in his teachings, would not have admitted the evidence of omens. But now Cassius has changed his mind, he gives credit to omens to predict the future. While coming from Sardines two eagles perched on his soldiers and feed on their flesh. All those who accompanied them to Phillipi have left. In their place ravens, crows and kites fly over their heads and look down on them as if they are prey. Their fatal shadows are cast over them like a canopy. He says he is full of new spirit now and ready to face the dangers of war with fortitude.

Cassius and Brutus do not know whether they will see each other again, therefore, they talk to decide what to do if they lose the battle. Brutus does not wish to commit suicide since he believes in the Stoic philosophy which considers suicide cowardly. Till the time of his death he will patiently await the judgment of providence. Cassius asks him if he will be ready to be led in triumph through the streets of Rome if they lose the war. Brutus refuses to be taken hostage in chains on the streets of Rome. They leave to end the work begun on the Ides of March. Brutus and Cassius feel that they may lose the war, therefore, bid farewell to each other. Cassius says if they meet again they will greet each other with a smile and if they do not then this parting will be a good one.

From the conversation between Antony and Octavius, we come to know that Brutus and Cassius have descended from the hills onto the plains and Antony is amazed as well as thankful at the turn of the events. It was Brutus' unwise decision and Cassius confirms it while talking to Messala. Cassius, who could manipulate Brutus was now being led into unwise decision by him. He has definitely changed

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by now. He submits to the will of Brutus even against his better judgment leading himself into a life-threatening situation. He shows his discontentment with Brutus but only to Messala. His refers to birds namely, eagle, raven, kite and crows who are associated with death. His belief in Epicurean philosophy that gods do not meddle with human events gives way to the Stoic philosophy of predestined fate. The scene also reveals the differences between Octavius and Antony who are together only against the same enemy.

Act V, Scene II and III: The Battlefield

Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men. Brutus gives orders to Messala to command the whole army to come down from the heights and attack Caesar's camp since they lack the fighting spirit. Brutus' army overpowers Octavius' army. Brutus sends the news of victory to Cassius. Cassius' army is fighting with Antony's men. Brutus' men instead of helping Cassius and his men start celebrating their premature victory.

Cassius is defeated by Antony and Antony after reaching his tents informs Pindarus of his victory. Cassius sends Titans to see whose men are they in his tent and tells Pindarus to climb up the hill and look for Titans. The day of his birth will also be the day of his death, says Cassius. Pindarus tells him that Titans has been captured by the enemies. Cassius asks Pindarus, his slave to kill him. Pindarus stabs Cassius who dies. His last words denote the fact that Caesar is avenged with the same sword that stabbed him. Pindarus runs far away from Rome, to his freedom. Brutus won over the troops of Octavius and Antony won over Cassius' troops. Titinius comes back to give the news of Brutus' win just to see that Cassius is dead, who would have thought they have lost the battle. He says Cassius misunderstood everything. He crowns Cassius, calls him the sun of Rome. Messala regrets the misunderstanding on Cassius' part. He leaves to give the news of Cassius' death to Brutus to whose ears it will sound like darts. Titinus wishes that Cassius had understood well the victorious shouts. He makes Cassius wear the garland Brutus has given him. He takes Cassius' sword and asks the gods to allow him to take his life, thus, killing himself.

Brutus enters with Messala, young Cato and others. When he sees Cassius and Titinus, he calls Julius Caesar mighty even after death whose spirit moves around in the battlefield inflicting wounds on their bodies. He calls Cassius the last of the Romans, there will be no one of his kind ever. He owes more tears to Cassius than he can shed. Brutus sends his body for funeral. Brutus, with others, leaves for the battlefield to try their fortune the second time.

In this Act, Cassius is overcome with melancholy. He has resigned to his fate and is almost sure to die. Brutus says with the death of Cassius, the ideals of freedom and liberty of Rome held dear by both are thrown away. Brutus does not exhibit pain on Cassius' death in public. He does not wish to see the funeral also because that would make him emotionally incapacitated.

Act V, Scene IV and V: The Battlefield

Young Cato calls himself the enemy of all tyrants. He dies fighting. Lucilius, pretending to be Brutus, is captured by Antony's soldier. Lucilius says he has surrendered only to die. He tells Antony that Brutus is safe and no one can capture Brutus alive. Gods will defend Brutus and if they find him alive or dead, he will be

true to himself. Impressed by Lucilius' love and loyalty to Brutus, he commands his soldiers to keep Lucilius alive. He likes to keep such men as friends and not as enemies. Antony tells his soldiers to find out Brutus and inform him in Octavius' tent. He suggests the soldier to kill him and then kill Brutus that would give him honour. They have actually captured a soldier who is posing as Brutus.

Brutus has lost the final battle. He tells his friend, his fellow soldiers about the appearance of Caesar's ghost several times to him both at Sardis and Philippi. He knows he has to die now. He asks Strato to hold his sword and runs into it. Brutus dies saying he did not kill Caesar with even the half the goodwill with which he kills himself. Octavius comes to look for Brutus. Strato tells him no one can conquer Brutus. Brutus alone has conquered Brutus. No other man gains honour by his death.

Octavius declares to accept all those who served Brutus into his service. Messala gives permission to Strato to go in the service of Octavius. Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. Octavius offered Brutus all the respect and rites of burial because of his virtue.

The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.

2.5 THEMES AND LITERARY DEVICES

Let us study the major themes and literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

Themes

Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy. The question central to the play is whether Caesar actually had the ambition to become a king, and thereby establish his authoritarian rule. In this regard, the perspective of various characters is taken into account. Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators judge all his actions to be ambitious. Ambition in the Elizabethan sense meant to be all-powerful. Antony, in the funeral speech, recounts the qualities which do not make him ambitious enough to be a threat to the Roman republic and its people and, hence, be murdered. Caesar's assassination is presented from conflicting perspectives of Brutus and Antony during the funeral speeches. Caesar's ambition is used as a reason by Brutus to justify his murder. Ironically, the assassination only leads to civil war in Rome, disturbing the general harmony and peace of Rome, not intended by the conspirators.

The public versus the private space is an important theme in the play. Most of the play is set in the public spaces of Rome. In Act II, Brutus and Caesar are found in their respective houses. In their private spaces too these statesman are never alone. Brutus opens up to himself in his own house. He is gentle to his servant and respectful and caring towards Portia. In private, Caesar, too, is alarmed by the portents. He instructs his servant to have the priests sacrifice an animal. As soon as Calpurnia enters, Caesar again wears his public mask and once again speaks with pride. Even with his wife, the privacy of his own house, Caesar is reluctant to part

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Check Your Progress

10. How does the play *Julius Caesar* begin?
11. Give an example of the use of superstition in the play.
12. What are the omens witnessed by Calpurnia in her dream?
13. How is the death of Caesar avenged?

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with his glorified and conceited image. Portia is able to assert her authority over Brutus who gives her advice to him. Caesar does not pay heed to his wife's words.

Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate. Brutus tries to choose between his friend and Rome, and he chooses Rome. Even Brutus is pursued to join the conspiracy not for friendship but because he is seen as noble and respectful by the plebeians. His presence will make the immoral act acceptable and worthy. Antony is a loyal friend of Caesar till the end of the play. He ensures that the conspirators are punished and moves the crowd to frenzy who demand justice and revenge. Friendship between Cassius and Brutus ceases by the end of the play. We notice a lack of warmth and friendliness between the two leading conspirators. Brutus taking a high moral ground snubs Cassius for his immoral actions and corruption. As a result, Cassius is seen forlorn and dejected at the end of the play.

Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in the play *Julius Caesar*. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other. Rhetoric is central to the politics of Rome as well as to the development of the plot. It not only represents but also constructs political reality. In the opening scene, the tribunes rebuke the commoners celebrating Julius Caesar's triumphant return after victory over Pompey. They give a fine speech to make the revellers feel ashamed of the celebrations. Cassius manipulates Brutus and Casca to join the conspiracy to murder Caesar. Decius uses the art of manipulation to take Caesar to the senate. After the murder of Julius Caesar, it is Mark Antony who uses rhetoric to move the mob in the favour of Caesar and avenge the murder of his beloved friend. Most of the manipulation that occurs in the play is either achieved by the use of flattery or by instilling fear.

Suicide was condemned in stoic philosophy. However, from the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, if it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act. For Cassius, living under the tyranny of Caesar was unthinkable. Thus, death would become his only alternative. Brutus who was a stoic philosopher commits suicide to avoid tyranny at the hands of Octavius and Antony. The others from Brutus' army die to show loyalty to their masters.

Throughout the play, many actions of the characters are influenced by their own free will and yet others are directed by fate. Cassius uses the concept of free will to persuade Brutus to remove Caesar from power. Cassius says that it is the fault of the Romans that they follow Caesar with all servility. Human beings are masters of their fates, therefore, they decide whether Caesar should be a king or not. Brutus willingly convicts himself to murder Caesar. The conspirators together assert their free will by killing Caesar. Caesar dismisses the soothsayer as a dreamer. However, the fate is displayed through many portents and warnings. The soothsayer forces death for Caesar on the ides of March. He ignores his wife's dreams and all the other portents. The poet Cinna says he did not want to come out on the roads. He has dreamt of having the same fate as that of Caesar. He is mauled by the frenzied crowd.

Conflict in *Julius Caesar* is both external and internal. External conflict reflects the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar because of the differences in the political ideologies between the conspirators and Julius Caesar. At the end of the play, the

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war between the triumvirate as one army and Brutus and Cassius as another depict the power struggle. Internal conflict is experienced the most by Brutus before he finally decides to kill Caesar. He struggles to choose between his duty to uphold Republican idealism of Rome being challenged by the growing ambition of Caesar and his love and friendship with Caesar. His soliloquy reveals his inner thoughts and his motives behind killing his friend.

Shakespeare makes use of the supernatural events, circumstances or agencies to influence the action and the lives of the major characters. The play is full of omens and prophesies that come true. These agencies also undermine the sense that characters can exercise free will and influence the outcomes of their lives. Superstitions are attached to many natural occurrences. A falling comet indicates the death of a monarch. The omens foreshadow the murder of Caesar as well as subsequent chaos and mayhem in the city of Rome. The priests did not find the heart in the beast sacrificed for Caesar's good health which also indicates his impending death. The birds kite, eagle, ravens and crows seen hovering over the army of Cassius also indicate death.

Nature in Shakespeare's plays is often held as a mirror to the mind and heart of his characters. Nature appears in a distinct form to indicate the inward movements and working of the mind of the characters. The outside turmoil represents the inner upheaval which perturbs Brutus ceaselessly. This chaos in the universe also foreshadows the state of Rome in the near future. To Cassius, it is a sign from gods to carry on with their conspiracy and free Rome from tyranny. The heavy storm creates a sombre mood, foreboding a calamity. It sets the mood and tone of the play. It is also taken as the emotional burst of the gods. Casca calls the storm and thunder representing the wrath of gods on the deeds of human beings.

There are two women characters in the play, Portia and Calpurnia. Portia is Brutus' wife and Calpurnia is Caesar's wife. They occupy a secondary position in the play as compared with their male counterparts, even though most of their opinions are strong and their fears real. Caesar totally disregards Calpurnia's ominous dream. They are not taken seriously and their fears and opinion are disregarded. Portia submits to the idea that women are feeble and erratic who cannot keep secrets. They also represent the private and domestic realm. Both women plead with their husbands to be more aware of their private needs and feelings. Nonetheless, Caesar and Brutus rebuff the pleas of their respective wives. Their priority is duty as a senator and in the matters of public opinion. Calpurnia and Portia are powerless figures, although willing yet unable to help and comfort Caesar and Brutus.

Ambition resounds as one of the themes in the play. Brutus convicts himself to kill Caesar because he finds him ambitious. He believes that Caesar's ambitions are in conflict with the concept of Roman Republicanism. If he becomes the king, the values for which Rome stands that is, freedom and liberty will be lost in the dictatorship of a tyrant. Whatever Brutus believes is his own point of view. Antony declares that had Julius Caesar been ambitious to such an extent to be a threat to Rome and its people then he would not have refused the crown thrice in the public.

Literary Devices

Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement. When Antony repeats that Brutus and his co-conspirators are 'honourable men' in his funeral speech, he

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ironically uses words 'honourable' and 'noble'. The two words are resonant in Roman culture, and Antony's ironical usage of the two words proves to be tremendously detrimental to the politics of Rome. He does not consider the conspirators to be honourable. Brutus is the man who repeats the soothsayer's warning to Caesar, and ironically he is the man who leads the conspiracy.

Pun denotes a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply different in significance. In the opening scene, a cobbler uses pun on the word cobbler which means bungler as well as the shoemaker. He continues to have verbal fun at the expense of Marullus and Flavius.

Foreshadowing means the warning or the indication of something to happen in the future. There are several examples of anticipatory warnings evident in the play. For example, the conversation between Brutus and Cassius, the soothsayer's warning, heavy thunder and storm, lions roaming the capitol, ghostly women walking the streets, Armetelius' letter, and many other events all foreshadow the assassination of Caesar, disrupting the political situation of Rome, followed by mayhem and chaos in the city.

Imagery refers to the images taken collectively, and is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in the works of literature, whether by literal description, allusion, or through similes and metaphors. Caesar is described as a falcon whose power will be weak if his popular support is withdrawn. The image of the storm infuses fear, terror and anxiety in the characters as well the readers. The images of infirmities of Caesar are vividly drawn by Cassius to Brutus. Caesar metaphorically compares himself to the northern star because it the brightest and constant star in the sky. He says he cannot be swayed by anybody's opinion. He is the master of his own thoughts.

Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself. Playwrights have used this device as a convenient method of conveying information about a character's motives and state of mind, or as exposition, and sometimes with the objective of guiding the judgments and responses of the audience. Shakespeare has used soliloquy in his numerous plays as a vehicle to convey the thoughts and internal conflicts of the characters. In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus does not discuss about his inner life with anyone. It is through his soliloquy spoken in the garden where he expresses his state of psychological and emotional turmoil.

In literature, symbol is an object or event which signifies some feeling, trait, suggests a range of references, beyond itself. Signs and omens are interpreted as well as manipulated according to the whims of an individual. These omens are so vital in *Julius Caesar* that they become a thematic issue in the play. Casca, terrified by the storm, interprets it as a civil strife in the heaven or it seems that the gods are angry with the deeds of human beings. He fears that the gods do not approve of the conspiracy. A fallen comet stands for the death of a monarch; storm symbolizes the inner and the outer conflict. The northern star is the symbol of constancy.

Anachronism is the placing of an event or person or thing outside its historical context. Shakespeare has introduced a clock that strikes the hour in *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story took place to make it more accessible to his audience. The commoners walking without their signs of professions is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Another example of Shakespeare

using Elizabethan references in this scene is the reference to towers and chimney tops. There were no towers or chimneys in ancient Rome, but these anachronisms, chronologically misplaced events, words or details, bring the play into alignment with the experiences of the audience for whom the play was written.

William Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

2.6 SUMMARY

- John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557.
- Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company.
- In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600.
- *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to the early comedies. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat.
- Shakespeare's forte lies in character portrayal and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature.
- *Julius Caesar* is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623.
- The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.
- The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place.
- Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade.
- The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king.
- Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome.
- The political situation outlined in Act I scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king.

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Check Your Progress

14. Why is suicide considered an act of heroism from the perspective of the Romans?
15. Name the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. State the various literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

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- Act I reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue.
- The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar.
- Act II begins with Brutus, in his garden, contemplating on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar.
- Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he has found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters before.
- In Act II, Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream.
- In Act II, Scene III Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends.
- Act III takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience.
- Inside the senate, Metellus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog.
- Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity.
- In Act IV, the triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will.
- The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together.
- The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle in Act V.
- In Act V Scene II and III, Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men.
- The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.
- Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy.

- Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate.
- Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in Julius Caesar. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other.

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2.7 KEY TERMS

- **Rhetoric:** It is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing.
- **Ides of March:** It is a day on the Roman calendar that corresponds to 15 March. It was marked by several religious observances and became notorious as the date of the assassination of Julius Caesar.
- **Soothsayer:** It refers to a person who is supposed to be able to foresee the future.
- **Drachma:** The drachma was one of the world's earliest coins. Its name is derived from the Greek verb meaning 'to grasp', and its original value was equivalent to that of a handful of arrows.
- **Verbal irony:** It is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement.

2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. William Shakespeare was born in 1564.
2. In 1593, *Venus and Adonis* was published.
3. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's play, *Every Man in His Humour*.
4. Heming and Condell collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six plays of Shakespeare.
5. The first theatre in England was built in 1576.
6. John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.
7. The first English comedy was *Ralph Roister Doister*.
8. Some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' group are —*The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group.
9. Also called 'Problem Plays' or 'Bitter Comedies', 'The Sombre Plays' show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life.
10. The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.

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11. Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse.
12. Calpurnia describes that she heard a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.
13. The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators.
14. From the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, since it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act.
15. Portia and Calpurnia are the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. The use of verbal irony, foreshadowing, and anachronism are some of the literary devices used in the play.

2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare.
2. List the major plays written by Shakespeare.
3. Mention the salient features of Shakespeare's plays.
4. What are the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the evolution of English drama.
2. Explain the major classification of Shakespeare's plays.
3. Prepare an act-wise summary of the play *Julius Caesar*.
4. How is internal conflict evinced through external conflict in *Julius Caesar*?
5. Give examples of the use of literary devices in *Julius Caesar*.

2.10 FURTHER READING

- Griffin, Miriam (Ed.). 2015. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. United States: John Wiley & Sons.
- Thomson, Peter. 1992. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. United Kingdom: Psychology Press.
- Bergeron Moore, David. 1996. *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*. United States: Associated University Press.

UNIT 3 OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Life and Works of Oliver Goldsmith
- 3.3 Summary of the Play: *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 3.4 Act-Wise Summary of the Play
 - 3.4.1 Prologue
 - 3.4.2 Epilogue
 - 3.4.3 Themes and Characters
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Terms
- 3.7 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 3.8 Questions and Exercises
- 3.9 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Eighteenth century poets — Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Gray — belong to the Age of Enlightenment. Oliver Goldsmith is recognized as a fascinating English writer of the eighteenth century. He wrote a number of novels, plays, poems, essays and biographies. His works deal with themes such as social class and position, and wealth and poverty. His well-known works include *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, ‘Citizen of the World’, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. In this unit, you will study the act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*, the character portrayal of the main characters and the depiction of the main themes of the play.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith
- Assess prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith
- Explain the main themes of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- Analyse the main characters of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*

3.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Several details about the life of Oliver Goldsmith are precisely unknown. It is believed that Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a Church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood. He spent most of his youth in the Lissoy village. Goldsmith joined the Trinity College, Dublin in 1745 under the sizar system which allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors. He never enjoyed a good reputation at college because he did not do well in

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studies, violated the rules and also participated in a riot in which several people died. He received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.

Goldsmith worked hard on the subject of theology for a couple of years but was rejected by the ministry. He failed as a teacher. He struggled to make a living as a tutor, a comedian, an apothecary's assistant, a physician in Southwark, an usher in a country school, all without any success. Eventually, he started writing reviews and essays for periodicals and embarked on a career as a Grub Street journalist and hack writer. He also started proofreading for the novelist and printer Samuel Richardson. The first book that appeared under the name of Goldsmith was entitled *The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East*. These letters were published as a series of essays. These were fictionalized letters presumed to be written by a Chinese mandarin visiting England. Under the identity of an Asian visitor, Goldsmith satirized the follies and foibles of the fashionable London society. These letters brought Goldsmith into limelight and to the attention of Samuel Johnson. Through Johnson's friendship, Goldsmith became a member of the city's exclusive Literary Club, which included writers—James Boswell, Edmund Burke, and Thomas Percy, painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, and actor David Garrick. At the age of 47, Goldsmith fell sick of fever and died in 1774.

Works

Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist. As a journalist, he contributed articles to several magazines like Tobias Smollett's *Critical Review*, Ralph Griffith's *Monthly Review*, *The Busy Body*, *The British Magazine*, *The Bee* and *The Lady's Magazine; or, Polite Companion for the Fair Sex*, and *The Westminster Magazine*. He wrote many essays including 'The Citizen of the World' in two volumes, 'The Life of Richard Nash,' 'The Mystery Revealed,' and 'History of England' in four volumes, 'Roman History' in two volumes, 'The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke,' and 'The Life of Thomas Parnell' and his most famous essay 'On Theatre: A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy'. He wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Goldsmith's fame chiefly rests on his masterpiece, a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, two plays *The Good Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, two poems *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. When was *She Stoops to Conquer* published?

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY: *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele. In a nutshell, the hero of the play Marlow is shy with ladies of his own social status, but quite open with servants, barmaids, and women of lower class. So the heroine, Miss Kate Hardcastle, decides to make him fall in love with her as someone from the lower class. She 'stoops' to an acceptable level to 'conquer' him. The play entertains and provokes laughter with its intrigues

and mischievous tricks that are not malicious. The play also marked an important step in the development of comedy by eclipsing the popular ‘sentimental comedy’ of the times. Though Horace Walpole, an advocate of sentimental comedy, attacked the play *She Stoops to Conquer* for being devoid of a moral lesson, the play proved to be an outstanding popular success when it debuted in 1773.

Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering. Goldsmith challenged sentimental comedy in his essay ‘A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy’ published in 1773. In this essay, Goldsmith has written that comedy should excite laughter, by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. All the classic writers of comedy aimed only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous. They never exalted their characters or made what Voltaire humourously calls a tradesman’s tragedy. He writes that in sentimental comedies, the virtues of private life and distress are exhibited while the vices and faults of mankind are not exposed. Sentimental comedies were successful among the people of his age. These plays portray all the characters as good and generous souls. Such plays did not do justice to the genre of comedy since they were more serious and moralizing in tone and the actors had block faces when they showed emotions. With the abundance of sentiment and feeling the plays lacked humour. The spectator was expected to pardon the faults or foibles, if any, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts. To Goldsmith, a genuine comedy is one that is a great source of entertainment and sentimental comedy provided none. Instead of ridiculing, it commended folly. Goldsmith believed if humour is banished from the stage, people would be deprived of the art of laughing. With *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith succeeded in introducing humour, mirth and delight, driving out the pathos of the sentimental comedy. The play proved to be innovative and exhibited a new kind of comedy.

Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood. He was told that the house of Mr Featherstone was an inn and directed there for entertainment. Goldsmith, easily deceived by a practical joke, had gone to the squire’s house and treated him as a host. From this situation, grew his character and their games of cross purposes.

3.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

Let us go through an Act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

3.4.1 Prologue

Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of ‘Comic muse’ that is genuine comedy. He argues that comedy which produced genuine laughter and candidly entertained people is now dead. It has been replaced by a new type of comedy known as the sentimental comedy. If sentimental comedy takes over the stage completely then the comic actors like himself and Ned Shuter (who played the role of Hardcastle) will have no work in future. Woodward tries to imitate a sentimental comedy actor and feels hopeless as he realizes that moralizing will not work for comic actors like him.

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Check Your Progress

- Who is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
- What is sentimental comedy?

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The speaker hopes that Oliver Goldsmith, who, like a doctor, will restore an ailing patient, with five potions corresponding to the five acts of his comedy. Goldsmith will infuse comedy with lively and amusing situations and revive it by entertaining and giving comic relief to the audience. At the end of the play, the audience will decide whether the doctor is qualified or just another quack like many others of the time.

Critical Analysis

Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The Prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.

The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The Prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor. He was offered the role of Tony Lumpkin but the actor turned down the offer thinking that the play would not be successful. Ned Shutter, another comic actor of the times, played the role of Mr Hardcastle in the play. The Prologue is presented in the form of a metaphor where genuine comedy is the patient dying of sentimentalism while Oliver Goldsmith is the doctor who will resuscitate it through his play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Act I Scene I

Summary

Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn. She grumbles about not visiting the town every now and then like many others in the neighbourhood. She also complains that no one pays them a visit except Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife and Cripplegate, the lame dancing master. Besides, another source of entertainment are the old stories of prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough told by Mr Hardcastle over and over again. Mrs Hardcastle does not enjoy these stories anymore and dismisses them as old fashion trumpery. She snubs her husband for always accusing her son Tony. Tony is neither educated nor mature; he has never been to school which Mrs Hardcastle says was due to his sickness. She believes as long as Tony has fortunes, education is insignificant. Mrs Hardcastle thinks Latin is a suitable form of schooling for Tony. Mr Hardcastle expresses fondness for everything old, old friends, old wine, old books, and old manners. He is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.

As Tony enters the stage, he is in a hurry to reach the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. His mother dissuades him from keeping the company of low and paltry set of fellows at the ale house. Dick Muggins, Jack Slang, Little Aminabad, Tom Twist are Tony's companions at the alehouse, whom he does not find of low disposition. Moreover, he cannot disappoint himself by not visiting the alehouse and leaves with his mother running behind him.

As Kate Hardcastle enters, Mr Hardcastle comments on her dress. He loathes the superfluous silk with laces which he feels are trimmings of vanity. He does not like this show. She reminds her father of the deal they have that she can wear

fashionable silk dresses of her choice during the day to receive visitors of her interest each day. In the evening, she dresses up according to her father's taste and welcomes his guests.

Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him. Mr Hardcastle has heard of him to be scholar, a well-bred young man with excellent services and will be employed to serve his nation. Marlow is said to be brave, generous, handsome, bashful and reserved. Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature. Kate feels that Marlow's reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands. She also believes it would be difficult to develop friendliness and love in a marriage fixed like a business. Nevertheless, Kate agrees to take Marlow as her husband to fulfil her father's desire. Mr Hardcastle informs, it may happen that Marlow may reject her. Kate takes it lightly, she will not cry on rejection and indifference, instead will set out to find a gentleman of newer fashion. For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.

Miss Constance Neville, a very dear friend of Kate, is the last person to enter the stage in Scene I of Act I. Kate breaks the news of Marlow to Constance. The audience learns from Constance that her beloved Hastings will accompany Marlow. The two gentlemen are inseparable friends. Constance appreciates Marlow for his good reputation and virtues. She also says that Marlow is timid and diffident in the company of modest ladies of her own class but he mixes well with girls of low social class. Another information divulged through their communication is that Mrs Hardcastle is the guardian of Constance's fortune. She wants Constance to marry Tony because of this good fortune, as this marriage will secure her son's future. Constance keeps Mrs Hardcastle happy by portraying a good picture of Tony and pretending to be in love with him though she knows they both do not love each other. Mrs Hardcastle also does not suspect Constance to have feelings for another man. She says if her relationship with Hastings grows and culminates into marriage she does not mind leaving the fortune. She will happily leave it for her aunt. Even Tony does not want to marry Constance. He would be happy to see her marry someone else.

Critical Analysis

The Act introduces the audience to the place of action that is a small countryside, in the house of Mr Hardcastle. Some background information, necessary to understand the play, is given to the audience. Mr and Mrs Hardcastle is an old couple and for both it is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle has a son Tony Lumpkin from her first marriage. Mr Hardcastle too has a daughter named Kate Hardcastle from his first wife.

Through a conversation between the two, Goldsmith instantly presents a contrasting nature of the two characters. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man. Their tastes also present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene,

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countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are lacking in sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. The worst is that earlier very few were affected by pretentiousness and snobbery but now it travels faster. Even her daughter Kate has become pretentious, influenced by the fashion, manners and French frippery after spending two years in London.

Although we see nothing of the surrounding countryside yet we hear about some of the neighbouring inhabitants. Miss Hoggs, Mrs Grigsby (a grig is a grasshopper) and Mrs Oddfish, all sound truly rural. Then there are Tony Lumpkin's low class friends who have rustic names and their occupations reflect their social class. Dick Muggins is the excise man, Jack Slang the horse doctor and there is Tom Twist.

The conversation between the couple throws light on some of the major characters and prepares the audience for their entry. Tony's entry confirms that Mr Hardcastle has given a more realistic account of Tony. He scarcely pays heed and respect either to his mother or his stepfather. Kate's entry immediately after Tony's exit puts them in stark contrast. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother; obedient in following Hardcastle's whim requiring her to wear simple dresses of her father's choice and meeting people of his choice in the evening.

The circumstances leading to plot development have also been established. Mrs Hardcastle's description of the mansion, comparing it with an inn prepares the audience for Marlow and Hastings to mistake the house for an inn and for Kate to be taken for a barmaid because of her plain attire in the evening.

Themes of wealth and inheritance are introduced. Tony Lumpkin has inherited an annuity from his father and Constance Neville owns a considerable quantity of jewellery which her aunt manages for her. She has to marry with the consent of her aunt or else lose her fortune.

The personalities of all the major characters of the play are revealed through their actions and dialogues. Kate is a confident and independent woman who will marry for love. At the same time, she ensures her father's happiness by making the man of his choice fall in love with her. We come to know about Marlow through Mr Hardcastle and Constance. Tony is fat, uneducated and outspoken. He is a trickster and loves to drink with his rowdy fellows. Hardcastle's description and his own actions confirm it.

Act I Scene II

Summary

Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. Tony is sitting at the head of the table, which is a little higher, with the ease of being very much at home. A gathering of shabby looking fellows with punch (cigar) and tobacco surround him, all shouting and singing. Holding a mallet in his hand, he sings a song, in which he raises a toast to all drunkards, shuns learning, education, and dismisses schoolmasters and Methodist preachers. The third verse of his song is in praise of the low life at the countryside. The alehouse landlord announces the arrival of two gentlemen from London standing outside. They have lost their way and are asking for directions to Mr Hardcastle's house. Tony is sure that one of them is a gentleman

who has come to court his sister Kate. Instantly, Tony Lumpkin hits on a plan to avenge his stepfather's constant grumbles about his behaviour. He asks the landlord to bring them in.

As the gentlemen ask about the Hardcastles, in his own fantasy, Lumpkin describes Mr Hardcastle as a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical old man with an ugly face. He describes Kate as an 'all trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole'. He presents the old man's son (himself) as a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of. Marlow is reluctant to believe the information they have gathered about the father and his daughter from Tony's account. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful and the son is an awkward brat spoiled by his mother. Tony and the landlord fabricate the description of the countryside as an area of boggy roads, hills and dangerous commons. As Marlow and Hastings express their desire to rest tonight in the tavern, Tony says there is no space. He directs them to his stepfather's house, describing it as an inn named The Buck Head run by an eccentric innkeeper who fancies himself as a gentleman. He presents Mr Hardcastle as an innkeeper on the verge of retirement aspiring to be recognized as one of the gentry. The deluded travellers leave for the inn.

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Critical Analysis

Act I, Scene II lays the basis for the ensuing plot that begins to work immediately. The mistakes of the night begin with Marlow and Hastings believing that Hardcastle's house is The Buck's Head inn and Hardcastle is the old, idiosyncratic innkeeper.

The scene further unfolds Tony's character. His picture presented in the previous scene matches his actions. His seating position shows his dominating position in the group which includes the rustics named in Scene I. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master. We get a glimpse into Tony's background. People, in general know, that his father has left him considerable wealth which he will inherit when he comes of age. He is a living replica of his father, who excels in country pursuits. He also says that he will soon be a worth fifteen hundred pound a year on marrying Constance.

Goldsmith also creates two scenes of the countryside. One scene is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion which lacks the fashion of the town but there is decorum and refinement. The other scene is set in the alehouse, a hub for the rowdy and boisterous low class rustics and drunkards like Tony. The setting and characters further present a social order with class bias.

Act II

Summary

The scene is set in Hardcastle's house. Mr Hardcastle, awaiting the visit of his prospective son-in-law Marlow, is seen instructing his servants Diggory, Roger and others on how to behave when the guests come to their house. These servants are not used to receiving guests and waiting at the table. Diggory, the head servant, is very talkative and loves to eat. Hardcastle instructs them not to talk, eat, drink or laugh hard in their presence and be attentive. He finds it hard to teach these servants who do not know anything about table etiquettes. The servants are only more confused. The scene is interrupted by the news of the arrival of Marlow and Hastings. Mr Hardcastle goes to receive his guests.

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Marlow and Hastings, with their servants, arrive at the scene. They admire the house instantly, clean and creditable, which as intended by Tony, is taken to be an inn. We learn from their conversation that Marlow has spent much of his life travelling, residing at the college or in an inn. This kind of life has not given him an opportunity to interact with reputable ladies. This factor is also responsible for his low confidence in the company of modest women. He does not remember of being acquainted with a single modest woman, except his mother. On rare occasions meeting a young cultured lady of his own class has left him petrified. He always looks for an opportunity to leave the room as he loses his confidence when the lady looks at him. He is also unable to counterfeit impudence since he is a modest man. He considers a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

On the contrary, Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to modest women. Jokingly, Hastings remarks that with this diffident attitude Marlow will never be able to get married unless his bride is courted by a proxy. Marlow is not even sure how will he court this woman whom he has come to meet and will simply answer her questions in yes and no. Hastings is surprised to know that a warm friend can be a cold lover. Marlow also asserts that he has come here to see the reconciliation of Hastings with Miss Constance Neville.

Mistaking Hardcastle to be an innkeeper, as intended by Tony, Marlow behaves arrogantly with him. Mr Hardcastle welcomes the two gentlemen in the Liberty Hall, at which the two young men poke fun throughout the conversation. While Marlow and Hastings speak of the need to change from travelling clothes into something fine like silk, the old man talks of his colonel uncle of which Marlow and Hastings make fun in an aside. The young men call for a cup of punch and then discuss the evening meal. They ask Mr Hardcastle for a bill of fare. It is a long menu because it has been prepared for special guests, Mr Hardcastle's prospective son-in-law and his friend. Marlow and Hastings are amazed at the quality and quantity of the proposed meal. They shun it thinking this big menu is to extract money from them. They ask for simple two-three things on the table. They force the old man to show them their bedroom. Mr Hardcastle is surprised to witness such imprudent and flippant behaviour. Nonetheless, he does what they desire. Marlow feels that the desire and learning to be a gentleman, has made the old man brazen. Finding the old man becoming troublesome, Marlow leaves the Liberty Hall to inspect his bedroom followed by the protest of Mr Hardcastle.

Hastings is surprised to see Miss Neville in an inn. Understanding that Hastings and Marlow have been duped by Tony, Constance clears the confusion. She tells him that it is her guardian Mrs Hardcastle's house and since it is old, it does look like an inn. She also mentions that Mrs Hardcastle is courting her on behalf of her son Tony who dislikes Constance. Hastings divulges his ploy to seize this opportunity to enter Constance's family and elope with her. Once the horses are refreshed they can travel to France. He wants to go to France because France gives freedom even to the slaves to choose their partners and the law of marriage among slaves is also respected. However, Constance is reluctant to leave without her jewels. She is anxious to get her jewels and secure her future. She has been asking for it from her aunt to wear it and will be successful very soon. Hastings does not desire anything but her. Together the lovers decide to leave Marlow in the deception that he is staying at

an inn because telling Marlow all this abruptly will make him leave the house and their plan to elope will not be executed.

Hastings informs Marlow that Constance and Kate have arrived. The family had come to dine in the neighbourhood and stayed back refreshing the horses at the inn. Marlow is reluctant to meet Kate. Constance and Hastings persuade Marlow to stay. After introducing Marlow and Kate to each other Hastings and Constance leave the place. A humorous conversation ensues between Kate and Marlow. Marlow is overcome by shyness, faltering and stuttering, scarcely able to complete his own sentences. In her solus, Kate sums up her impression of Marlow. She finds him attractive and a man of sentiment, sober, a serious, honourable and highly sensitive young man. He has good sense, but is ignorant of it. He is extremely engrossed in his fears. She determines to find out how she can boost his confidence and help him in overcoming his shyness.

The fashion styles of London are the topics of discussion for Mrs Hardcastle and Hastings as they re-enter the room. Hastings flatters Mrs Hardcastle on her hairstyle, her dress and her youthful appearance. Mrs Hardcastle is impressed with his talks of London which she loves and regrets that she has not been there. Hastings, to impress her, says it seems that she has been brought up in London as her manners are like the fashionable elite of London.

Mrs Hardcastle finds similarities of face and height in the two young people Tony and Constance and sees it as an auspicious sign of their suitability for each other. Meanwhile, Constance and Tony are fighting, Tony tells Constance to keep distance and that he does not wish to have any relationship with her. Mrs Hardcastle calls these fightings falling in and out of love many times a day as if they are already husband and wife. Tony Lumpkin upsets his doting mother and a rant between Tony and his mother ensues. She calls him a viper, a monster who is never seen in the house when in good humour or spirits. He is always found in the ale house, and that he never fulfils any duty towards his mother. She calls him a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, and undutiful boy. The two ladies leave.

Tony and Hastings are left in each other's company. Hastings tries to know about his feelings for Neville. Tony makes fun of Constance and Kate. He calls Constance a bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom, with lots of tricks in her thicket, as loud as a hog in a gate with friends, eyes as black as shoes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. Hastings exhibits his feelings for Constance; she is well-tempered, silent and sensible. Her meekness and modesty charms him. Tony says Hastings finds her to be a well-tempered girl because he does not know her as well as him. Hastings loves Constance and wants to marry her, while Tony detests the thought of marrying her. He is being urged by his mother so that she can maintain control of Constance's fortune for his son. Hastings requests Tony to help him elope with Constance. Tony instantly agrees since he wishes to get rid of her as soon as possible. He also promises to help them get Constance's fortune.

Critical Analysis

The servants' scene once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene. The servants, in their conversation also emphasize that Mr Hardcastle is a great teller of military tales, which was also mentioned by Mrs Hardcastle.

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The play that Tony Lumpkin conceived starts working. Hastings and Marlow mistake Mr Hardcastle to be an old innkeeper who wishes to be a part of the gentry. The whole scene reveals the condition of taverns and inn and their owners. The maintenance of large mansions usually made the owners bankrupt, who later turned them into inns for their livelihood. Marlow, in spite of travelling widely, still lacks the assurance about these inns. The bad inns fleece and starve the travellers and the good ones tax them dearly for the luxuries. Everything appears so hospitable to them that the two fear the high charges for all of it.

The conversation between Hastings and Mrs Hardcastle exhibits the contrast between the opinion held by Mrs Hardcastle about the metropolitan city, London and the actual scenario. Mrs Hardcastle dwells in her own imaginative view of the world of the fashionable metropolitan London society. Her opinion of the elite London society which she has not experienced is based on the information given in 'the Scandalous Magazine' which contained reviews of books, plays and social circulars. Hastings has fun at her expense. Tower Wharf was certainly not a fashionable place. The Pantheon was in Oxford Street, the Grotto Gardens were less fashionable than Ranelagh and the Borough of Southwark was by this date not a place where the nobility resided. He pokes fun at Mrs Hardcastle's incomplete knowledge of London's fashionable society, of which she so yearns to be a part of. When Mrs Hardcastle joins Hasting's talk with Constance, her conversation reveals her pretensions and ignorance of the fashionable London life. Mr Hardcastle, too, is transported to the other world of campaigns in war. It is also a fabricated one with incorrect dates and names of places. Often, he narrates stories of valour and gallantry from the past.

Marlow, as described earlier, admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class. Not once did he lift his eyes to look at Kate's face directly. He fumbled over the words throughout the conversation with the lady. Marlow's impudent behaviour with females of the lower class and refined conduct in the company of women of reputation, as well as his misbehaviour with Mr Hardcastle, thinking him to be the innkeeper and the servants emphasizes the entrenched system of class division in eighteenth century England.

The plan to elope to France where there is freedom to choose one's partner and respect for the institution of marriage is a critical statement on England's class conscious society where individuals marry with the intention of upholding their status rather than for love.

There is also one scene in the play in which Lumpkin has been presented as a friendly and agreeable person. Hastings draws attention of the audience to his virtue that he looks like a lad of spirit. Tony promises to get Constance jewels so that she can take them with her.

Act III

Summary

The scene in Act III is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion. Mr Hardcastle alone is perplexed and wonders why his friend, Sir Marlow, recommended that Kate should marry young Marlow, who seems rude and unmannered. He believes that Kate, too, will be shocked to meet such an insolent man. As it is evening, Kate has changed

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her dress to live up to her commitment to her father to dress up with simplicity in the evening. Mr Hardcastle and his daughter share their views on Marlow. While Kate praises Marlow and approves of his ways which, she concludes, he has acquired from travelling across the world. She finds everything natural about the man. She is thoroughly impressed with his timidity. She claims to have not seen anyone so modest as Marlow, who met her with a respectful bow, stammering voice and a look fixed on the ground. He treated her with diffidence and respect, admired the prudence of girls that never laughed, tired her with apologies for being tiresome and then left the room with a bow. Mr Hardcastle disapproves of Marlow's ways and is convinced that he has acquired all that immodesty by travelling across the world, from the bad company and French dance masters. He is aghast by his brazen immodesty, asking twenty questions, and never waiting for an answer, interrupting his remarks with some silly pun, asking him to make punch (drink). He compares Marlow to a bully called Dawson from earlier in the century. Mr Hardcastle discerns that the first sight of Marlow has deceived his daughter.

Finally, father and daughter agree to reject Marlow as unsuitable, but for different reasons, Hardcastle because of Marlow's impudence, Kate because of his apparent bashfulness. Although Kate does not dismiss Marlow completely yet she feels that he may have some good qualities behind his diffident appearance. For her, a smooth face represents good sense and virtue. Hardcastle says if Marlow, whom he addresses as Mr Brazen, is able to reconcile the contradictions in his personality then only he can please both of them. Both are of the opinion that they are neither completely right nor wholly wrong about Marlow and proceed to find more about him.

Tony enters with a casket of jewels that he has stolen from Mrs Hardcastle's drawer and gives them to Hastings. Tony has the keys to all the drawers in his mother's bureau and that is how he was also able to go to the alehouse every day. He does not want Constance to be cheated of her fortune. Hastings believes it would be better if Mrs Hardcastle gives the jewel casket to Miss Neville herself. Tony tells him to keep the box till she gets it directly from his mother which is like parting with her tooth. Hastings is worried about her disappointment when she finds jewels are not in her bureau.

In the next scene, Constance is seen requesting her aunt to give her the casket of jewels. Mrs Hardcastle reprimands her with remarks about the unsuitability of wearing ornaments at such a young age. She will need them when her beauty will fade. Constance retorts something that will repair beauty at 40 years of age will improve beauty at 20 years of age. Mrs Hardcastle praises Neville's beauty which is absolutely natural blush and is beyond the beauty of thousand ornaments. Mrs Hardcastle tries to convince Constance saying that jewels are out of fashion and offers her own unfashionable semi-precious ornaments to Constance, which she refuses to accept. In an aside, Mrs Hardcastle tells Tony that she will hang on to the jewels till Tony and Constance get married and the fortune passes on to Tony. As she leaves to bring her own jewellery, Tony informs Constance that he has given the jewels to Hastings and they both can elope. Tony Lumpkin, as mischievous as he can get, suggests Mrs Hardcastle to tell Constance that the jewels have been stolen and he is witness to this incident. She does so. Moments later a dreadful wailing breaks out as Mrs Hardcastle discovers that the jewels are missing. Lumpkin continues with his mischief appreciating Mrs Hardcastle for being a fantastic actor. She bemoans

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that her son is unable to distinguish between jest and earnest and feels sorry for her niece. Ironically, she is the one who has been tricked.

Kate, simply dressed, is accompanied by her maid Pimple. Her simple dress led Marlow to believe that she is a barmaid in the inn. Every woman in the country wears simple dress in the evening and changes only when she visits or receives company. Also, Marlow did not look up at her face even once when she met him first as Kate Hardcastle. Also, Kate's face was hidden behind the bonnet. Therefore, he does not recognize her in her evening dress. Kate wishes to keep up that delusion. It is by keeping up the mistake she wishes to be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to the market. By stooping to conquer she would make an acquaintance and victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. Her chief aim is to take Marlow off his guard and examine his heart. Marlow enters whistling, happy to find himself away from the people of the house all alone. He muses that Miss Hardcastle is too grave and sentimental for him and she squints. Kate meets Marlow as a maid. The moment he looks at her, he wants to steal a kiss from her. He behaves the way Hastings had mentioned earlier about his behaviour in the company of women from the lower strata. He is unabashed with barmaids and others of the like. Marlow mentions he is a great favourite among ladies but he does not know what makes him so popular. At the Ladies Club in the town, a reference is made to a famous female coterie; he is called by the name Rattle. Telling his name Solomon, he flirts with Kate, mistaking her to be a bar maid. Offers to kiss her, salute her, to be at her service. He admits that cards, suppers, wine, and old women make him merry. Tries to hold her hand and kiss but fails and leaves.

Once again, Mr Hardcastle is shocked to see the impudence of the young man. But Kate wants to prove Marlow to be a modest man and wants to get a chance to convince her father of Marlow's modesty. She believes that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, and hopes that her father forgives him.

Critical Analysis

This Act highlights the diverse views held by Mr Hardcastle and Kate about Marlow's character. It seems Kate and Mr Hardcastle are talking about two different people. With Mr Hardcastle, whom he believes to be an eccentric innkeeper, Marlow shows his unruly side. Knowing Kate to be a fine lady, however, Marlow remains reserved.

This Act further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

Act IV

Summary

Mr Hardcastle receives a letter informing that Sir Charles Marlow will arrive shortly. Constance apprises Hastings of this information. The plans for elopement are made and Hastings wants to be out on their way to France as soon as possible because of the fear of getting caught since Charles Marlow recognizes him. He has given the jewels casket to Marlow. Marlow is a little confused about the casket. He has given

it to Mrs Hardcastle to keep it secure and safe. Hastings is horrified to know that the jewels casket is in the possession of Mrs Hardcastle and decides to leave without it.

Enchanted by the barmaid, Marlow is unable to free himself of her thoughts. He also expresses his intense desire to be one with her. He is totally in awe of her personality. He regrets not being able to kiss her.

Mr Hardcastle is exasperated with Marlow and his servants. He tolerates Marlow only because he is his friend's son. Angrily Mr Hardcastle commands Marlow to leave his house with the drunken pack of his servants immediately. He has endured Marlow's insolence for more than four hours and still there seem to be no end to his immodesty. Marlow, on the contrary, not only refuses to leave but also claims to never have met with such impudence in his whole life before. Mr Hardcastle reveals that Sir Charles Marlow's letter made him believe Marlow to be a well-bred and modest man but he is no better than a coxcomb and a bully. Mr Harcastle informs Marlow of his father's arrival anytime soon which leaves Marlow puzzled.

A conversation follows between Kate and Marlow. He wishes to confirm whether the place is an inn and she is a barmaid or not. Kate calls herself a poor relation of Mr Hardcastle to whom the mansion belongs. She only manages the household. Marlow is ashamed for thinking Kate to be a barmaid. He feels sorry for his misbehaviour and for mistaking her simplicity for allurements. He expresses his feelings for Kate, thinking her to be a poor relation of Hardcastle, and that he is bewitched by her simplicity and he would be undone, if he stays any longer. Kate pretends to weep and Marlow calls it the first mark of tenderness he ever had from a modest woman. He is deeply touched. She is the only one from the family whom he would leave with reluctance. Owing to their different status Marlow cannot make her his wife.

Constance requests Tony to get the casket of jewels again; he refuses and informs her he has arranged for a horse for them to elope. Mrs Hardcastle arrives. Diggory, the servant brings a letter for Tony. Constance recognizes the handwriting, the letter is from Hastings. She tries to keep Mrs Hardcastle engaged so that their plan is not revealed. As Tony could not understand the handwriting, it is Mrs Harcastle who reads it, comes to know about their plan, and decides to send Constance to live with aunt Pedigree. She immediately prepares to leave for aunt Pedigree's house.

Hastings accuses Tony of disclosing the plan to his mother. Marlow blames Hastings for hiding the truth and not stopping him from the wrong act. Marlow tells Tony that it is because of his mischief that all here are in trouble and, hence, unhappy. All present on the stage are disappointed with the happenings.

Critical Analysis

The mistaken identities and circumstances start unfolding. As Mr Hardcastle mentions Marlow's father, he begins to think of mistaking the mansion to be an inn. Kate tells him it is Mr Hardcastle's house. Marlow confesses to have feelings for Kate and Kate also reciprocates those feelings. Hastings plan to elope with Constance is also disclosed to Mrs Hastings.

The conversation between Marlow and Hastings also throws light on Marlow's opinion about women belonging to the low class. Hastings warns Marlow that he cannot rob a woman of his honour to which the reply comes that firstly, barmaid

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of an inn does not have any honour and secondly, there is nothing in this inn for which he cannot pay. He means to say that he will pay the barmaid to be with him. And if she has virtue, he should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it. The scenes also reveals Marlow's character a little more and his thoughts about women of lower class. Once again the class differences are highlighted and the necessity to be in relationship only with people of the same class is asserted. As Marlow says that if, he were alone in this world with no social obligations he could have married her. But the opinion of the world matters to him. According to Marlow, difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying her. Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.

Act V Scene I

Summary

Charles Marlow and Mr Hardcastle have come to know about Marlow's mistakes. Marlow possesses a fortune more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share and increase his happiness.

Marlow feels sorry for his misconduct. He apprises his father and Mr Hastings that he has not given Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of his attachment or even the most distant hint to suspect him of affection. They have just had one interview, and that was formal, modest and uninteresting. The old men are unable to believe this statement. As he leaves, Kate joins the two old men. She admits that Marlow has professed of a lasting attachment and love, has said civil things to her, talked much of his want of merit, and her greatness. Old Marlow mentions his son's submissive nature and inability to have conversation with modest women. Kate suggests them to hide and see Marlow professing his love for her.

Scene II

Scene II is set in the back garden. Tony tells Hastings that he took the ladies for a round and brought them back to the Hardcastle's house instead of taking them to aunt Pedigree's house. Moreover, Mrs Hardcastle falls into the pond. She does not know that it is her own house. She sees someone coming and Tony frightens her saying it is a highwayman. It is actually Mr Hardcastle, who has come listening to the cry for help. Anxious, she hides behind a tree. Tony convinces Mr Hardcastle there is no one around and his mother along with Constance is at aunt Pedigree's house. Mr Hardcastle is surprised that they have covered such a long journey in such a short time. Mrs Hardcastle, thinking the old man to be a highwayman, pleads for mercy to take all the money but spare her son. Recognizing the voice of his wife, Mr Hastings thinks she is out of her senses. Blinded by her fears, she is amazed to see Mr Hardcastle in a frightful place, far from home. Mr Hardcastle understood that Tony has played a prank on her. Mrs Hardcastle swears to teach Tony a lesson. Tony retorts that the whole parish is of the opinion that Mrs Hardcastle has spoiled her son so she should also bear the fruits of the same.

Constance is reluctant to elope and wishes to marry with the consent of everyone in the family and also get her fortune. Hastings tries to persuade her to elope, stay in love from the moment, let fortune perish. Love and contentment will

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increase their fortune beyond the monarch's revenue. Constance wishes to be prudent. She believes that hasty decisions taken in a moment of passion lead to repentance in the long run. She has decided to talk to Mr Harcastle to resolve the issue for he is compassionate and just. Hastings is apprehensive because Mr Hardcastle may have the will to relieve her but not the power to do so since Mrs Hardcastle is her guardian and fortune keeper.

Scene III

Marlow admits to Kate (disguised as a poor relation) his inability to marry her. It agonizes him to be separated from her. Kate asks him to wait for a couple of more days and see his uneasiness subside. He confesses that he has already trifled too long with his heart. Now pride begins to surrender to his passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of parents, and the contempt of his peers, begin to lose their ground. There is nothing that can restore him to himself except this painful effort of resolution. Kate, still playing the role of a poor relation, says his sufferings for her are of little value as they will soon be gone in a day or two once he leaves for his city. Soon, he will regret the feeling he harbours for her. She does not urge him to stay. Kate tells Marlow that her family and education is as good as Miss Hardcastle's family but they come to nothing if the family is not affluent. Acting sorry, she says she must remain contented with the slight approbation of credited merit. Kate says what began with indifference should also end with indifference. Any connection between them would appear mercenary on her part and imprudence on his part. She will never feel the confidence of being addressed by a secure admirer.

Marlow defends himself. He does not care for the fortune; it is her beauty at first sight that caught his attention. He likes spending time with her. He decides to stay and tell his father about her. He is sure that after seeing her, his father will not question about her class. Marlow will not repent any decision except that he did not understand her merit before and would like to atone for his past misconduct. Every moment reveals a new merit in her and increases his diffidence and confusion. Marlow kneels down and expresses his feelings to make her feel confident and secure.

Both the fathers, Charles Marlow and Mr Hastings, who were listening to the conversation hiding behind the screen, chide Marlow for wooing Miss Hardcastle in private but not accepting it before them. Marlow is surprised to hear that Kate is Mr Hardcastle's daughter. Kate pokes fun at him and asks which Marlow should she address, one who is a faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the one who is loud, confident and keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning. The two old men pardon Marlow for everything.

Mrs Hardcastle believes Hastings and Constance have eloped but Constance has not taken her fortune. Mr Hardcastle knows she cannot be so mercenary. Hastings and Constance enter the stage and announce they could not go without the consent of everyone. Hardcastle asks Tony whether he refuses to take Constance as his wife or not. Tony says that he has not come of age yet to pronounce this statement. Mr Hardcastle discloses the secret that Tony has come of age three months ago and his wife asked him not to reveal this fact. Tony formally announces his refusal to make Constance his wife. Marlow and Kate reconcile and decide to have a merry morning.

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Critical Analysis

Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in this Act. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families. To own wealth and fortune is vital to be respectable in the society. As Kate mentions being affluent is more important than to have good education and family. The fact that it is Mrs Hardcastle who is responsible for spoiling her son, everyone believes it, is once again fortified. Kate, who stooped to conquer, wins Marlow's heart as a woman of social class lesser than his own. That justifies the title of the play. Marlow not only expresses his love to her but also firmly decides to convince his father and make Kate (belonging to low class) as his wife going against all restrictions of class.

The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.

3.4.2 Epilogue

Epilogue one is spoken by the actress who played the part of Kate Hardcastle. She speaks in the person of a barmaid. It summarizes the action, hoping that the humorous tale of how Kate, who 'stooped to conquer' justifies the author's abandonment of sentimental comedy. She stooped to conquer and win a husband for herself without any aid from her fortunes. And Marlow falls in love with the simplicity of the barmaid and not the fashionable Kate and her fortunes. She begins and ends the epilogue with the plea to obtain the appreciation of the audience for the play. She narrates the five stages of the barmaid's life. The structure of the epilogue corresponds with the lines spoken by Jacques in *As You Like It*.

The second epilogue is spoken by J. Cradock, who plays the role of Tony Lumpkin. This epilogue reiterates the theme of the play that assumptions of money and class should not matter much to anyone. He says that now he has renounced Miss Constance and will soon start receiving a thousand pounds a year. He will go to London since there people have some regard for the innate qualities of a person, no matter what he inherits. He will show the world what good taste is. He will set new fashions and prove it to the London gentry that they too are gentlemen.

Critical Analysis of the Setting

The play is set in eighteenth century England. The play is set in a country side, away from the urban London society. The place of action is in and around Mr Hardcastle's mansion. One of the scenes is set in the alehouse called The Three Pigeons, Tony's favourite hangout.

3.4.3 Themes and Characters

Let us now study the prominent themes of the play.

Class

The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children. Young men from good families might consider sleeping with a barmaid, but would not normally consider marrying one.

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Nevertheless, Goldsmith views class as more of a psychological construct, class prejudices are the product of social and psychological conditioning. The perspectives of the characters are influenced by the class to which they belong. For instance, Tony Lumpkin is a squire's son and like his biological father, prefers alehouse companions and country folk to people of his own class. He does not spend much time with any of his family members too. He is the only one who enjoys the company of low class people. Another example is that of Marlow. He is terrified of the respectability of women of his class like Kate Hardcastle. When he confronts Kate as a barmaid, Marlow is sexually interested in her, and gets emotionally involved when he comes to know that Kate is a poor relative of Mr. Hardcastle. But Marlow shows inability to marry a woman outside his class. Kate is the same person who plays different roles, and it is Marlow who invests those roles with social and psychological value. Kate, in disguise, cuts across the social boundaries and stoops to conquer love. Marlow's attitude towards Kate Hardcastle is another example of the vital role played by class in eighteenth century England. His behaviour throughout the play is natural and genuine.

Inheritance

The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England. In these plays, the fortunes of young men and women were often controlled by their guardians. If they married without the consent of their guardian these young people would lose their fortunes. Continuing with the tradition, Goldsmith also sets the same condition for Miss Constance, niece of Mrs Hardcastle. She has to marry the man of his aunt's choice or she will have to part with the jewels that her uncle has left for her in his will. And it is to save Tony's future that Mrs Hardcastle wishes Miss Constance to marry Tony.

Money

Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes. Even Constance is reluctant to leave her casket of jewels behind. The characters are judged on the basis of lack or access to money. Marlow would hide his emotions for a woman who belongs to the lower class because his father would not accept this and, hence, will not give his approval for marriage. Even Mr Hardcastle is treated with disrespect till the moment he is thought to be the innkeeper. Mrs Hardcastle wants Tony to marry Constance for her fortune. It is Hastings who is ready to elope with Constance without her casket of jewels. He needs only her companionship and not her money. Tony is another character who does not care for money. He refuses to marry Constance because he does not like her. It does not matter to him if he loses the inherited wealth. Nonetheless, he can afford extravagance because he has access to wealth.

Love

The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not. All he wishes for is to get married to her. This is the reason he decides to run away to France where love marriages are accepted.

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Kate makes it clear in the beginning of the play that she would not marry someone whom she does not love. She has, therefore, 'stooped' from her status to make Marlow fall in love with her. This way she obediently respects her father's decision as well as fulfills her own desire to marry a man for love.

Mr and Mrs Hardcastle also share a bond of love that is strong and resilient. It is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle is loud, pretentious, greedy, a fashion freak and eccentric. She is the one who is responsible for Tony's presumptuousness. Mr Hardcastle loves the lady and treats her with all regards. He loves her with all her faults and attends her gently and in good humour. Mr Hardcastle is a loving and an affectionate father to both his obedient daughter Kate and his boisterous step son Tony.

Mrs Hardcastle loves her son so much that she covers up all his mischief. In order to protect Tony's future she wants Constance and Tony to get married even when she know they do not love each other. It is believed that Mrs Hardcastle's love and pampering has spoiled Tony.

City vs Countryside

Mr Hardcastle views town manners as pretentious. The conversation between Mr and Mrs Hardcastle and their respective tastes present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene, countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are devoid of sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. In his song in the alehouse, Tony praises the countryside and he is the one who enjoys the company of his rustic friends.

Kate provides a combination of being refined and simple at the same time. It is Marlow who praises her for having a refined simplicity. Having lived in town, she is able to appreciate the values of both sides of life and can find happiness in appreciating the contradictions that exist between them.

Characters

Mr Hardcastle, an old fashioned romantic, is a traditionalist who loves the past times, old manners, old books and old wine, and a rustic way of life. He is critical of the fashionable London society, which he believes, breeds vanity and affectation. He is a caring husband and an affectionate father. As a husband he loves his second wife with all her faults and treats her with his usual gentle good humour. As a stepfather, he is only gently critical of Tony. Mr Hardcastle understands Tony better than his mother and gives a more realistic appraisal of Tony's character. He is a doting father who wants his daughter to be happy in marriage and, therefore, firm in his decision to find a compatible match for Kate, but of course with her daughter's consent. He believes in class hierarchy.

Mrs Dorothy Hardcastle is an admirer of the fashionable London society. She yearns for it. Her first dialogues with her husband express her longing for a trip to the town. She takes lively interest in fashion. To accommodate the latest fashions she tries to look younger than her age. Her love for Tony, her son has spoilt him. Being a doting mother, she is not ready to admit any faults of Tony. In her selfish pursuit, she wants Miss Neville to marry Tony because of her inheritance and social standing. She is not at all concerned whether the two love each other or not.

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Tony Lumpkin is an ill-mannered and a spoilt freak who enjoys drinking with his alehouse companions. He is neither interested in studies nor conscious of his class. His buddies are rustics who drink with him at the alehouse. He amuses himself by gambling, drinking, and playing pranks on people. It is his mischievous act on Marlow and Hastings that puts the plot into motion. Tony is reluctant to marry Constance but cannot refuse until he legally comes of age. For all his immaturity and imbecility, Tony does show some strength of character. He refuses to marry for money and fortune. Though for selfish reason to get rid of Constance, he helps Hastings to run away with Constance. He even steals the jewels for the lovers from his mother's drawer which could have been his own had Constance married with Hastings without Mrs Hardcastle's consent.

Kate Hardcastle is an independent woman. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother. She obediently follows her father's whim to wear a plain dress in the evening. She seeks a companion in marriage with whom she is comfortable, and not just a wealthy gentleman. To ascertain Marlow's true feelings, Kate pretends to be a barmaid to get him to announce that he loves her despite her low social position.

Marlow is a young man who behaves differently with people of different class. He is informed to be a handsome, brave and generous scholar, a reserved fellow. Marlow mixes with girls of low class, brash and outspoken in the company of barmaids and other working class women, but shy and tongue-tied when in the company of women of his own class and standing.

3.5 SUMMARY

- It is believed Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood.
- Goldsmith received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.
- Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist.
- Goldsmith wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
- Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele.
- Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering.
- Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood.

Check Your Progress

5. Who wrote the Prologue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
6. How does Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begin?
7. What is the setting of Act I Scene II?
8. Why does Mrs Hardcastle want Constance to marry Tony?
9. Whom does Mr Hardcastle want his daughter Kate to marry?
10. How does Marlow's treatment of ladies of low class and high class differ?

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- Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of 'Comic muse' that is genuine comedy.
- Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.
- The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor.
- Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn.
- Mr Hardcastle is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.
- Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him.
- Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature.
- Kate feels that Marlow's reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands.
- For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.
- Act I presents a contrast between the characters of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man.
- Act I Scene II highlights Tony's character. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master.
- The servants' scene in Act II once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene.
- Marlow admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class.
- Act III further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and

shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

- In Act IV Marlow confirms that difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying Kate (woman of low class). Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.
- Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in Act V. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families.
- The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.
- The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children.
- The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England.
- Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes.
- The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not.

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3.6 KEY TERMS

- **Sizar system:** This system appears to have begun in the late sixteenth century in Cambridge and Dublin. This system allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors.
- **Foible:** It is a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone's character.
- **Solus:** It is alone or unaccompanied (used especially as a stage direction).
- **Coterie:** It refers to a small group of people with shared interests or tastes, especially one that is exclusive of other people.
- **Fop:** This term refers to a man who is excessively vain and concerned about his dress, appearance, and manners.

3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith are *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*.
2. *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.
3. Marlow is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Sentimental comedy is a genre of the eighteenth century literature in which comedy is aimed at producing tears rather than laughter.

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5. The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times.
6. Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle.
7. Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons.
8. Mrs Hardcastle wants Constance to marry Tony because Constance Neville has a fortune to her name. Hence, through this marriage Tony's future would be secured.
9. Mr Hardcastle wants his daughter Kate to marry his friend's son Marlow.
10. Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to women of high class. He is extremely shy and lacks confidence in front of women of high class.

3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. Summarize the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Write a short note on the Prologue and Epilogue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Briefly summarize the role of Kate Hardcastle in the play.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse *She Stoops to Conquer* as a sentimental comedy.
2. Discuss the title of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Critically analyse the theme of wealth and inheritance as presented in the play.
4. Evaluate the characteristics of Marlow's personality.

3.9 FURTHER READING

- Baugh, Albert Croll. 1967. *A Literary History of England*, 2nd ed. New York, USA: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
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UNIT 4 ONE-ACT PLAY

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Percival Wilde: *The Hour of Truth*
 - 4.2.1 Major Works
 - 4.2.2 Critical Analysis: *The Hour of Truth*
- 4.3 Farrell Mitchell: *The Best Laid Plans*
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 - 4.4.1 Life and Works
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- 4.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.9 Questions and Exercises
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

A one-act play is a short piece of drama that consists of only one act. It usually has one or more scenes, but does not exceed one act. Some popular one-act plays include *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Goat* by Edward Albee, and *The Long Christmas Dinner* by Thornton Wilder.

In this unit, you will examine the famous one-act plays namely, *The Hour of Truth*, *The Best Laid Plans*, *The Pen of My Aunt*, and *Refund*.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the play *The Hour of Truth* by Percival Wilde
- Summarize Farrell Mitchell's famous play *The Best Laid Plans*
- Assess the themes of the play *The Pen of My Aunt*
- Discuss the issues in Fritz Karinthy's play *Refund*

4.2 PERCIVAL WILDE: *THE HOUR OF TRUTH*

Percival Wilde was born on 1 March 1887 in New York. He was a famous American playwright and author, and has written a lot of short stories too. He completed his graduation from Columbia University in 1906 and began his writing career in 1912. His plays got a lot of acknowledgement during the period of the famous 'Little Theatre Movement'. He also wrote book reviews for the *New York Times* and the *New York Post*.

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Wilde married in the year 1920 to Nadie Marckres. He was also appointed the post of secretary and was later awarded the post of the director. He was also appointed as one of the members of the advisory board of the association of the Mystery Writers of America.

He was a banker by profession and besides being so, he was also a machinist's mate in the US Navy during World War I. He decided to become a playwright after his first short story gained popularity among the masses.

4.2.1 Major Works

The following is a list of his famous works:

Novels

- *Mystery Week-End* (1938)
- *Inquest* (1938)
- *Design for Murder* (1941)

Collections of short stories

- *Rogues in Clover* (1929)
- *P. Moran, Operative* (1947)

Plays

- *Dawn and One Act Plays Of Life Today*
- *Dawn*
- *The Noble Lord*
- *The Traitor*
- *A House of Cards*
- *Playing With Fire*
- *The Finger of God*

Confessional, and Other American Plays (1916)

- *Confessional*
- *The Beautiful Story*
- *The Villain in the Piece*
- *A Question of Morality*
- *According to Darwin*
- *The Unseen Host, and Other War Plays*
- *The Reckoning*
- *Eight Comedies for Little Theaters*

Films (Story)

- *Moonlight Follies* (1921)
- *The Guttersnipe* (1922)
- *The Rise of Dutton Lang* (1955)

- *The Craftsmanship of One-Act Plays* (1923)

4.2.2 Critical Analysis: *The Hour of Truth*

Percival Wilde's famous play, *The Hour of Truth*, is an intense psychological play which deals with the subject of corruption and the power of money on an individual's behaviour. Throughout the play, we see that there is an exploration of greed from several angles. The writer has depicted the influence of money in an individual's life because of which they even forget their moral values and principles. However, it is only towards the end of the play that the characters realize the fact that money brings only isolation, punishment, deception, frustration and endless shame rather than a sense of contentment.

Major Characters in the Play

The major character in the play are as follows:

Robert Baldwin: He is the main protagonist of the play and is an extremely honest and just individual and a sincere worker. He has been appointed as a secretary of the Bank President, John Gresham, as his secretary.

The character of Robert Baldwin is like an everyday American who works for a living, however, he is not able to earn a decent salary which is sufficient enough to support his family. Yet, he is an upright individual in both deeds and thoughts. His honesty is evident when John Gresham is accused of mishandling bank's money. John Gresham requests Robert Baldwin to say just three words, 'I don't remember' so that he will be able to escape punishment. He was also offering him a reward of a hundred thousand dollars. He, however, does not support the idea and eventually his honesty rewards him.

Martha Baldwin: She is the wife of Robert Baldwin who supports her husband and like her husband, is an honest individual. She knows the fact that her husband will not resort to unfair means in order to gain money. When she learns about the offer which her husband's boss has proposed to him, she, however, believes that the offer should be accepted. She further believed that they were being honest as her husband in reality did not know what had happened hence he was in a way telling the truth only. She also was convinced of the fact that they should support Gresham as they know him for quite long time and there would be no harm in supporting him.

John Gresham Baldwin and Evie: They are the children of Robert Baldwin and Martha Baldwin. They were earlier against the offer being offered by Gresham. However, they later felt tempted by the amount which was being offered. They, thus, urged their father to take the money and to invest that into some business. They also tried to blackmail their father, that if he will not agree, he will be portrayed as a person who had betrayed his own friend. They were, thus, of the opinion that there is no harm in being dishonest.

Summary of the Play

Robert Baldwin works as a secretary for a banker, John Gresham and has been working with him for almost thirty-five years. In the play, John Gresham is accused of a fraud and Robert Baldwin is the witness against his case. When the play opens Baldwin has been called by Gresham and Baldwin's family are seen as waiting for

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him at home. The children are worried as they think that their father may get involved whereas his wife is sure of the fact that he would not be involved. She is proud of her husband's honesty with which he has lived his life. They are also worried about the fact that differences might emerge between Robert and Gresham. Thus, the readers get an idea that Robert is an honest man. However, when Robert Baldwin returns home, the family gets to know that he has been offered a hundred thousand dollars by John Gresham if he says that 'I don't remember' and these words will free him from the accusation. However, Robert Baldwin who has been an honest man all his life is unwilling to do so. He feels that if he speaks those three words, then he will fall in his own eyes. He said that, 'all of my past would rise up and strike me in the face. It would mean to the world that for years I had been living a lie; that I was not the honorable man I thought I was.' When Gresham told him that he knew he would not accept the offer, he thought it as a compliment, however, his family thought it as 'rather an expensive compliment'.

Though it had been thought that the depositors would lose money, Baldwin was aware that there was enough money and they would thus not lose anything. However, he did not reveal this fact to the reporters and let it appear otherwise. He was in fact waiting for Gresham to make that announcement so that things would to some extent go in Gresham's favour, though he must still be punished for misappropriating funds. Baldwin's son John (who has been named John Gresham Baldwin after John Gresham), does not look at the misappropriation as a crime, but just a technicality, since no one is going to lose any money and finds it 'rather hard on Gresham'.

It, however, gets revealed later, that Robert Baldwin will need to refresh his memory with the help of notes for giving proper testimony. When Martha asks him 'tine day John was baptized, when Mr. Gresham stood sponsor for him: how proud we were! And when we came home from the church you said do you remember what you said, Robert?'

He replies: 'No. What was it?'

Martha says: You said, 'Martha, may our son always live up to the name which we have given!' 'Do you remember that?'

Baldwin replies: 'Yes dimly'.

Martha: 'It would be sad-very sad- if the name of John Gresham, our son's name, should come to grief through you...'

Robert Baldwin: {after a pause}: 'Martha, are you telling me to accept the bribe money that John Gresham offered me?'

The others do not consider it as a bribe and even John Gresham had referred to it as the difference between what Robert had been paid all along and what he should actually have been paid.

When his daughter asks what people will say when because of his testimony John Gresham goes to jail, Robert replies, that 'they will say I have done my duty. Evie: no more and no less'.

Evie believes that 'people might say that you had turned traitor to your best friend'.

The logic given to Robert is that when Gresham tells the people that he will pay back all their money then people will not want him to go to jail and at the same

time if his best friend is checking notes to make sure he goes to jail, people will be ill disposed to such a traitor friend. The children also try to explain Robert that no one is going to lose a cent and no one wants to see Gresham punished except Robert Baldwin.

Martha adds that she believes in being merciful and states the fact that Gresham had always been good to Robert. She then goes on to remind Robert that since the bank had been out of work and asks him what he will do now.

While Robert is hopeful of getting a job and thinks he is not getting one because no one will appoint a senior man as a clerk, it appears that the truth is that no other bank is willing to 'employ a man who was just as guilty as John Gresham'.

While Robert Baldwin feels that his not being guilty will be known to everyone on the morrow, the others tell him that people will just believe that he is proving himself not guilty to save himself and that not one will even believe that Gresham had been misappropriating funds which had become known to Robert '... only a day before the smash'.

His son then tells Robert that the only person with whom he can get a job is Gresham if he does not go to jail and that Gresham could offer him a partnership, 'with the hundred thousand capital you (Robert) could put in the business'.

Robert is shocked by this and then John uses another tactic by saying, 'of course, the capital doesn't matter. He'll owe you quite a debt of gratitude besides'.

Martha plays on her husband's emotions saying: 'A hundred thousand would mean a great deal to us, Robert. If you don't find a position soon, John will have to support us.'

John can earn only thirty dollars a week as compared to sixty dollars that his father was getting.

It is a cleaver play on Robert's emotions:

Martha: 'It's not fair to John.'

John (angrily): 'Oh, don't bother about me'.

[Evie begins to weep.]

John tells his father that not giving witness against Gresham is '...the square thing to do—he'd [Gresham] do as much for you'.

When Robert asks his family whether or not they want him to take the money, not one of the three is ready to answer. In fact, they are avoiding eye contact with him.

Robert says that he cannot be in partnership with Gresham as people will not trust him. John advises that with a hundred thousand in hand he could go into business with someone else.

At this point, Baldwin comes out saying what he thinks the family is trying to do: 'God knows, I never thought this day would come! I know- I know no matter how you try to excuse it—I know that if I take this money I do a dishonorable thing. And you know it! You and you, and you! All of you! Come, admit it!'

John tries to convince the fact that no one will get to know about it. Robert Baldwin wishes that they would all at least be honest with each other. He sees the truth in his wife's eyes and remarks: 'Shams! Liars! Hypocrites! Thieves! And I no better than any of you! We have seen our souls naked, and they stink to Almighty Heaven! Well, why font you answer me?'

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While the family is of the opinion that it is not wrong what Gresham is asking for, Baldwin is of the opinion that it is not right. However, he does get convinced that he will not testify against Gresham.

Just then the Marshall, the President of the Third National pays Baldwin a visit. He has a position in the bank that he would like Baldwin to take. Gresham had told Marshall of how Robert had refused the huge sum of money and how Gresham was sure no amount of money would make Robert do something he thought wrong.

Marshall goes on to say: ‘Baldwin, he paid you the supreme compliment: rather than go to trial with you testify against him, he confessed!’

Setting

The entire play is set in the parlour of a little cottage on a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, when the sun is overhead and the baked clay underfoot are merciless. A mother, son and daughter are eagerly awaiting the return of Robert Baldwin. The weather is not good but seems to be clearing, heralding a better time, ‘in the distance, lowering clouds give promise of coming relief’.

Plot

Robert Baldwin works in the bank of Mr Gresham who is now in police custody for misappropriation of depositor’s money. Robert has been offered a hundred thousand dollars to save Gresham from punishment by just saying ‘I don’t remember’ to any awkward questions. Robert Baldwin is an extremely honest individual. The play deals with the reactions of the family members after they know about the offer made by Gresham. Thus, the influence of money has been dealt in this play.

Theme

Percival Wilde’s play *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological study which explains the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption. Throughout the play, the greed and desire for money is analysed from different perspectives and how it influences different people. It has been observed that money can make people justify any action and can forget their values and morals. The theme of reward for the good and punishment for the bad is clearly apparent in the plot of the play. While all along it is put out that in doing the right thing Baldwin will be earning a bad name for himself and all the sympathy will be with Gresham, however, it does not appear like that towards the end of the play. The two main characters in this play are Robert Baldwin, the secretary of a reputed bank and the banker, John Gresham. Gresham has misappropriated money and is now offering Robert Baldwin a huge sum of money (as the difference between what he had been paid as salary and what he actually deserved) to get him out of punishment by confessing that he cannot remember what happened when asked a difficult question at the time of his giving witness. Baldwin refuses the bribe and is unwilling to lie. Even his wife, son and daughter try to reason with him and make him accept the money which is being offered by Gresham. However, towards the end of the play, Baldwin gives in and makes it clear that the thing should remain between the members of the family. He, thus, gives in to the power of money, however, his honesty is preserved and appreciated as Gresham accepted his crime and praised Baldwin for his honesty.

Check Your Progress

1. What is the main theme of the play *The Hour of Truth*?
2. Name the prominent works of Percival Wilde.

4.3 FARRELL MITCHELL: *THE BEST LAID PLANS*

Farrell Mitchell's famous play *The Best Laid Plans* revolves around the story of three men who formulate a plan and succeed in catching the burglars. The major characters of the play are:

- Wood and Spender: Two Friends
- Primrose: Butler
- 'Slick' Jack and 'Bungler' Bill: Burglars
- Cuthbert: Policeman
- Detectives

The play opens in an expensively furnished sitting room where we see a man (Wood) seated in an armchair close to the fire in the fireplace and is talking with another man (Spender) who is somewhere outside the room. Together, they have planned to go out and are approximately thirty minutes late.

Before leaving, the two have a conversation with the butler (Primrose) and it appears that certainly there is something afoot for which preparations have been made as it is evident from the following conversation:

Spender: 'You have your instructions clear in your mind?'

Primrose: 'Yes, sir'.

Wood: 'Is everything arranged?'

Spender: 'Yes, everything. All the jewelry locked away'.

Wood: 'And the key to your safe hid under the carpet by the fireplace'.

Spender: 'Nobody would think of looking there'.

Wood: 'Not even a burglar, my dear Spender'.

Spender: 'No. Not even a burglar. Come along. We'll go'.

When the men leave and the butler has also retired, then two thieves enter the room. They ensure that the curtains are properly drawn and only then they should switch on the lights. Bill is a greedy fellow who inspects everything which is expensive in the room whereas Jack just wants the jewelry. He warns Bill of leaving his fingerprints on things and getting caught later on. Bill has been to prison before but not Jack as a result of which, he considers himself to be a better planner and it is his planning that has kept him out of jail.

Bill is not sure that a plan is the only thing keeping them out of jail and he opines, 'I've got to admit it it's worked so far. One day it won't. Then we'll both go for a stretch.'

Jack is sure of the fact that his plan is foolproof. He asks Bill what that time is since he has his plan chalked out precisely. He explains the plan to Bill as follows:

Bill: 'Five minutes past nine'.

Jack: 'Exactly what it should be. And at ten past, Sergeant Willis of the Metropolitan Police comes down the street on his usual beat, phones from the box at the corner to his Section House, and at twenty-past nine, pushes off to see his favorite cook. Then the coast's clear until Police constable, Travers comes slowly down the street at ten o'clock exactly- which gives us forty minutes clear. If we did

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the job now Sergeant Willis would see us climbing out of the window and we'd fall right into the wide open arms of the law'.

Bill: 'You certainly have studied the situation, Jack'.

Jack: 'Yes. If that Spender bloke hadn't dilly-dallied about, we'd have had the sparklers by now and been away. That half-hour's thrown all my calculations out of joint. But, that's what I mean by planning. You're ready for anything that happens'.

Bill wants to know Jack's plans for the butler and Jack answers that, 'he tells me that he always listens to the nine o'clock news, and then, after that to the radio play that starts at twenty-past nine'.

Jack has an answer available and an already thought out plan for any kind of hurdle. He is, thus, fully prepared to carry out a successful robbery. The two of them successfully retrieve the key from under the carpet, rob the jewelry, replace the key and are ready to leave when suddenly the door opens and Spender and Wood enter. Spender is seen carrying a revolver.

Since they are caught now, Bill is worried and says that he will go to prison for all of five years since he has already been convicted before. Jack is not flustered and even says that they should remain patient.

At this point, the situation takes an interesting turn. Bill learns that the jewels are of a much higher value than Jack has made him believe and he is furious with Jack for trying to cheat him out of his fair share of the loot.

However, the confusion is cleared by Jack when he says that, 'there's no need to get your wool off. If I'd told you how much they were worth, you'd never have agreed to take on the job with me. You'd have been windy. That's true, isn't it?'

Bill: 'May be you're right! But what about my proper share?'

Jack: 'You'd have got it. I never swindle a pal'.

Just when Wood turns to call the police, Jack requests Wood to do a favour for him. Wood agrees and Jack asks '...Please look out of the window and see if it's raining'.

Wood draws the curtains and checks, draws back the curtains and informs Jack that there is no rain. Jack wants a re-check since he feels that he saw a glimpse of rain. He wants to make absolutely sure that there is no rain and requests Wood to re-check. It is decided that once he checks, Jack will have to tell the reason for this behaviour. He again performs the ritual of opening the curtain, checking and closing the curtain again. Jack then says that the story is a rather long one and it might make the two men think he is stalling his arrest.

He narrates that when he was holding a job in a city, he met a lady who predicted fortunes, who told him that he would lose his job and take to the kind of life he is involved in now. The prophecy came out to be true and she also informed him that he could never be caught on a day when it was not raining. Even this has proven true till now and he does not carry out any of his jobs on a rainy day. However, this time it is not raining and still, he has been caught.

Then he asks Spender for a favour and Spender is willing to grant him one, since Wood had granted Jack a favour. Jack has a question for Spender and not a task to perform as he had for Wood.

Jack: 'Would you care to tell me how you got wise to my plans?'

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Spender: ‘Certainly. Primrose suspected you from the beginning. He’s a wise old bird, is Primrose, and he spotted that you knew very little about Salvage. He’s used to be in Charge of its collection during the war, and he knows everything about it that’s worth knowing. So he led you on and gave you plenty of Information-false information. And here you are. Easy, isn’t it?’

While Bill stands fretting about what will happen to him in jail since he will be caught for the second time. He also opined that Jack did a worse job than a five year old, Spender reminds Wood to call the police and tells Bill and Jack to sit down.

Just as Wood moves to make the call, a policeman arrives on the scene. Spender asks Primrose to send the policeman in. Spender informs the policeman that they have caught the two thieves in the act of burgling. The policeman seems to know the two criminals and even knows their name, ‘I know them both, Sir. “Slick Jack” Lawrence and “Bungler Bill” North.’

Then the policeman went on to praise Wood and Spender: ‘We have been waiting Lawrence for a long time now. He’s done a lot of jobs around here. You’ve done well, sir’.

Wood feels that such a marvelous job calls for a celebration and offers the policeman, whom he addresses as sergeant, a ‘spot’. The policeman appears in a hurry and he says:

Policeman: ‘I am not a sergeant yet, sir only a constable. No thank you sir. Got to get going with these two men’.

But, Wood insists on his taking a drink and goes off to make it. Primrose follows saying that it would be better for him to make it instead. It is clear that the policeman is not going to take a drink and he politely but vehemently says:

Policeman: ‘Sorry, sir. But you know the police rules. No drinking on duty. It’s more than my position’s worth’.

Understanding the point that the policeman is making, Spender tells Primrose, ‘Tell Mr. Wood the officer cannot drink on duty’.

The policeman asks for leave from Spender so that he can take the two criminals away. He goes on to say that the sergeant will be at the telephone box and will send for the ‘Black Maria’ to pick up the criminals.

Just then, Wood enters and says sorry that the policeman cannot have a drink. He is inquisitive and wishes to know what it was that brought the policeman to the house at such an appropriate time. The policeman has a ready answer and he says: ‘I happened to be passing on my beat when I saw two figures in the gardens of the house. I thought they might belong here, but when they moved around to the side, I got suspicious and I nipped around too... They had both vanished when I got around and I didn’t quite know what to do. I made my usual routine call from the box, then I thought I’d look back and make few inquiries. When I knocked at the door your butler, brought me straight up...’

The policeman then handcuffs the two criminals together and again praises Spender and Wood for their great work.

Wood enquires of the policeman if he is confident of managing the two criminals on his own and then asks if he is sure that he will not have a drink. Wood seems to be really persistent and wants the policeman to take a drink before leaving.

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Spender reminds him that a policeman cannot drink on duty. Then Wood offers a drink to the criminals. However, Jack refuses and Bill says he would like a double scotch.

Jack tries to stop him, however, Bill is unwilling to listen to Jack and Wood really insisted on giving a drink to Bill. He persists in his hospitality saying: 'No I insist. Let Burglar bill, have one, sergeant, before you take him along'.

The policeman says that they are now under his charge and he cannot allow them to drink. He further says, that, 'and now, if you'll excuse me, I'll say good night and take these two with me'. Just then Wood says that the two of them, Spender and Wood, will be needed as witnesses.

The policeman tells him that the requirement will come up only when the matter reaches the court. Wood appears uneasy about going to court and says: 'You never know. I just wondered whether our part of the job ended here. I don't like police courts'.

The policeman tries to ease his worry by saying the court will not appear the same to a person who goes as a witness as it appears to criminals.

Finally, the policeman managed to make a move with the prisoners and just then four men rush into the room. Primrose is at their heels. Primrose tells Spender, '....These men are detectives from Scotland Yard'.

The policeman who had taken Jack and Bill into custody was not actually a policeman. This had become clear to Wood on seeing his shoes: 'light-soled shoes'/'to do any climbing while he is burgling'.

Wood goes on to say that under the pretext of getting a drink he had called up the police headquarters. And reveals part of his plan saying: 'Then I talked to keep everyone here until the flying squad arrived'.

And the following lines explain how the burglars arranged their robbery (Cuthbert is the man posing as the policeman):

Jack: 'Yes, Mr. Spender. I may as well tell you the truth. Cuthbert, here, is in the swim too. I always had him standing by if was ever caught on a job. He just has to come in and bluff it out as he did tonight. Then he walks us out of the house, and we're free. It would have worked too, if it hadn't been for your observant friend'.

Spender: 'But how was Cuthbert to know you had been caught?'

Jack: 'When Mr. Wood drew the curtains twice that was the sign'.

One of the detectives tells Jack: 'Very smart, Lawrence. But criminals always overstep the mark sooner or later. You did this time.'

Wood is worried about the fact that he had set out to outsmart the criminals while they could have very easily outsmarted him.

4.3.1 Critical Analysis: *The Best Laid Plans*

In the beginning of the play, we find that Spender is constantly correcting Wood and tells him the approximate time by which they are late. This seems a bit odd since Spender is the one delaying and then it is he himself who is informing Wood of the exact delay. While Spender seems to be an individual who seems to believe in precision and exactness and on the contrary, is not on time too. However, towards the end of the play, the relevance of keeping exact time at that moment becomes clearly evident.

The playwright builds curiosity in the audience's mind by immediately introducing the element of precious jewels in a safe and the key to the safe securely hidden under the carpet. This is a premonition of the fact that things will certainly go wrong. But when Wood asks Primrose, the butler, 'Is everything arranged?' it has created a thought that there is something that might go wrong with the jewels.

And as the two men, Spender and Wood, leave the house and Primrose retires to his quarters, two thieves (Jack and Bill) arrive on the scene and rob the safe. They know where the key was and where the safe is and when the sergeant is on his beat, when he makes his call when the constable arrives and so on. The research, carried out by Jack, is complete and so is the planning since he even has alternative plans. He is confident of the fact that he will easily pull the job.

However, there has been a delay in their plan, as Spender had delayed in leaving the house. Then again, Bill has wasted sometime looking at the various expensive objects in the room and then wiping them clean since he did not want to leave his fingerprints and wants to visit the jail again. However, as soon as they were leaving, Spender and Wood enter the room and catch them red-handed. All along, when Bill is wasting time, tension is building in the mind of the audience and there is a feeling that these two might get caught. Then again, the planning as revealed by Jack makes it appear that they are completely safe.

After having been caught red-handed by Spender and Wood, there seems to be no escape for them. Jack seems to be stalling for time or an opportunity to make a run for it when he asks Wood to check twice if it is raining.

Apparently, the two of them are fated to go to prison since a policeman appears on the scene and takes charge of them. Wood seems in no hurry to end the chapter. He is extremely interested in knowing how the policeman happened to arrive at the right time and he appreciatively listens to the story and then goes on to offer the policeman a drink which he himself goes off to make. It does appear like he is going overboard since a policeman will not drink on duty and that is precisely what the policeman says. Then, Wood insists that the criminals should drink something.

While Jack refuses, Bill, true to his character, is keen on a double scotch and Wood is equally enthusiastic to make it. The policeman will have nothing of it since he cannot let criminals under his charge drink. Then somehow, the policeman manages to make everyone understand that he must go with the criminals and get the sergeant to a police vehicle to get them to the police station.

Again, Wood insists that he should go along with them as witnesses will be required. His instance is now like that of a person who is either not thinking straight or is obsessed. Again the policeman manages to convince him that it will be needed only when the matter comes to court and to this too, Wood has an objection, and tells that he does not like courts. The policeman then, says that, 'when he goes as a witness it will not be the same as if he had gone as a criminal'!

Finally, the policeman manages to start moving out when suddenly four men rush in followed by Primrose. These are the detectives that Wood had cleverly managed to get to the house by making a call to Scotland Yard when he left the room under the pretext of making drinks. It now becomes evident that all the while he was delaying the exit of the policeman with the criminals to give enough time to the detectives to reach the scene of crime. He asks the policeman how he happened to come, offering drinks to the policeman and even the criminals and wanting to go

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along as witnesses were all part of his plan to cause delay. And, also Wood had seen the shoes that the policeman was wearing. They were not police boots which hinted towards the fact that he was not a policeman but a criminal who was in league with Jack and Bill. He would have taken the two criminals out posing as a policeman and they would thus, would have been set free.

Spender and Wood now really want to know how the policeman managed to be on the scene at the right time. Jack's good planning is revealed. He had made Wood signal to the accomplice by opening and closing the curtain twice while checking for rain. Wood is upset at having been used by the criminals.

Wood: 'I did the signaling for him! And I thought I was clever! Spender, old bou, I need a drink to restore my self-confidence'!

Thus, towards the end of the play, the plans laid down by Jack and Wood failed, however, Wood still managed to save the day and thus, prevented the crime.

4.4 GORDON DAVIOT: *THE PEN OF MY AUNT*

Elizabeth MacKintosh was a famous Scottish writer who was born on 25 July 1896. She wrote under two separate pseudonyms: Josephine Tey and Gordon Daviot. She was renowned for her mysterious writing and in case of plays, she mostly used the pseudonym of Gordon Daviot. It has been observed that most of her plays had historical or biblical themes.

4.4.1 Life and Works

Elizabeth MacKintosh was born in Inverness. She was the daughter of Colin MacKintosh and Josephine (née Horne). Elizabeth studied at the Inverness Royal Academy, from where she went on to Anstey Physical Training College in Erdington, which was a suburb of Birmingham. In several schools across Scotland and England she taught physical training. She went back to Inverness in the year 1923 to tend to her mother who was ailing and where she stayed with her till she passed away later in the year. Elizabeth continued to remain in Inverness to keep house for her father. At that point, she ventured into her writing career.

The famous books of MacKintosh's are found under the pseudonym Josephine Tey. Elizabeth's mother's name was Josephine but it is not clear from where she picked up Tey. She has written about a dozen one-act plays and several full-length plays using the pseudonym Gordon Daviot. While the origin of Gordon is not known, the Daviot part comes from the scenic locale near Inverness of the same name where she and her family spend much of their happy time.

Her demise had put an abrupt end to a promising and distinguished career as a playwright and novelist. Post the demise of her mother and while she was keeping house for her father, she started to write and thus her writing career began. Having sold several short stories to several magazines amongst which was the *English Review*, however, by 1929 she managed to published her first novel, *Kif*, written under the pseudonym Gordon Daviot, it was the same name that she used for the first detective novel (featuring the Scotland Yard detective Inspector Alan Grant) that she wrote titled, *The Man in the Queue*. There were several other novels written by her under the pseudonym of Josephine Tey.

Check Your Progress

3. How did Wood realize that the policeman is an accomplice of the thieves?
4. Why was Jack not worried even after he was caught by Wood and Spender?

Her two-act play, *Richard of Bordeaux*, was received well by critics and ended up being played for enthusiastic audiences for over a year with John Gielgud in the title role. She was unable to repeat this success in theatre.

In 1936, her novel *A Shilling for Candles*, her first novel as Josephine Tey was immediately appreciated by Alfred Hitchcock and he went on to say that she had provided him with enough scope to build up an atmosphere of suspense and surprise. The film is based on the novel titled *Young and Innocent* (early 1938) which was about a young man who was charged for a murder which had not been committed by him.

The approach to historical investigation which Tey has used in *The Daughter of Time* was considered as the best novel of her. According to a critic Marghanita Laski, 'Miss Tey has combined historical research with the suspense of the best fictional detection in a manner so stimulating that one can only beg her to hospitalize Inspector Grant again and again and again.'

This comment came about due to the plot of the novel: Alan Grant, Scotland Yard Inspector (a character who also appears in five other novels by the same author) is feeling bored while confined to bed in hospital with a broken leg. Marta Hallard, an actress friend of his, suggests that he should amuse himself by researching a historical mystery. She brings him some pictures of historical characters, aware of Grant's interest in human faces. He becomes intrigued by a portrait of King Richard III. He prides himself on being able to read a person's character from his appearance, and King Richard seems to him a gentle and kind and wise man. Why is everyone so sure that he was a cruel murderer?

With the help of other friends and acquaintances, Grant investigates Richard's life and the case of the Princes in the Tower, testing out his theories on the doctors and nurses who attend to him. Grant spends weeks pondering historical information and documents with the help of Brent Carradine, a likeable young American researcher working in the British Museum. Using his detective's logic, he comes to the conclusion that the claim of Richard being a murderer is a fabrication of Tudor propaganda, as is the popular image of the King as a monstrous hunchback.

The novel *The Singing Sands* (1952) was published posthumously. *The Privateer* (1952 as by Gordon Daviot) was a novel published just prior to her death. She left her estate including royalties from her books to the National Trust.

Works

The following is a list of her famous works:

Mystery novels

Inspector Alan Grant Novels:

- *The Man in the Queue* (or *Killer in the Crowd*) (1929) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *A Shilling for Candles* (1936) (as Josephine Tey) (the basis of Hitchcock's 1937 film *Young and Innocent*)
- *The Franchise Affair* (1948) (Inspector Grant appears briefly at the beginning, mentioned a few times) (filmed in 1950 starring Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray)
- *To Love and Be Wise* (1950)
- *The Daughter of Time* (1951) (voted greatest mystery novel of all time by the Crime Writers' Association in 1990)

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- *The Singing Sands* (1952) (turns on the discovery of the lost city of Wabar, based on the legend of Iram of the Pillars)

Stand-alone mysteries

These novels are set in the same 'world' /geography as the Inspector Grant novels:

- *Miss Pym Disposes* (1946) (as Josephine Tey)
- *Brat Farrar* (or *Come and Kill Me*) (1949) (the basis, without on-screen credit, for the 1963 Hammer production *Paranoiac*)

Other novels

- *Kif: An Unvarnished History* (1929) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *The Expensive Halo: A Fable without Moral* (1931) (as Gordon Daviot)
- *The Privateer* (1952)

Biography

- *Claverhouse* (1937) (as Gordon Daviot) (a life of the 17th-century cavalry leader John Graham, 1st Viscount of Dundee)

Plays

- *Richard of Bordeaux* (1932)
- *The Laughing Woman* (1934)
- *Queen of Scots* (1934)
- *The Stars Bow Down* (1939)
- *Cornelia* (1946) (as F. Craigie Howe)
- *The Little Dry Thorn* (1946)
- *Rahab* (1947)
- *Leith Sands* (1947)
- *Valerius* (1948)
- *The Balwhinnie Bomb* (1949)
- *Sara* (1951)
- *Dickon* (1955)

4.4.2 Critical Analysis: *The Pen of My Aunt*

The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is set in the period of 1944 summer, in German-occupied France. The play deals with a young French man caught by a German corporal. The boy does not have any proof with him, however, he claims to be the nephew of the person on whose land he was caught. When the owner of the estate is informed of the situation, he becomes his co-conspirator to save him from the law.

Characters in the Play

The characters are as follows:

Madame: The owner of a country house

Simone: Her young servant

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Stranger: A French soldier on the run

One-Act Play

Corporal: A German soldier

Summary

The play is set in two scenes. The first scene takes place in the grounds of the Madame's country house and the second scene in the drawing room of the same country house.

The first scene is an extremely short scene; the German corporal spots a young French civilian who is a stranger seen in the grounds of a French country estate in daytime. He thus, asks him to stop, which the stranger does. He does not have any proof with him and as a consequence of which he is marched off by the corporal.

The second scene opens in the drawing room of a French country house during the Occupation. A middle aged woman, Madame, is seen entering from the garden with a bunch of flowers in her hand and proceeds to arrange them in the vase. She is admiring the flowers when suddenly her servant Simone, a young girl, enters to inform her something.

Madame then begins to lecture her on the prevailing times as France is now occupied by Germans and it is a time of barbarism, the French thus, will not take much time to turn uncivilized: 'One thing we still possess, thank God; and that is good manners. The enemy never had it; and it is not something they can take from us.'

The stranger is then brought to Madame's house in a jeep accompanied by two German army men. While the servant girl is scared to see them, however, Madame is calm and waiting for the men to ring the bell. They do nothing of that sort to which Madame remarks: 'Yes. They have forgotten long ago what bells are for'.

The thirty year old civilian stranger enters and is followed by the German corporal close on his heels. This is where the play takes an unexpected turn and the stranger refers to Madame as his aunt: 'Ah, there you are, my dear aunt. I am so glad. Come in, my friend, come in. My dear aunt, this gentleman wants you to identify me.'

However, the reaction of Madame is the turning point of the play as she accepts him as her nephew. She informs the German corporal: 'But of course this is my nephew'.

The German corporal believes her and apologizes and says: 'But you will admit that appearances were against the young gentleman'.

At this point, Madame and then even the stranger posing as her nephew, begin to belittle the Germans and go so far as to say that the collar that the Germans wear prevents proper flow of blood to their heads which causes 'varicose veins in the head'. The play ends with the corporal saying: 'I have only one desire, Monsieur, and that is to see your papers'.

At this point, the French man, Madame and the young servant girl, Simone, come up with a clever lie that possibly the papers have gone with the clothes to the laundry and that when the laundry returns the next day, they will show the papers to the German corporal.

The corporal overhears Simone say that she has never in her life seen the young French man. He confronts the others in the house with this truth. This creates tension but then another lie is forged and they make the corporal believe that what Simone must actually have said is that she wished she had never seen him since he makes her slog with the huge amounts of hard work he makes her do.

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Towards the end of the play, Madame though is under the rule of the Germans as France has been occupied by Germany, however, she still threatens the corporal. The audience first believed that the stranger might get into trouble, however, is saved by Madame. She even convinces the corporal to take the young man to a safer place.

Madame's Character

The protagonist of the play is the Madame, a French woman, who is the owner of a large estate. It is her conflict which is the play's key focus and not the troubles of the French man after he has been caught by the German Corporal. Madame is the person who is defending her country which has fallen into the hands of Germany. She is also trying her best to uphold the honour of her country and its customs and traditions and the civilized manner in which its people conduct themselves in comparison to the barbarian ways of the occupying enemy. Furthermore, she is representative of a stereotypical French citizen who is clever, calm, cunning and artistic. Her attitude with the corporal is representative of the attitude of all French towards the Germans. Madame shows the corporal that she is indeed a 'collaborator', that she is providing all possible help to the Germans as far as their ruling France is concerned. While with her pretext, she has gained the trust of the enemy by acting as a collaborator, however, in reality Madame is involved with an undercover resistance movement against the German enemy and they are successfully deceiving the enemy into believing that they are being provided all possible help. She is, thus, portrayed as a person who is extremely organized and completely disciplined.

She has impeccable manners and has not deviated from them despite the barbaric ways of the occupying enemy. The French people are civilized and are not 'barbaric' like the Germans. A witty and sharp person, Madame, is not flustered by tough situations and handles them with ease and a calm exterior. When she is confronted by the stranger and the German Corporal who has the authority to cause harm to the French, she maintains her cool and stands by the French man who is not even known to her. The situation that falls upon her is sudden and strange but it does not fluster her. She creates clever deceptions one after the other to fool the German Corporal into believing that the stranger is actually her nephew. Fearless and courageous, she is true to her word and boldly and calmly faces German authority even though she is a citizen of the occupied land and now under German authority. Of the enemy, she has no fear, rather she is not averse to manipulating and even threatening the enemy. She comes to the corporal with the threat of getting him demoted.

She is a woman who is trying every sort of means in order to resist the enemy. With her skill and authoritative ways, she manages to get the German Corporal to believe that the stranger is actually her nephew. While Simone, Madame's servant girl, has been shown to be fearful of the German Corporal, of German's in general and of the situation that had developed, she gains strength from the manner in which Madame skilfully tackles the situation. Simone finds that she too has gained strength to be a part of the deception with the stranger by quarrelling over how 'messy' the stranger always is. In this play, Madame is a strong image of the French people and shows that they have the strength to resist their enemies.

Theme of the Play

The main theme of the play is the opposition of the French to the Germans in German occupied France. It provides an insight into the civilized and composed manners of

the French as opposed to the barbaric ways of the Germans. It brings the patriotism of the French and how they were putting on a front of being co-operative with the German occupiers while actually running a secret resistance movement against them.

Another theme in the play is that war is nasty and it makes individuals behave in unconventional ways. People would not deceive and lie in normal daily life but under war conditions, individuals possess the feeling of being patriotic and a virtue, to save your country, your countrymen, your home, your honor and dignity. The play therefore, is a critique on war, and its effect on individuals. Madame, who is a dignified person and has been a follower of rules and discipline also becomes conniving and a liar when it comes to saving a fellow countryman from the clutches of the Germans.

Critical Appreciation

The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is ridden with external conflicts, the first is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not a free country at that point. A French soldier dressed as a civilian is caught wandering in the woods without authorization and papers by a German Corporal. This is the second conflict since the French soldier has to save himself from getting arrested and will be punished by the Germans since he has no idea what they might do with him if he falls into the hands of the German conquering authorities. His life is at stake at this point.

However, this conflict is resolved when the owner of the estate, the Madame, when asked by the German Corporal readily identifies him as her nephew which frees him from the charges. The conflict is not over since nearly right to the end the German Corporal believes and then disbelieves that the man is Madame's nephew and is insistent that his only interest lies in seeing the young French man's papers. As mentioned, the corporal asks for the French man's papers and this too is an external conflict since the man has no papers to show. This conflict is again resolved by the combined efforts of Madame, her servant and the French man.

The three of them carry through the excuse that possibly the papers have gone with the laundry and should be back the next day and will then be shown to the corporal. Then there is the conflict in which Simone is heard by the corporal saying that she had never set eyes on the stranger. The trio manage to convince the corporal that what Simone had actually said was that she wished she had never set eyes on the stranger since whenever he comes, they make her work extremely hard. While there are many conflicts presented in the play, they are presented in a lively manner and make the play extremely humorous and one where the audience is eager to know how the conflict will be resolved.

The play had made a critique of the army, and the manner in which the army people are accustomed to a robotic and calculated life, without personal free will, just following orders in a set manner trained to live by commands.

The play also carries the theme of nationhood, brotherhood and patriotism. It depicts how the French people during the occupation of France by the Germans, were eager to protect their land from these invaders.

Madame: '...France maybe an occupied country, a ruined nation and a conquered race, but we will keep...the usages of civilization...'

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Madame: 'One thing we still possess thanks to God and that is good manners, the enemy never had it and it's something they cannot take away from us...'

Madame: '...that is a risk one must take...'

Madame is portrayed as a person who is strong and patriotic, who does not fear anything. She strongly favours the French man in front of the German Corporal.

Madame: '... And you will have to answer it and behave as if you had been trained by a butler and ten upper servants...'

Madame: '...You have your place here that is what those creatures on our doorstep have...'

Madame: 'Simone, this may be an age of barbarism but I will none of it inside the walls of this house...'

Madame: '...to ask for his papers was routine, but to insist on their production is discourtesy, I shall say so to your commanding officers...'

Madame: 'I tell lies my friend but no silly lies...'

Madame: '...that she wished she had never set eyes on my nephew...'

Madame: '...if I report on your conduct this afternoon, tomorrow you will be a private...'

Madame: '...to freedom!'

The stranger manages to get away from that clutches of the Germans and from the horrific fate that he would have had if he was found guilty. Madame identified him as her nephew and even kept getting him out of the various awkward situations that kept arising and finally she even ensured that the German Corporal provided him a lift and safely reached him to a place where he would be safe. Madame puts her own life at risk in her attempt to help out the stranger and save him from being captured by the Germans. The manner in which she behaves with the corporal to save the stranger is at times authoritative and her personality forces the corporal to agree with her, her cleverness is so powerful and her deceiving strength so perfect that the corporal does not suspect too much. Then there is her courage which goads the German Corporal into giving in and agreeing that the stranger is her nephew and even agreeing to reach the young French man to a safe place, unharmed, even when he is not allowed to undertake such a service for the French.

When the corporal informs Madame that the stranger is claiming to be her nephew:

(There is the slightest pause, just one moment of silence)

Madame: 'but of course he is my nephew...'

Stranger: '...you didn't know that that a packet of documents weighing half a ton were in the pocket, an identity card, a laissez passer...'

Madame: 'that she wished she had never set eyes on my nephew...'

Madame: '...take him to the crossroads and I shall forget your lack of efficiency...'

Madame: 'If I report your conduct this afternoon, tomorrow you shall be a private...'

In the play, the pen is a symbol of knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom. It stands for the wisdom and the power

imbedded in the character of the Madame, she is very clever and smart, she knows how to remain firm in tough situations and she can always stand up for the sake of her homeland.

Madame: ‘...certainly I write with it—but it is also my notebook—look I only need my hairpin and then so out of my quill pen comes my notebook...But enough for a list of names.’

Madame: ‘...you may use my desk...My own special pen...Isn’t it beautiful...’

The play ends on a happy note. The young French man is saved from the clutches of the Germans. From a historical point of view, the play is a depiction of truth and draws a parallel with what actually happened in the war. In the war, the axis was finally defeated by the Allied forces implying that the German’s were finally defeated by the French and driven out of France.

Madame: ‘...perhaps one day you will come back and dine with me and tell me the rest of the tale...’

Stranger: ‘...two years today perhaps’?

Madame: ‘one year today...’

Madame: ‘to freedom’!

Simone: ‘yes to freedom’!

Simone: ‘(with immense satisfaction) and a very bad end to that corporal...’

In the play, the Germans have been stereotyped. The Germans are hard-hearted, rational, cold, emotionless, proud, resolute and skillful, extremely judgmental, robotic, organized, disciplined and obedient. On the other hand, the French appear to be extremely artistic, well-mannered, innovative, emotional, peaceful, calm and composed, very cunning and clever, very creative and those who generally think in abstractions.

While Madame is the stereotypical French citizen, the corporal is a stereotypical German.

Corporal: ‘Ah madam, a little more discipline among your nephew’s generation and we might not be occupying your country today.’

Stranger: ‘You think it was that collar of yours that conquered my country, the only result of wearing a collar like that is varicose veins in the head.’

Madame: ‘...corporal, try to make your duties a little less literally, my countrymen appreciate the spirit rather than the letter...’

Corporal: ‘I have instructions Madame, and I obey them...’

Corporal: ‘...thank you Madame we Germans have come a long way from the gees...’

Corporal: ‘Yes only when someone tells me to...’

Madame: ‘...Very if it will help, I tell you’

Madame: ‘Then don’t be absurd Corporal, to be absurd twice in five minutes is too often...’

Simone: ‘Oh Madame, Madame, have you...’

Simone: ‘Calm Madame, with my insides turning over and over like a wheel!’

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Check Your Progress

5. What are the main conflicts highlighted in the play, *The Pen of my Aunt*?
6. State the main theme of the play.
7. What is the significance of pen in the play, *The Pen of my Aunt*?

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4.5 FRIGYES KARINTHY: *REFUND*

Frigyes Karinthy was born on 25 June 1887 and died on 29 August 1938. He was a Hungarian translator, journalist, poet, playwright and author. It was he who is looked upon as being the very first proponent of the concept of six degrees of separation. It was seen in a short story of his of 1929 entitled *Chains (Láncszemek)*. He is considered to be amongst the highly popular Hungarian writers. He was the father of poet Gábor Karinthy and writer Ferenc Karinthy.

Out of the works of Karinthy, there are two English translations, besides others, which are his science fiction novellas that continue the adventures of Gulliver, the character created by Swift. The work *Voyage to Faramido* is his early examination of artificial intelligence, and has a pacifist theme. The work *Capillaria* is a piece of satire which is darkly humorous and polished and carries the theme of ‘battle of the sexes’.

He was born to bourgeois parents who lived in Budapest, Karinthy’s parents converted from being Jewish a little while before his birth. His writing career began with journalism and he continued writing short, humorous blurbs throughout his career. Karinthy gained sudden fame post his 1912 publication *That’s How You Write (Így írtok ti)* which was a collection of his literary parodies. In the years that followed, he continued to expand the collection. Among his early works, his collection of short stories from school life *Please Sir! (Tanár úr, kérem, 1916)* also stands out for its grasp of the trials and tribulations of the average schoolboy. He admired the writings of H. G. Wells and the fiction that he himself wrote is greatly influenced by Wells. Karinthy went on to translate some works of Wells into Hungarian like *The Country of the Blind* and *The Sea Lady*. Karinthy’s best known translation was of A. A. Milne’s work, *Winnie the Pooh*, which was given the status of a cult book in Hungary.

World War I onwards, the writings of Karinthy took on a more engaging and serious tone, however, they still had a satirical element in them. It has been claimed that Karinthy was greatly influenced by Jonathan Swift and from it stem his works, *Voyage to Faramido (Utazás Faramidóba, 1916)* and its sequel, *Capillaria* (1921). Several of the stories and novels of Karinthy carry the theme of the difficulties of man-woman relationships, in part because of his second marriage which was an unhappy one.

In 1936, Karinthy underwent a surgery in Stockholm for a tumor in his brain. He describes this experience in his autobiographical novel, *Journey Round my Skull, (Utazás a koponyám körül)*, originally published in 1939; a reissue appeared as a NYRB Classic in 2008 with an introduction by neurologist Oliver Sacks. Two years later, he passed away when holidaying in at Lake Balaton.

Personal Life

In 1913, Karinthy got married to Etel Judik, the actress. It was a happy marriage. Their son was named Gábor. In 1918, Etel died because of Spanish flu pandemic. Karinthy remarried in 1920. His second wife was Aranka Böhm, the psychiatrist. A second son was born of this marriage and he grew up to be the renowned writer Ferenc Karinthy. Although he did not speak the language, Karinthy was an ardent supporter of Esperanto, attending Esperanto congresses, and even became the president of the Hungarian Esperanto Society in 1932.

Karinthy is famous for his own strain of dry sense of humour. He said once, 'In humor I know no jokes'. One of the many examples of his dry humour was his advertising slogan for his book *Journey Round my Skull: The Newest Novel of the Famed Tumoris*.

The film *The Stork Caliph* (1917) by Alexander Korda was based on a novel by Mihály Babits. The script writing of the film was done by Karinthy.

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4.5.1 Critical Analysis: *Refund*

The famous play *Refund* is originally written in Hungarian language, however, the renowned author Percival Wilde translated the play in English.

The play *Refund* is an unusual story. It humorously deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation. The forty year old man, Wasserkopf is the protagonist of the story around whom the entire story revolves. Wasserkopf after completing his education was unsuccessful in securing a job. He thus accepted the fact that he was unable to do anything and was conflicted about the idea whether his education has ever taught him anything or not.

Wasserkopf met his school friend, Lederer, one day and they began talking about the latter's business. When Lederer told him about foreign exchange and Hungarian money, Wasserkopf could not grasp what was being said and he began asking Lederer questions related to foreign exchange. At this point, Lederer told Wasserkopf that there was no point of his education if he did not know even such a small thing and that he should go back to his school and get a refund for his fees since he does not seem to have gained anything from that education. Thus, the moneyless and jobless Wasserkopf found this suggestion to be a great one and he paid his school a visit to get a 'refund' on his school fees.

In German, the word 'Wasserkopf' means one who has a 'water head', or a person who is eccentric.

When the play opens, Wasserkopf who was a bad performer during his school days is paying a visit to his school after eighteen years of leaving the school with the intention of making the principal refund the tuition fees that he paid to the school while he was a student in that school. This request shocks the principal since it is now eighteen years since Wasserkopf has been away from the institution and has now returned with the feeling that there is nothing worthwhile that he has learnt during his education in the school and so he will get back his tuition fee for all the years that he was at the school. Wasserkopf informs the school that the certificate he received from the school was of no use and so far he has not even been able to get employment.

The principal is also confused as a result of this peculiar situation. An emergency staff meeting is called. The masters quickly realize that Wasserkopf is a cunning and crafty man who has come with the intention to extract money. What Wasserkopf wanted was to take a re-examination, miserably fail it and return from the school as a proud possessor of the refunded school fees. Realizing that Wasserkopf's actual purpose in coming to the school was to claim the refund, the teachers made up their mind to outsmart him with ensuring that any answer that he gave, no matter how erroneous it might be, was proven to be right for the question asked. The Mathematics Master stressed that it was essential that they stick together and implement the plan fully together. They thus decided that they should be united in the implementation of the plan and at the same time should assist each other.

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The masters were to give Wasserkopf an oral exam and his refusal to sit down for the exam was smartly interpreted by the Mathematics Master to be a signal to not go in for a written exam which would require Wasserkopf to sit.

The History Master posed the first question to Wasserkopf. He asked for how many years the 'Thirty Years' war had lasted. Though the question was so posed that it carried the answer in the question, Wasserkopf who was bent on failing answered that the 'Thirty Years war', lasted seven meters. The History Master could not think of a logic to prove such an absurd answer to be correct for the question that had been asked. But the Mathematics Master had a reply. He proved the answer right based on Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The Mathematics Master puts forth the argument that since space and time are relative terms, it is possible to represent years in terms of meter. Since a year can be one meter and seven years are seven meters and since the actual warfare happened for not over twelve in any single day, it was correct that the thirty years war lasted for seven meters. With his answer having been proven right, Wasserkopf passed the history exam. At this point, Wasserkopf goes on to call the History Master a numskull.

All the other masters pose their questions and for each absurdly incorrect answer provided by Wasserkopf some logic or the other is given to prove that it is the correct answer and he is marked excellent for each answer. Despite his providing incorrect answers and even being abusive towards the masters, the examiners showed no anger towards Wasserkopf since their goal was to prove him to be an excellent student.

The question posed by the Physics Master's was whether objects actually become smaller as people moved away from them or was it just some optical illusion. Wasserkopf replied with the single word 'Ass'. The Physics Master said that the answer was correct by providing the logic that the melancholic look of the ass is also an optical illusion. So, the answer that was given by Wasserkopf is made out by the master to be a logical one with providing a metaphorical explanation and this proves that Wasserkopf has correctly answered even that question and has passed. In return, Wasserkopf called the master a cannibal.

The question posed by the Geography Master is: 'What city of the same name is the capital of the German Province of Brunswick'? The Geography Master is easily able to prove that the capital of the German Province of Brunswick is 'same' which was the answer provided by Wasserkopf. The Geography Master is referred to as 'old reprobate' by Wasserkopf who has made it a point that he will call the masters nasty names.

When it was the turn of the Mathematics Master to ask Wasserkopf a question he carefully wove a net to trap him in. The Mathematics Master began with asking Wasserkopf a question which the master refers to being an 'easy' question and the question is: 'If we represent the speed of light by X and the distance of the star Sirius from the sun by Y , what is the circumference of a one-hundred-and-nine-sided regular polyhedron whose surface area coincides with that of the hip-pocket of a state railway employee, whose wife has been deceiving him for two years and eleven months with a regimental sergeant major of hussars'. The principal, Wasserkopf as well as every other master present for the re-examination of Wasserkopf is shocked by this question. Everyone knows that withal possible knowledge that Wasserkopf has he would have found that answer to that question difficult to provide. Yet he provides an arbitrary answer which is two thousand six hundred and twenty nine

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liters. There is tension in the air as the principal and other professors look expectantly in the direction of the Maths Professor, who coolly says that it is the wrong answer and that the correct answer is two thousand six hundred and twenty-eight liters and not twenty-nine. The master then goes on to say that Wasserkopf had failed in Mathematics and due to this fact it is right to refund his tuition fee to him. Now, the Mathematics Master lays down the actual trap where he asks Wasserkopf to provide an accurate calculation of the amount that should be refunded to him. Wasserkopf is too foolish to understand that the difficult question has now been posed to him. So, Wasserkopf calculates the various components of the amount that is due to him and arrives at the figure of 6,450 crowns and 50 heller. Upon obtaining the exact figure from Wasserkopf, the Mathematics Master tells the ex-student that actually this was the difficult question that he had been asked. In return Wasserkopf calls the Mathematics Master an 'old stick-in-the-mud'. Since he has given the correct answer to the extremely difficult question, he is given the title 'Mathematical Genius'.

So, it is with the masters' close co-ordination and combined efforts that they are able to make it appear like Wasserkopf has cleared the re-examination with flying colours due to the excellent knowledge he possesses. Since he has cleared the re-examination there is no question of a refund on his fee and he is sent out of the school without a refund. The sly and crafty Wasserkopf is defeated by the masters.

The play ends with the masters and the principal taking out all their anger at the ex-student and having him thrown out of the school and finally being extremely happy that they have won:

The History Master: 'So I'm a numskull, am I? Say it again and I'll show you what is what!' The Physics Master: 'I'm a cannibal? What? And you were the one who tied a string across the aisle...' The Geography Master: 'Hypocrite? Nitwit? Ass? Me?' The Mathematics Master: 'Old stick-in-the-mud?' The Servant (*entering*): 'Yes, sir'? The Principal (*indicating Wasserkopf*): 'Remove that object!' (*The servant seizes Wasserkopf by the collar and the seat of his trousers and rushes him off. The Principal turns to the staff and beams*). 'Thank you, gentlemen, for your magnificent co-operation. In the future it will be our proudest boast that in this school a pupil simply cannot fail'!

(They shake hands and slap each other's back)

Humour in Refund

In the play, the author has made use of humour to bring out the problems that exist in the education system which does not prepare the students to become individuals who are capable of functioning in the society as adults. The language used and the allusions go together to bring out the humour. The strategy that the masters form for outwitting Wasserkopf by ensuring that he passes while he is trying his best to fail the re-examination so that he can get a refund on the expenses that were incurred for his education is all put forth in an extremely humorous manner. The nonsensical questions, the weird answers and the logic used to prove the answer right add comedy to an otherwise serious issue. The Mathematics Master has a creative, non-linear thinking capable of proving every answer of the ex-student to be correct. The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation which is also humorous. The way Wasserkopf is tricked into a situation where he proves that he does know mathematics by calculation the amount that should be refunded to him is extremely humorous.

Themes

We will now discuss the themes of the play *Refund*.

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(i) Teachers and their lateral thinking

In the play, the simple questions asked by the masters, except the Mathematics Masters, were meant to ensure that the ex-student Wasserkopf would be able to pass the re-examination. But, Wasserkopf is determined to fail, and therefore, he provides extremely nonsensical answers to the questions. Yet, the clever masters use lateral thinking to somehow prove that the answers provided by Wasserkopf are absolutely correct.

The History Question was: For how many years did the Thirty Years' War last. The answer was: Thirty Years' War lasted seven meters. The logic given for the answer being correct: according to Einstein's Theory of Relativity time and space are relative terms because of which it is possible to represent years as meters. Since the war was fought for less than twelve hours a day it was actually fought for only seven years. Seven years can be represented as seven meters.

The Physics question: Do objects actually become smaller as people moved away from them or is it just an optical illusion. Answer: 'Ass.' The logic given for the answer being correct: Ass is the correct answer since the melancholic look of the ass is also an optical illusion.

To prove all other answers that Wasserkopf gave as logically correct, the masters made use of extremely innovative and creative thinking to successfully prove that Wasserkopf is indeed a genius and they made him pass the re-examination awarding him the title of Mathematical Genius. At the end, Wasserkopf is forced out of the school without a refund.

(ii) A criticism of the modern education system

The play depicts that Wasserkopf, who was considered a bad student, is now a person who is considered good for nothing. He has been unable to get a job and the school certificate that he has, has also proved to be useless. When he returns to his school to ask for a refund, the masters take him to be a sly and crafty person who is looking to get hold of money. The masters are all out to outwit him so that the school does not have to provide him a refund. The point of note here is that Wasserkopf has actually not been able to gain an education from his school which has provided him the necessary ability to live life with dignity. The masters, instead of looking at the pitiable situation that Wasserkopf is in despite having studied in that school, are all pooling their resources to fool him and outwit him. The masters and the principal do not seem to be at all bothered or worried about the welfare of Wasserkopf, instead they are all out to make the undeserving Wasserkopf pass the re-exam by hook or by crook just so that they do not need to pay up the refund.

The education system is not helping the students ready to live and function in the actual world. The syllabus is not geared towards teaching them life skills but is more tuned to memorizing. The student's creative and logical thinking is not developed and the actual knowledge that the student gains does not prove to be appropriate for being a productive part of society as an adult. Even such students who pass from school with flying colours might be misfits in society.

While the masters have the knowledge, which is itself evident from the type of questions that they are asking by building the answers into the questions at most times and from the manner in which they are able to prove that even the most absurd of the ex-student's answers is correct, the masters have not been able to pass on the same knowledge to the students of their institution. The ex-student who has come for a refund is an example. Even then, rather than thinking about how they could ensure that all students actually leave the institution with enough knowledge to function in society as productive individuals, they are thinking of what they can do to make sure that Wasserkopf cannot trick them and fail the re-examination.

The play throws light on several aspects of the education system and on the process of examination and promotion. It shows that a single exam is held for assessing the students' ability and capability. Just like the questions posed by the masters in the play, the actual exams are also generally full of excessively elaborate and frivolous questions. The students' career is linked with their performance in those examinations. Also, there are some such teachers who do not care for the students' welfare but are themselves working for self-preservation by passing or providing good marks to undeserving students. This tactic is used where the teachers are under tremendous pressure as their own position and promotion are linked with the percentage of students that pass.

The play ends with the principal saying: 'Thank you, gentlemen, for your magnificent co-operation. In the future it will be our proudest boast that in this school a pupil simply cannot fail'!

It is a point to note that while *Refund* is a one-act play which was written more than a century ago, is still relevant in the existing times.

4.6 SUMMARY

- Percival Wilde was a famous American playwright and author, and has written a lot of short stories too.
- Percival Wilde's famous play *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological play which deals with the subject of corruption and the power of money on an individual's behaviour.
- Robert Baldwin is the main protagonist of the play and is an extremely honest and just individual and a sincere worker.
- The character of Robert Baldwin is like an everyday American who works for a living, however, he is not able to earn a decent salary which is sufficient enough to support his family.
- In the play *The Hour of Truth*, John Gresham is accused of a fraud and Robert Baldwin is the witness against his case.
- Robert Baldwin informs his family that he has been offered a hundred thousand dollars by John Gresham if he says that 'I don't remember' and these words will free him from the accusation.
- The entire play *The Hour of Truth* is set in the parlour of a little cottage on a rather hot and sultry Sunday afternoon, when the sun is overhead and the baked clay underfoot are merciless.
- The play deals with the reactions of the family members after they know about the offer made by Gresham.

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Check Your Progress

8. How does the play highlight a humorous situation?
9. Why did Wasserkopf decide to visit his school to ask for refund?

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- *The Hour of Truth* is an intense psychological study which explains the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption.
- The two main characters in this play are Robert Baldwin, the secretary of a reputed bank and the banker, John Gresham.
- Robert Baldwin gives in to the power of money, however, his honesty is preserved and appreciated as Gresham accepted his crime and praised Baldwin for his honesty.
- Farrell Mitchell's famous play *The Best Laid Plans* revolves around the story of three men who formulate a plan and succeed in catching the burglars.
- The play opens in an expensively furnished sitting room where we see a man (Wood) seated in an armchair close to the fire in the fireplace and is talking with another man (Spender) who is somewhere outside the room.
- When the men leave and the butler has also retired, then, two thieves enter the room.
- The two of the thieves successfully retrieve the key from under the carpet, rob the jewellery, replace the key and are ready to leave when suddenly the door opens and in come Spender and Wood.
- The playwright builds the curiosity in the audience's mind by immediately introducing the element of precious jewels in a safe and the key to the safe securely hidden under the carpet.
- Apparently, the two of them are fated to go to prison since a policeman appears on the scene and takes charge of them.
- Wood was delaying the exit of the policeman with the criminals to give enough time to the detectives to reach the scene of crime.
- Spender and Wood now really want to know how the policeman managed to be on the scene at the right time.
- Thus, towards the end of the play, the plans laid down by Jack and Wood failed, however, Wood still managed to save the day and thus, prevented the crime.
- Elizabeth MacKintosh was a famous Scottish writer who was born on 25 July 1896.
- She wrote under two separate pseudonyms: Josephine Tey and Gordon Daviot.
- In 1936 her novel, *A Shilling for Candles*, her first as Josephine Tey was immediately appreciated by Alfred Hitchcock and he went on to say that she had provided him with enough scope to build up an atmosphere of suspense and surprise.
- The approach to historical investigation which Tey has used in *The Daughter of Time*, was considered as the best novel of her.
- The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is set in the period of 1944 summer, in German-occupied France. The play deals with a young French man caught by a German corporal.

- The protagonist of the play is the Madame, a French woman who is the owner of a large estate. It is her conflict which is the play's key focus and not the troubles of the French man after he has been caught by the German corporal.
- The main theme of the play is the standing up of the French to the Germans in German occupied France.
- Another theme in the play is that war is nasty and it makes individuals behave in unconventional ways.
- The play *The Pen of My Aunt* is ridden with external conflicts the first of which is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not a free country at that point.
- The play had made a critique of the army, and the manner in which the army people are accustomed to a robotic and calculated life, without personal free will, just following orders in a set manner trained to live by commands.
- Madame is portrayed as a person who is strong and patriotic, who does not fear of anything. She strongly favors the French man in front of the German corporal.
- In the play, the pen is a symbol of knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom.
- Frigyes Karinthy was a Hungarian translator, journalist, poet, playwright and author.
- Karinthy's best known translation was of A. A. Milne's work, *Winnie the Pooh*, which was given the status of a cult book in Hungary.
- Several of the stories and novels of Karinthy carry the theme of the difficulties of man-woman relationships, in part because of his second marriage which was an unhappy one.
- The play *Refund* is an unusual story. It humorously deals with an extraordinarily ludicrous situation.
- Being moneyless and jobless, Wasserkopf decides to visit his to get a 'refund' on his school fees.
- Wasserkopf who was a bad performer during his school days is paying a visit to his school after eighteen years of leaving the school with the intention of making the principal refund the tuition fees that he paid to the school while he was a student in that school.
- The principal is also confused as a result of this peculiar situation. The masters quickly realize that Wasserkopf is a cunning and crafty man who has come with the intention to extract money.
- The play ends with the masters and the principal taking out all their anger at the ex-student and having him thrown out of the school and finally being extremely happy that they have won.
- In the play, the author has made use of humour to bring out the problems that exist in the education system which does not prepare the students to become individuals who are capable of functioning in the society as adults.

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- The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation which is also humorous.
- The way Wasserkopf is tricked into a situation where he proves that he does know mathematics by calculation the amount that should be refunded to him is extremely humorous.
- The play depicts that Wasserkopf, who was considered a bad student, is now a person who is considered good for nothing.
- The masters, instead of looking at the pitiable situation that Wasserkopf is in despite having studied in that school, are all pooling their resources to fool him and outwit him.
- The play throws light on several aspects of the education system and on the process of examination and promotion.
- It is a point of note that while *The Refund* is a one act play which was written more than a century ago which is still relevant in the existing times

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Conniving:** It refers to someone who is involved in doing activities which are illegal, immoral or harmful.
 - **Heralding:** It refers to a sign which is about to be materialised.
 - **Flustered:** It refers to a person who is in a state of agitated confusion.
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4.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The main theme of the play *The Hour of Truth* deals with the influence of money in the lives of the individuals and the ways in which it tempts them to the path of corruption.
2. The prominent works of Percival Wilde are enlisted as follows:
 - (a) *Mystery Week-End* (1938)
 - (b) *Inquest* (1938)
 - (c) *Rogues in Clover* (1929)
 - (d) *Dawn*
 - (e) *The Noble Lord*
 - (f) *The Traitor*
 - (g) *Confessional*
 - (h) *The Beautiful Story*
 - (i) *The Villain in the Piece*
3. Wood realized that the policeman is an accomplice of the thieves as he was apprehensive about the fact that how can a policeman appear on the exact time and also because he was not wearing the correct boots which a policeman wears.
4. Jack was not worried even after he was caught by Wood and Spender as he was a good planner. He knew that even if someone catches him, then his accomplice dressed as a policeman will come to his rescue.
5. The main conflicts highlighted in the play *The Pen of My Aunt* are external conflicts which is that France has been occupied by the Germans and it is not

a free country at that point. Secondly, a French soldier dressed as a civilian is caught wandering in the woods without authorization and papers by a German corporal. He thus, has to save himself from being arrested.

6. The main theme of the play is the opposition of the French to the Germans in German occupied France.
7. The significance of pen in the play *The Pen of my Aunt* stands for knowledge and of ultimate power, of creativity and of final authority, of wisdom. It represents for the wisdom and the power imbedded in the character of the Madame.
8. The extraordinary manner in which the masters and the principal manage to completely turn the matter around creates a strange situation and highlights humorous situation in the play *Refund*.
9. Wasserkopf decided to visit his school to ask for refund because he was unable to secure a job and believed that his education has not given him anything. However, he grew more eager when his friend Lederer asked him questions related to foreign exchange reserves and he failed to provide any answers.

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4.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How was Wasserkopf forced out of the school without a refund?
2. Write a short note on Madame's character from the play *The Pen of My Aunt*.
3. How is the character of Robert Baldwin been portrayed in the play *The Hour of Truth*?
4. Why do you think Madame was supporting the French man?
5. How can you say that Jack was a good planner in the play *The Best Laid Plans*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the ways in which the Masters tried to outwit Wasserkopf.
2. Explain the themes of the play *The Pen of My Aunt*.
3. Discuss the ways in which Wood helped to prevent the crime in the play *The Best Laid Plans*.
4. Analyse the treatment of money and its influence on the lives of the individuals in the play *The Hour of Truth*.
5. Critically analyse the play *Refund*.

4.10 FURTHER READING

- Bailey, Matilda; Leavell, Ullin Whitney. 1963. *A World of Experience*. United States of America: American Book Company.
- Moon, Samuel. 1965. *One Act: Eleven Short Plays of the Modern Theatre*. United States of America: Grove Press.
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- Karinthy, Frigyes. 1938. *Refund: A Play in One Act for Seven Males*. New York: Samuel French.

UNIT 5 LITERARY FORMS

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
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- 5.10 Questions and Exercises
- 5.11 Further Reading

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5.0 INTRODUCTION

Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama, and essays.

There is no authorized list of such words. Words that are used frequently for the purposes described above come to be recognized as literary forms. Literary forms are essential for a complete understanding of literature. In this unit, you will study the various literary forms such as lyric, ballad, ode, sonnet, epic, elegy, satire, dramatic monologue, drama, one-act play, essay, novel and short story.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the various forms of poetry: lyric, ode and elegy
- Assess the salient features of a ballad, sonnet, epic and satire
- Define a dramatic monologue
- Explain the various tragic and comic English plays

- Analyse the growth and development of the novel form
- List the famous essays and short stories in English

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5.2 FORMS OF POETRY: LYRIC, ODE AND ELEGY

There are various forms of poetry that have emerged over a period of time. In this section, we will discuss ode, lyric and elegy.

5.2.1 Ode

The root of the word ‘ode’ lies in the Greek word ‘aeidein’ which means ‘to sing’ or ‘to chant’. This form is a part of the lyric poetry tradition. An ode is a poem that has a formal poetic diction, sometimes addressed to an absent person, or an object, and dealing with a subject which is serious in nature.

An ode usually has three segments: strophe, antistrophe, and epode. In the earlier days odes were accompanied by music and dance. The performance involved two choruses or individuals. The first chorus/individual recital or singing of the strophe, followed by the second chorus or individual reciting/singing of the antistrophe and then both together singing the epode. Romantic poets used this lyrical form to express their strongest sentiments.

There are three varieties of odes, distinguished by form and structure: the Pindaric, the Horatian, and the Irregular.

The Pindaric ode is named after the classical Greek poet Pindar, who is acknowledged with introducing the ode form. It was performed by a chorus and accompanied by dancers. These performances consisted of strophe, antistrophe, and epode. Pindaric odes were performed to commemorate victories related to athletic pursuits.

William Wordsworth’s poem, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, is an excellent example of a Pindaric ode in English. It begins with a formal opening, the middle segment mirrors the opening; and the ending — that is of varying length — is composed with a variety of metrical structures:

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe’er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*

The Horatian ode owes its name to the Roman poet Horace. It is more informal, less elaborate and more tranquil and meditative in tone than the Pindaric ode. This form is more apt when one is reading or writing for personal pleasure, rather than

for theatrical performances. The Horatian ode has a regular pattern of stanza. An example is Allen Tate's poem *Ode to the Confederate Dead*:

*Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones yield their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
To the seasonal eternity of death;
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,
They sough the rumour of mortality.*

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The third variety of ode, the irregular ode, is formal in manner and has the characteristics of the classical ode in terms of its thematic value. One of the well-known examples in this form is *Ode on a Grecian Urn* written by John Keats. The other examples of this kind of ode are Robert Lowell's *Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket*, Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, and Robert Creeley's *America*. It is important to mention here that the 'qasida' form found in Persian poetry has similarity with the ode form.

5.2.2 Lyric

Lyric is a form of poetry that addresses emotional and personal matters. Let us now discuss lyric poetry.

Lyric poetry

In Greece, during the ancient period, any poem which was accompanied by a lyre (a musical instrument) was called a Lyric. Lyric poetry is an umbrella term for any poem which is short and conveys personal feelings and opinions, has a single speaker and possesses a song like quality. It could be elegy, ode, sonnet song or hymn.

Lyrics in Latin literature were found as early as in first century BC by Catullus and Horace. In the Middle Ages in England 'lyric' poetry manifested itself through folk songs, hymns (a lyric with religious subject), songs of the troubadours (the poet and musicians of aristocratic origin in France). Lyric found its existence in other non-English counterparts of the globe.

'Eihazal' originated in Persia around tenth century. Thematically this poetic form always centres on love and contains couplets. Omar Khayyam, Amir Khusrau, Alisher Navoi are proponents of this form. In China, 'sanqu' poetry, written in regional dialects gained prominence. Petrarch developed the sonnet style in Italy which was later used by many writers. The word 'sonnet' in Italian means 'little song', a fourteen line rhyming song following the iambic pentameter. Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two sections: an 'octet' (first eight lines) and a 'sestet' (last six lines). 'Bhajan' in the Indian context refers to short religious poems; some exponents of these writings were Tulsidas, Kabir, and Soordas.

Lyric poem in sixteenth century gained prominence through sonnets composed by Sir Philip Sidney and Shakespeare. The early Romantics as well as the late Romantics like Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, and Keats also used this form in various experimental ways. Lord Tennyson was another major poet during the Victorian era.

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His poetry collection like *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) was well appreciated. *In Memorium* (1850) and *Maud* (1855), both written by Tennyson, contains 133 and 27 lyrics respectively. There have been a few experiments with this genre in the modern period as well.

5.2.3 Elegy

The form of elegy originated in ancient Greece as lamentations for the dead. Elegies can be simple, encomiastic, reflective, critical or pastoral. The simple elegy is a funeral song for an individual. Spenser's *Daphnida* was modelled on Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and is an example of a simple elegy. The encomiastic elegy is a memorial for a great person in which the poet recollects his life and personality, e.g., Spenser's *Astrophel* on the death of Sidney; Milton's *Lycidas* for Edward King; Arnold's *Thyrsis* for Arthur Hugh Clough are examples of this kind of elegy. The reflective elegy has a melancholic and reflective mood. Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is a prominent example of this type of elegy. *Anglo-Saxon Deor, the Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* also come in this category. The critical elegy was used in the nineteenth century as a medium for literary criticism, e.g., Arnold's *Memorial Verses* in which he pays tribute to Wordsworth and places him above Goethe and Byron. Pastoral elegy is one in which the poet laments the death of a dead companion using the elements of the pastoral. It is in the tradition of Greek *Theocritus, Bion and Morchus*. By conventions, the poem begins invoking the muses and refers to classical mythology. The whole of nature joins the mourning which leads to a funeral procession. Digression is common in such elegies. The poem ends on a note of hope as do Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonis* and Arnold's *Thyrsis*.

In modern usage, it is the theme that matters and not the metre. The theme of an elegy must be mournful or it should be sadly reflective. It is usually a lamentation for the dead, though it may be inspired by other sombre themes, such as unrequited love, the fall of a famous city and the like. It is written as a tribute to something loved and lost. Thus, in writing an elegy, an English poet is not limited to any one form, but may choose whatever most fitting seems to him.

Though grief is the dominant emotion in the early part of the elegy, the note often changes towards the close, as the poet reconciles himself to the inevitable such as *Lycidas* closes on a note of optimism:

'Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more, For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead, Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.'

5.3 SONNET, EPIC, BALLAD AND SATIRE

Let us now study the literary forms—sonnet, epic, ballad, and satire.

5.3.1 Sonnet

In this section, we will study the sonnet form which is one of the most enduring literary forms of poetry in English. The sonnet form was introduced by Wyatt and Surrey in the sixteenth century in English. Before we move on to talk about English sonnet, let us go through the origin and development of the form. The word sonnet itself was introduced in English language in 1557 as the title of Surrey's poems. This is either directly borrowed from Middle French sonnet or directly from Italian sonetto, literally 'little song'. The root word is also either the Old Provençal

Check Your Progress

1. Name the three segments of an ode.
2. Define lyric poetry.
3. Give an example of a simple elegy.

diminutive of son ‘song, sound,’ or Latin sonus ‘sound’. In either case, the definition of sonnet has both the attributes. Sonnet was the most common form of poetry in the late Middle Ages. By the thirteenth century, it had developed a standardized form. The form consists of fourteen equal lines that follow a set rhyme scheme. The sonnet form was perfected in the fourteenth century during the Italian Renaissance by Francesco Petrarca, the Renaissance scholar and poet. Sir Thomas Wyatt in the sixteenth century translated some of the Petrarchan sonnets in English and is credited with introducing the sonnet form in English literature.

The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet. Usually, these fourteen lines follow the hendecasyllable (a line of verse containing eleven syllables) and Alexandrine (a line of two hemistichs [half-lines] of six syllables each, separated by a caesura) meters. The octave, first eight lines normally ask questions and the sestet, the last six lines answer them. At the end of the eighth line of the Petrarchan sonnet there is a ‘volta’ or ‘turn’, a point in the sonnet where the idea or theme is turned on its head. This will be like a question is answered (or introduced), or the subject matter is further complicated. Usually the volta takes the form of a ‘but’ statement contradicting or complicating the content of the earlier lines. A Petrarchan sonnet follows the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdecde, though with some variation, especially within the final six lines.

The first eight lines have interlinked rhyming scheme that also point out the same idea or theme in them. Further, we can understand that the rhyme scheme ‘abba’ typically starts at a point moving towards another and coming back again to the starting point. This talks about the closely knitted subject matter within the four lines. After the volta along with a change in the idea or theme, the rhyming scheme also takes a turn. The variations of rhyme in the sestet can take the form of cdc cdc or cddc ee. The theme in the Petrarchan sonnet is usually the unattainable love of the beloved. However, this is mostly unrequited love. As a result, in the sonnet, the lover will be seen praising the beloved and justifies his love for her. The beloved in this sonnet is portrayed as an ideal who also teaches the lover the feeling of love. In one of his famous collection of sonnets ‘Rime Sparse (Scattered Rhymes)’, Petrarch talks about his transcendental longings for Laura. These longings are translated into an earthy and impatient expression of physical desire in some of his sonnets. This theme is further exploited by the poets who followed him. The theme later became so entangled with the sonnet form that people started defining sonnet as a love song and it became associated with high poetic diction, vivid imagery, and romantic love.

1. Wyatt and Surrey

As mentioned earlier, the sonnet emerged in English literature in the sixteenth century through Thomas Wyatt and his younger contemporary Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey’s translation of Petrarchan sonnet into English. The early circulation of their sonnets was in manuscripts only. Their sonnets were first published by Richard Tottel in his *Songes and Sonettes* that is better known as Tottel’s Miscellany in 1557. Now let us go through Petrarch’s Rime # 140 which was translated by Wyatt and Surrey. The first line of the sonnet is translated as ‘The long love that in my thought doth Harbour’ ‘The love that doth Reign and live within my thought’ respectively.

*THE long love that in my thought I harbour,
And in mine heart doth keep his residence,
Into my face presseth with bold pretence,*

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*And therein campeth displaying his banner.
 She that me learneth to love and to suffer,
 And wills that my trust, and lust's negligence
 Be reined by reason, shame, and reverence,
 With his hardiness takes displeasure.
 Wherewith love to the heart's forest he fleeth,
 Leaving his enterprise with pain and cry,
 And there him hideth, and not appeareth.
 What may I do, when my master feareth,
 But in the field with him to live and die?
 For good is the life, ending faithfully.*

In this sonnet the lover is captivated by the beloved. This captivation is further strengthened by the use of military images. The love of the mistress has camped in his heart displaying the banner. This intense love is translated into a carnal desire towards the beloved. But he is overcome by the chastity of the lady which forces him to be faithful. The beloved teaches him to restrain his passion and also to be reigned by reason and shame. As the beloved is not reciprocating the love, the lover feels himself to be abandoned by his fearful master and wants to put an end to his life. This is a drama of erotic excitement. The lover is inhabited by love that causes him to undertake things that involve risk or danger. It also causes him to suffer pain and embarrassment. But then he realizes that love is beyond this aspect. At another level, that sonnet is an engagement with the aristocratic and humanist system that seems attractive in the beginning but is finally understood as incompatible. In Surrey's translation of the same sonnet, there are some minor changes. The speaker's heart is already captive before the sonnet starts. Later he insists very strongly upon his own act in this entire episode. Finally, the poem ends with a reminder of good life with the lover, but for Wyatt it ends with a sweet death. Surrey in this translation experimented with the rhyming scheme of 'abab cdcd efef, gg' which was perfected later by Shakespeare.

Despite the fact that Wyatt and Surrey introduced this form in English language, it is Shakespeare and Spencer who credited with the introduction of this form. Both of them essentially changed the rhyming scheme and stanza structure and along with them the meaning associated with it.

2. William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is widely known in literary circles as the famous playwright of English literature. He has thirty-seven plays to his credit; all of them with varied themes and characters. In addition, he has also written three narrative poems and 154 sonnets. The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four stanzas. The first three are quatrains (four line stanza) followed by a couplet (two line stanza). The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. It has the following rhyme scheme 'abab, cdcd, efef, gg'. The division of three quatrains and a final concluding couplet offered him greater amount of variety with regard to rhyme and theme than is usually found in its Italian predecessors. All his sonnets typically use iambic pentameter, a ten syllable line where the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed. Shakespeare uses the three quatrains to develop an idea with three

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different images and finally reach the conclusion in the couplet. The change in mood or theme mostly happens in the beginning of the third quatrain with a final couplet concluding the arguments. But most often, he waits till the couplet ends and usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh look at the theme. Out of these 154 sonnets, the first 126 sonnets written are addressed to a fair young man in his youth and the last 28 sonnets are addressed to a dark lady. Nobody knows that a flesh and blood person exists in reality or not. The themes of the sonnets abound in love, beauty and mortality. This sequence was published in 1609.

Sonnet 18

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

In this sonnet, the speaker is describing the beauty of the beloved (here the young man). This is introspection on death and a consolation in the end that the young man will remain immortal through this poem. The sonnet starts with a question on metaphor whether to compare the young man with summer season or not. However, he says that summer has its finest moments but his beloved is far more superior than this season. Further, summer will soon depart just like any other beautiful thing in nature. Likewise, the young man also has a short life which will soon be past. As the lover, it is the speaker's intention to immortalize the beauty in verse and preserve it for future generations to cherish. The sonnet ends with a very bold claim that as long as there are men on this earth, they will read this sonnet and will help the young men to relive their memories. This is a typical example of romantic intimacy.

3. Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty. He is known for his experiments in the stanza form. He divided his long poem into nine line stanzas of which the first eight lines are written in iambic pentameter and the last line is in iambic hexameter. It follows the rhyming scheme of 'ababbcbcc'. This stanza is called a Spenserian stanza. He has also written a sequence of sonnets called *Amoretti*. It tells the story of Spenser's own successful courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle. In this sonnet also he experimented with the form. The resultant form is called the Spenserian sonnet. This sonnet is also divided into three quatrains and a final couplet with

iambic pentameter lines. The rhymes are interlinked as in 'ababbcbccdcdee'. The interlinking of rhymes in the three quatrains also tells us that they speak of similar themes and the couplet will offer a conclusion. Let us look at one of his sonnets.

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Amoretti, Sonnet No.75

*One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I write it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that doest in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize,
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wiped out likewise.
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse, your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.*

This example is taken from *Amoretti* sonnet No.75. As we have noted, the sonnet has linked rhyme scheme in the quatrains. This suggests the linked rhymes of such Italian forms as *terza rima*. Here, the poet is talking about the transitory nature of human life. This idea is depicted through the use of the metaphor of writing his beloved's name on the beach sand which is then wiped away by the coming tide. When the lover repeats this action, his beloved scorns and scolds him and tells him that it is a futile effort. Her life is also like that name which will be erased from the face of earth when the time comes. As with the Shakespearean sonnet, the speaker/poet is trying to overcome the temporal aspect of life writing a sonnet. The speaker then turns to writing the sonnet. He says that the body may decay and will turn to dust. But he will not let her memory die. The virtues of his beloved and their mutual love will be made eternal through the poem. This poem will further elevate her status and reserve her place in heaven. This will also be a guiding force for the latter's life.

The earlier sonnets dealt with the love of the lover for his beloved. But in the seventeenth century, the sonnet adopted other themes as well. For example, the metaphysical poets John Donne and George Herbert wrote religious sonnets highlighting their love for God. Both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan rhyme schemes were popular throughout the seventeenth century period. But poets kept on experimenting with newer styles as well.

4. John Milton

John Milton, the famous English poet, is better known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost*. We will carry out an analysis of it in the epic section. He was a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. However, like other English poets, he has also written sonnets. Let us go through sonnet No. 19 from his poem *On His Blindness*.

*When I consider how my light is spent
When I consider how my light is spent,*

*Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to hide
 Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he returning chide;
 Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
 I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
 They also serve who only stand and wait."*

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This sonnet is similar to the Italian form of writing sonnets. The octave is divided into two quatrains and the sestet is divided into two tercets (three line stanza). The rhyming scheme is 'abba abba cdc cdc'. The first eight lines raise questions to God who has created him and has given him immense talent. The last six lines discuss the answer that he receives from God. The speaker of the poem is the author himself.

Milton lost his sight at a very young age. This brings the irony prominent in this sonnet to the fore. Milton tells his readers that he knows his potential but is unable to deal with it. This is because his primacy of experience has been lost. He is not able to see anything now. He is very scared to think that he is not using his talent to his fullest potential. He thinks that God will punish him for not using his talent. He is also questioning his creator—God—but knows that he should be careful while doing so. A patient wait has helped him receive the answer. The answer clearly states that God does not want man's gift or work to praise him. God rather expects man to bear his mild yoke. Hence, this sonnet is an exploration of Milton's relationship with God and his faith in God. He refers to the parables that Jesus told in this sonnet. In line 3 he talks about the servant who buried the talent given to him by his master and did not do anything about it. The servant lost faith in the eyes of his master and was thrown out because of this action. The style of the sonnet has been derived from the Baroque Period.

5. John Donne

John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery. Poems like *The Canonization*, *The Flea* are all examples of the use of this metaphysical style. Donne is known for his unique treatment of love and amorous courtship in his poems. However, later in his life, he became an Anglican priest. During the tenure of his poetic career, he is known for his famous Holy sonnets. Here, the lover is mankind and the beloved is God, his creator. Let us go through the explanation of one such sonnet of *Holy Sonnets*.

*Batter my heart, three-person'd God
 Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you*

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*As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.*

*I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.*

In this sonnet, John Donne like Milton, has created a dialogue with God. The speaker is aware of his shortcomings. He is very fickle minded and is going astray from the path of God. His heart is craving for worldly pleasures. So he wants God his creator to come and save him. He feels that it is the duty of God, the creator, to save his creation. This, he feels, can only be done by overthrowing God's enemy who is residing in the heart of the speaker. God has to forcibly imprison him to free and purify him. In this sonnet, he mixes the style of the Italian and Shakespearean sonnets into one. The first eight lines of the sonnet have a rhyming scheme of 'abba abba' that corresponds to the Petrarchan sonnet. But in the last six lines, the rhyming scheme is 'cdcd cc' where you have a concluding couplet like that of Shakespearean sonnets. The use of violent metaphors like battering, captive, usurped town, and so forth shows the speaker's intense longing for God.

The tradition of writing sonnets went out of date during the Restoration period. However, the tradition of writing sonnets returned during the period of the French Revolution. The penchant for sonnet continued during the Romantic period. The sheer number of sonnets written during this period itself stand testimony to this fact. For example, William Wordsworth wrote 523 sonnets, John Keats 67 sonnets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge 48 sonnets, and Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote 18 sonnets. These sonnets imbibed the elements belonging to both the Shakespearean and Petrarchan traditions.

6. William Wordsworth

Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the Romantic period. Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity. *The Prelude* is one of the significant poems written by Wordsworth. In addition, he has written several sonnets as well. Some of his famous poems are *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge*, *The World is Too Much With Us* and *London, 1802*. Let us study one of the ecclesiastical sonnets from the poem *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge* I which is a historical record of the origin of the Anglican Church till his own time.

*Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—*

*Albeit labouring for a scanty band
 Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
 And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
 Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
 Of nicely-calculated less or more;
 So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
 These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
 Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
 Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
 Linger—*and wandering on as loth to die;*
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
 That they were born for immortality.*

This sonnet is part of the sonnets that talk about the ecclesiastical architecture. In this context, he mentions the types of spiritual church in truth and charity (34–37); in humble altar and low pile (38–41); in cathedral and college chapel (42–45); the eternal city (46–47).

7. Percy Bysshe Shelley

P.B. Shelley is one of the renowned Romantics. He is known for his powerful poems like *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, and so forth. His sonnet *Ozymandias* is also highly anthologized. Shelley innovated radically, creating his own rhyme scheme for the sonnet *Ozymandias*.

*I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 “My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

This sonnet mentions a traveller’s account of the ruins that he has seen of an ancient city. The traveller recounts that while he was travelling to a place where ancient civilizations once existed, he had seen an abandoned statue in the middle of a desert. From the title, we can make out that the land he has visited is Egypt. The statue exists in a dilapidated condition. There are two stones that look like legs of an individual but there is no trunk attached to the statue. He could only see the face of the statue from which he could see the stern and powerful look of a ruler. The traveller states that the sculptor was skilled enough in depicting the emotions

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of a ruler on the statue. On the pedestal near the face, there is an inscription that tells anyone who might happen to pass by, basically, ‘Look around and see how awesome I am!’ But except the statue there is nothing to tell the greatness of his rule and empire. There is just a lot of sand, as far as the traveller can see.

This sonnet acts as a warning to the city/country that he lives in and the king. During Shelly’s time, we could see that France’s hegemony has ended like that of the empire of Ozymandias. Likewise, the sonnet forebodes a warning that England’s rule will also end soon. The king and the nation should not take pride in whatever they have achieved in terms of prosperity and power.

Another important aspect of the sonnet is its point of view. What is said in the poem comes from the writing made by the sculptor on the statue of king Ozymandias. This is read by an unknown traveller who narrated that to the speaker. This helps in creating a sense of the mystery of history and legend. Everything about the narration is shrouded in mystery. The traveller is unknown. Also, we are not sure whether the traveller has actually seen the statue and interpreted it correctly or not. Moreover, the statue itself is a creation of a sculptor, who might or might not have truly captured the passions of the king. Our best access to the king himself is not the statue, not anything physical, but the king’s own words.

8. Gerard Manley Hopkins

G. M. Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a Modern poet. He got converted to Catholicism and became a priest. His religious conviction and reverence for nature is very evident in all his poems. Most of his sonnets were written in sprung rhythm, for example *The Windhover*. He like other English poets experimented with the sonnet form in *Pied Beauty* and *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection*. Let us study a sonnet of the poem *God’s Grandeur* written by Hopkins.

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining ftnr shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

This sonnet talks about how nature represents Gods glory. This sonnet validates the presence of god and also justifies his existence. Nonetheless, human beings who focus more on material prosperity have started destroying Nature. Nature rejuvenates

itself to greet the man daily in the morning. God is also gracious and gives the power of rebirth to Nature.

9. Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen is one of the famous English poets who wrote during the period of the First World War. His poems showcase the excruciating experiences of the First World War. He was influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon. Let us read some lines written by Wilfred Owen in the Preface to an anthology of his poems.

This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them.

*Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty,
dominion, or power, except War.*

Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War.....

To conclude, we can say that sonnets remain one of the most enduring forms of poetry in contemporary times. The early English practitioners such as Edmund Spenser (who gave his name to the Spenserian sonnet), Michael Drayton, and William Shakespeare (who is also credited with a second form of English sonnet) largely wrote about the theme of love in their sonnets.

Further, authors such as G.M. Hopkins have challenged the traditional format of the sonnet form, by varying the rhyme schemes, and rhythm.

5.3.2 Epic

Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry and a major form of narrative literature. This is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well. An epic is often defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war. The narration is usually in a continuous form. Aristotle has ranked the epic as second only to tragedy. In order to be called an epic, the poem needs to fulfill the following criteria.

- The poem has to be long and all the lines should be in a particular meter.
- The subject matter of the poem should be serious.
- The language should be formal and the style elevated.
- The hero should be a quasi-divine figure or a semi-god itself.
- The actions of the hero will affect the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the instance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) the entire human race.

In addition, there are some epic features which are distinct of writers. These features have been drawn from the traditional epics. There are differences between traditional and literary epics. Traditional epics are also called folk epics. They were not written but transferred orally from generation to generation. They were about a tribal or national hero during a warlike age. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Greek, in Sanskrit Valmiki's Ramayana and Vyas' Mahabharata, the Old English *Beowulf*; the French *Chanson de Roland*, German epic *Nibelungenlied* and the Spanish *Poema del Cid* are all examples of traditional epics. There is no written testimony regarding the authors of these oral epics. The Greek epic is attributed to Homer, for example. Northrop Frye, in his acclaimed book *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) talks about how Homer established for his successors the 'demonstration that the fall of an enemy, no less than of a friend or leader, is tragic and not comic,' and that with this 'objective and disinterested element,' the epic acquired an authority based 'on the vision of nature as an impersonal order'.

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Literary epics, on the other hand, were written by individual poets but certainly drew inspiration from the traditional form. The Latin epic poem *The Aeneid* written by Virgil, the English epic poem *Paradise Lost* written by John Milton, *Hyperion* by John Keats are examples of literary epics. *The Aeneid* served as the model for *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost* in turn became the fragmentary epic *Hyperion*.

The other distinctive features of an epic which are found in literary works across the world are as follows:

- The epic starts in *media res* that is, in the middle of things.
- The poet invokes the muses in the beginning of the poem to sustain the long poem.
- The poem mentions supernatural events usually attributed to the will and actions of the gods.
- A list of heroes is mentioned in the poem.
- The heroes are always discussed with epithets.
- The use of epic similes is mostly prevalent in the poems.
- The poet remains omniscient throughout the poem.

Many works like Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* do not strictly adhere to the traditional or literary epic style but their scale and grandeur is the same. Nowadays, the term epic is applied to literary works who follow that model without the verse form. Prose forms like Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so forth are treated as epic poems because of the large-scale treatment of the subject matter. Georg Lukács, Hungarian Marxist philosopher, further uses the term bourgeois epic for all the novels that talk about the social reality of their capitalist age on a broad scale. Lukács said that 'the novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God'.

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

The study of a Western epic will have to start with Homer's epic either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. In this section, we will look at *Iliad* and the model that it has provided for the later writers to follow.

Iliad is a sustained song of around sixteen thousand lines written in dactylic hexameter. The poem invokes the muses for the successful completion of the poem. Muses in Greek mythology are the nine goddesses, who are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and who preside over art and science. They not only act as the poet's inspiration but also give an authoritative tone to the entire poem. The same pattern applies to *Odyssey* as well.

Iliad begins with the *Song of Ilium* and, thus, the audience in its very first line is introduced to Achilles' anger. The hero is a figure of great national importance. He is the Greek warrior and demigod Achilles, who is the son of the sea nymph Thetis and mortal Peleus. In *Odyssey*, the poet talks about the wanderings of Odysseus after he leaves the shore of Troy after winning the battle back to his home in Ithaca.

The setting of the epic has a similar magnitude. It takes in its purview the entire world. *Iliad* talks about a world war like scenario in which all the nation states in and around the Aegean (Mediterranean) sea participated. In *Odyssey* also, the hero's journey covers the entire Mediterranean sea and the places surrounding

it. He even goes to the underworld to understand the meaning of life and ultimately finds a safe way home.

The hero's action is also larger than life. The hero performs superhuman deeds or undertakes risks which require supernatural powers to survive. Achilles in *Iliad* kills numerous Trojan soldiers so much so that the river turns red with their blood. Further, he even wounds a goddess. The way in which Odysseus overcomes the hurdles placed by the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, how he gets away from the tricks of Circe are all examples of his superhuman abilities and finally, how he returns home even after he is opposed by gods and goddesses is very impressive in the poem.

The use of the supernatural element is a distinctive feature of epics. The gods take an active part in the lives of the mortals. For instance, in *Iliad*, there are gods and goddesses who take sides of the two armies.

Apart from these epic features, there are so many aspects which are a part of the oral traditional epics and these are as follows:

- *Iliad* follows a ring structure, that is the first and last book has similar events.
- In *Iliad*, words, phrases and sometimes entire passages are repeated by different characters in different scenes. For example, Agamemnon sends Odysseus to Achilles to bring him back to the war. In this scene, Agamemnon asks Odysseus to make certain promises which are repeated by Odysseus to Achilles.
- There are type scenes in *Iliad*. Type scenes are typical scene, that is, there are events that tend to recur and whenever similar events are described it follows a set pattern. For example, when a duel is described, first the participants give a proposal to fight, it is followed by a verbal fight, then different arms are hurled in a sequence and finally one of them is hit brutally and dies.
- The events in *Iliad* follow a minor to major parallelism. This implies that the intensity of the events increases and reaches a culmination in the last books. For example, there are so many duels fought in *Iliad*. It starts with Paris and Menelaus and culminates with Achilles and Hector.

Virgil's *The Aeneid*

Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus. He took Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as his template and created an epic that surpasses both of them and created an example for others to follow. But he could not complete the epic and in his death bed he wished the manuscript to be burnt. But it was his friend and patron, Maecenas, who did not follow the last wish of Virgil and kept the manuscript for posterity. Just like other traditional epics, Virgil's Aeneas, the hero of the epic, is the son of the goddess Aphrodite. He was prophesied to be the founder of the new Troy which he set out to build and finally laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

The entire poem is written in spondee hexameter of almost twelve thousand lines. He also starts with the invocation to the muse and then begins to tell about the wanderings of the hero and the war that he has fought for building the empire. Virgil asks the muses for help to complete the long narrative poem. Like Homer's *Iliad*, *The Aeneid* has two invocations—first in book I and second in book VII.

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The poem starts in *media res* at a critical point in the action. Aeneid does not start in the beginning of things. He has already wandered for twelve years and reaches Carthage his penultimate stop where he narrates his wanderings to Dido, the queen of Carthage. He starts with the fall of Troy and how the Greeks treacherously defeat the Trojans because they could not win by force. Then in the fifth book, he moves into the present state of affairs. He goes on to describe Aeneas' travel through the underworld where he learns about his destiny.

The story of the epic, as we have noted, is associated with war or adventure. In the case of *The Aeneid*, it is associated with both war and adventure. The first line of the poem itself talks about it 'Of arms and the man I sing'. Out of the twelve books, the first six books talk about Aeneas' adventure through the Mediterranean for twelve years and the last six books talk about a great war fought between Aeneas' allies and Turnus' allies.

The epic talks about several legendary heroes. In *The Aeneid*, this happens in the seventh book where there is an entire catalogue of the allies of Turnus. This is a significant feature of the epic and so Virgil invokes the muses again. Further, Aeneas is a demigod and his actions will result in the building of the Roman Empire that will change the course of the entire human history.

The Aeneid is also full of epithets like Pius Aeneas, graceful Turnus, and so forth. He also uses epic similes. In one such example, the author compares Aeneas and Turnus with bull fighting for the female which is an extended simile.

Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. This is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter. The Prologue contains the list of heroes in the poem. All the twenty-nine people are described in detail in this poem. This poem is about a group of pilgrimages visiting Canterbury. The invocation is not there in the traditional sense but you can see that the poem starts with the mention of the April showers and the wind blowing on the earth which is symbolic of the blessings of God.

Milton's *Paradise lost*

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* can be seen as the true English literary epic. He has used blank verse in this poem. It is a long poem and comprises approximately twelve books of ten thousand lines.

The author starts the epic by stating his argument, or the epic theme. He further invokes the muses to inspire him in his great task of writing. Nevertheless, for Milton the muses are not the Greek daughters of Zeus but the Christian Holy spirit who inspired Moses and other biblical characters. The muse is addressed with the epic question, the answer to which provides the inaugural beginning of the poem.

Just like the earlier lines, the narrative starts in *medias res*. The angels are hurled to hell and he is trying to gather his scattered forces and to determine the path of revenge in the beginning of the poem. Beginning with Book V and right through Book VII, the author through the medium of the angel Raphael, narrates to Adam the events in heaven which have led to this particular situation.

In the first book, we are presented with the catalogue of the principal characters. These characters are described through various means. They are often

given set speeches that reveal their diverse temperaments and moral attitudes; for example, the debate in Pandemonium, Book II.

Milton's epic is not narrow in terms of space and time. Although its action focuses on the temptation and Fall of Man, yet it encompasses a broad time span from the creation till the end of the world. Likewise, the spatial scope of *Paradise Lost* is also very vast. The actions in heaven, the revolt in heaven by the rebel angels against God, are narrated to us; we see action on earth that is Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in hell where Satan gives his great speech.

The hero of the poem possesses superhuman qualities. According to some critics, the heroes are Adam and Eve, who are the progenitors of the entire human race. If we regard Christ as the protagonist, He is both God and man. If we regard Satan as the hero, then he is an angel. The war is between God and Satan. Satan uses human beings as his arms. The journey and adventure related to journey can be seen in the journey of Satan through chaos to discover the newly created world of human beings.

An epic poem is a ceremonial performance and is narrated in a ceremonial style, which is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportional to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture. Hence, Milton's grand style is the use of formal diction and stylized syntax, which are largely based on Latin poetry.

Locke's the Rape of the Lock

The Rape of the Lock written by Alexander Pope is a famous mock-heroic poem. A mock epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter. In a masterpiece of this type, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), Alexander Pope views through the grandiose epic perspective a quarrel which takes place between two families, the Petre and Fermor families over the theft of a lady's curl. The poem includes such elements of traditional epic such as the use of supernatural element, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes.

To conclude, we can say that the epic genre is divided into two types, traditional and literary. The traditional epic provided some features that the later literary writers tried to incorporate in their works. As epic is an elaborate poem written in a stylised language, not many writers have employed this form unlike the sonnet. Nonetheless, there are many renowned epics written in the English language.

5.3.3 Ballad

A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and hence it is either called a folk ballad or traditional ballad. These narrative pieces were composed by a single author and sung to all types (literate and illiterate) of people. Traditionally, these songs were transmitted orally and as a result, the subsequent generation of singers have introduced several changes in these ballads. Most often the ballad is set to music and has a refrain (a repeated chorus). Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures. The story mentioned in the poem is usually a folk story or a popular story derived from a tragic incident that has happened in the society.

A typical ballad consists of a quatrain that is a four line stanza. The first and the third lines will be in tetrameter in iambic foot and the second and fourth lines

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will be in trimeter iambic foot. That is, they usually have eight or six syllables in a line, where the even numbered syllables will be stressed. Similarly, the rhyme scheme is often 'abcb' because of the musical quality of this rhyme pattern, that is, only the second and fourth line will rhyme. This is called the ballad meter or ballad stanza. This is even followed in the literary ballads. An example from *Lord Thomas and Fair Annet*:

*'O art thou blind, Lord Thomas?' she said,
 'Or canst thou not very well see?
 Or dost thou not see my own heart's blood
 Runs trickling down my knee?'*

Some of the other features of a ballad are listed as follows:

- A ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal.
- A ballad begins with a brief description or introduction and tells the story without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings.
- Formulas (repeated words, phrases, sentences) are also used in the ballad to help the singer remember the course of the song. Some of the examples are stock descriptive phrases, a refrain in each stanza and incremental repetition, in which a line or stanza is repeated, but with an addition that advances the story.

Like the traditional epic, the traditional ballad has greatly influenced the form and style of literary ballad. The literary ballad imitates the form, language, and spirit of the traditional ballad.

While ballads have always been popular, it was during the Romantic movement of poetry in the late eighteenth century that the ballad resurfaced and became a popular form. Many famous Romantic poets, like William Wordsworth, wrote in the ballad form. Now we will look at two of the most famous English ballads one by Keats and the other by Coleridge.

La Belle Dame sans Merci

John Keats's poem *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad. The poem is divided into twelve quatrains that follow the rhyme scheme of 'abcb'. In each quatrain, the first three lines are of iambic tetrameter and the last line an iambic trimeter, which is just about the traditional ballad meter. This gives the impression that each stanza is self-contained and gives it a slow movement.

*O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
 Alone and palely loitering?
 The sedge has withered from the lake,
 And no birds sing.*

There are multiple voices in the poem like the narrator—a knight—the lady his beloved who is extremely beautiful and a person who is asking the narrator what happened. None of them are identified in the poem, in keeping with the ballad tradition. The ballad opens with the questions put up to the knight. This stanza is repeated in the twelfth stanza as the refrain. But the refrain has some minor variations and is an answer to the question in the first stanza. This gives the poem

a good enclosure by bringing the poem back to the beginning. This repetition also emphasises the fate of the unfortunate knight.

The ballad talks about the man who is wandering in the cold hills. He narrates how he was guided by the girl without mercy to that hill like many other men and left alone. The landscape and the trees also represent the inner feelings of the knight.

*The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.*

The entire story is written in a simple language with repetitions and absence of any kind of detail. This is a typical storytelling tradition of the ballad, along with the strong but impersonal emotions therein. Here, the poet shows how the narrator forgets everything in the arms of the beautiful lady.

*She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.*

The following lines talk about the beautiful lady who can enchant any man like Circe in the Greek tradition. But, in the end, she leaves them alone because she enjoys doing it.

*I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'*

This poem also talks about an encounter that has given the narrator both pleasure and pain. Some critics see it as Keats' rebellion towards pain associated with love. The reason for the death of the person is not mentioned in the poem. It is left to the imagination of the reader. It can be a warning to obsessions as well, be it love or drug or anything else.

*And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Another famous ballad is *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This tells the story of a mariner who has returned from a long and arduous journey and shares the terrible events encountered by him on the sea. This poem has a much longer and a much more elaborate plot than the typical folk ballads. But he opens the ballad with an abrupt and impersonal third-person narration of the traditional ballad. The old sailor narrates the story to one of the three guests who were going to a wedding.

*It is an ancient Mariner;
And he stoppeth one of three.
The sailor grabs the attention of the guest by his hypnotic eyes.
He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.*

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He then tells his sad but horrific journey on the ship and how it got caught in the winds and went astray to the Antarctic. He tells them how an albatross guided them to safety from the icebergs that trapped the ship. Then suddenly the sailor decided to shoot the albatross.

With my cross-bow,

I shot the albatross.

At first, the sailors were against the mariner but seeing that there is light wind and the ship is moving in the right direction they changed their mind and supported the mariner.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,

That bring the fog and mist.

But suddenly the winds changed their direction and the ship is in trouble again. They understood their mistake in supporting the mariner in shooting the albatross. The sailors now started blaming the mariner for shooting the albatross. The sailors tie the albatross on the neck of the sailor blaming him for the bad things that are happening on the ship.

Ah! Well a-day! What evil looks

Had I from old and young!

Instead of the cross, the albatross

About my neck was hung.

The ship is near the equator and they have again lost their way on the sea. The ship reaches a place where there are so many slimy creatures. The sailors are not able to continue as the provisions on the ship have also exhausted. All the soldiers except the ancient mariner die of thirst.

Water, water, every where,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, every where,

Nor any drop to drink.

Finally, after a troubled journey of seven days and night, he is saved when he blesses the snakes. He appreciates their beauty and he thanks and praises God. Suddenly, the albatross that was on the neck falls down ending the curse. The sailors who were dead rise in good spirit and steer the ship towards safety. Now, he wants to do penance and that is why he wants to talk to them who will guide him in his prayers. After he narrates the entire story, he goes back home. The guest who was stopped does not feel like going to the wedding anymore and he also returns and wakes up the next morning as a wiser man.

He went like one that hath been stunned,

And is of sense forlorn:

A sadder and a wiser man,

He rose the morrow morn.

A ballad like an epic has an oral origin. However, later writers have adapted it to form a literary genre. They all follow the same tradition of storytelling in a simple and impersonal tone.

5.3.4 Satire

Satire is a literary genre which makes use of humour, exaggeration, ridicule or irony to criticize a particular topic in the context of contemporary issues. Poetry is seen as a powerful vehicle for satire. Romans were the ones who used satirical poetry very effectively for different purposes. Though primarily a literary device, it can also be seen in other art forms as well. It evokes in the reader feelings of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation towards the subject.

The practitioners of this form had vehemently justified it by saying that it is a corrective measure of human vice and folly. For example, Alexander Pope said that ‘those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous’.

Satire can be divided into direct satire and indirect satire. In a direct satire, the speaker is the first person and addresses the reader of a character in the text itself. Horace and Juvenal are pioneers in the use of this type of satire. Horace uses a speaker who is characterized as an urbane, witty, and tolerant man of the world. He is often moved to ironic amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy. The poem uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke from readers a wry smile at human failings and absurdities—sometimes including his own. Horace described his aim as ‘to laugh people out of their vices and follies’. In Juvenalian satire, on the other hand, the speaker is characterized by a high moralist seriousness. He uses a dignified and public style of utterance to criticize modes of vices and errors which are no less dangerous because they are ridiculous, and who undertakes to evoke from readers contempt, moral indignation, or an unillusioned sadness at the aberrations of humanity.

In indirect satire, there is no direct address to the reader or the person addressed. The most common indirect form is that of a fictional narrative, in which the objects of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous or obnoxious by what they think, say, and do, and are sometimes made even more ridiculous by the author’s comments and narrative style.

Absalom and Achitophel

Absalom and Achitophel was written by John Dryden. It was published anonymously in 1681. This is a political satire. In this poem, the poet craftily uses the story of the rebellion of Absalom against King David described in the Bible as the basis for discussion of the background to the Popish Plot (1678), the Exclusion Crisis (1679–1681), and the Monmouth Rebellion (1685). In the biblical history, Absalom who is the son of David, rose in revolt against him. He is guided by the advice of Achitophel who was the trusted adviser of David but rebelled against him. But Hushai, another advisor of David, helped him contain the rebellion. In the end, Absalom dies hanging by his hair from an oak tree.

Dryden’s poem tells the story of the first provocation. In the poem, Monmouth is portrayed as Absalom, the beloved boy; Charles is portrayed as David and Shaftesbury as Achitophel. The poem places most of the blame for the rebellion on Shaftesbury and makes Charles a very reluctant and loving man who has to be king. The poem also refers to the uproar of the Popish Plot.

Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel* has various levels of meaning. It talks about the relationship between fatherhood and son. It shows how self-indulgent

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love creates unfair conflict. Also, it can be read in the backdrop of feminism and how female power threatens political power.

...for several mothers bore

To god-like David, several sons before.

But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,

No true succession could their seed attend.

Next, it can be read as an argument on the renaissance idea of the superiority of children born out of wedlock.

whether, inspired by some diviner lust,

Mac Flecknoe

John Dryden who was a Tory, in 1682 wrote *Mac Flecknoe*, subtitled 'A Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T.S'. (which is a reference to Thomas Shadwell). *Mac Flecknoe* while representing a permanent type of the pretentious poetaster specifically satirized the living author Thomas Shadwell.

Here in this poem, Dryden portrays Shadwell as a bad writer with bad taste. In this poem, he uses the mock heroic style, tremendous wit and hysterical hyperbole. He uses all these to create an inflated tone to parody the subject.

Let them be all of thy own Model made

Of Dulness; and desire no Forreign Aid,

The opening of the poem has an epic grandeur and creates a feeling that his subject is also a heroic figure. Dryden makes allusions towards two of Thomas Shadwell's plays, *Epsom Wells* and *The Virtuoso*. He also satirises the metrical feet and rhyme scheme used by Shadwell in one of his poems *Psyche*.

And big with Hymn, Commanders of an Host,

The like was ne're in Epsom Blankets Tost.

The poet is seen arriving in the beginning of the poem. The water is full of filth. All the people are happy to see him except for another contemporary poet who is envious of the fact that he is not chosen as the successor to the throne. Dryden states that the realm in which Shadwell rules is very small and he is ruling over people who are not at all educated.

This Flecknoe found, who like Augustus young,

Was call'd to Empire, and had Govern'd long;

In Prose and Verse was own'd without Dispute,

Through all the Realms of Nonsense, Absolute;

The poem ends with the old king descending the throne. The new king Shadwell is more devoid of wit than his predecessors. This is how Dryden concludes his satire.

Satire in English has been written in every period beginning with the Middle Ages. But it was during the Restoration and eighteenth century that the satire reached its zenith. The names of those who wrote satires include Dryden, the Earl of Rochester, Samuel Butler, Wycherley, Aphra Behn, Addison, Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Swift, Gay, Fielding, Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Burns and William Blake. However, the twentieth century is also rich in satirical works.

Check Your Progress

4. Name one famous epic poem written by Edmund Spenser.
5. List any two essential criteria of an epic poem.
6. Define a ballad.

5.4 DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

The dramatic monologue is a prominent genre of Victorian poetry. It is considered the most significant innovation of the age, rather we can say that it highlights the age. It has been widely used by a number of poets like Alfred Tennyson, Algernon Swinburne, Felicia Hemans and Augusta Webster. Its use continued throughout the twentieth century, influencing poets, both British and American, from T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound to Peter Porter and Richard Howard.

Dramatic monologue is a kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent 'listener' of one or more persons. Through dramatic monologues, the poet's own thoughts and the mind of the impersonated character are revealed. Although dramatic monologue was practiced by Tennyson and Arnold, it was developed and perfected by Robert Browning. Major examples of this form in English are Tennyson's *Ulysses* (1842), Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi* (1855) and T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917). These poems have theatrical quality. In dramatic monologues, the speaker is talking to someone who is a mute listener but the speaker expresses his point of view, psychology. The speaker may or may not be telling the truth but he is trying to convince someone of something. Sometimes what the speaker does not say is just as revealing and interesting as what he or she does say in the poem. The speaker reveals his/her character and motives to the reader, while remaining unaware that he is doing so. Robert Browning is the master of dramatic monologues. *My Last Duchess*, *The Last Ride Together*, *The Lost Mistress* are his famous monologues. The lover is very upset as all is over between him and his beloved in *The Lost Mistress*; he begins,

*All's over, then: does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!*

There is always an abrupt and dramatic opening in such monologues; colloquial expressions are used by the speaker. The lover is talking to his beloved at rejection of his love by her. The reader can also visualize the setting before his eyes; this is the hallmark of a dramatic monologue.

The monologue aims not so much to proclaim its subject matter but to build up the character of the speaker. Browning's monologues characteristically consist of nonstop narrative spoken by a single character to a definite listener. It is the character created by the poet who is speaking his thoughts and not the poet himself. Browning's characters are just like real live human beings with complicated personal histories. Each dramatic monologue has the following characteristics:

1. The whole poem is spoken by a person other than the poet in a particular situation. For example the Duke in *My Last Duchess* bargains with an agent for a second wife.
2. This persona addresses and interacts with one or more other people but we know of the auditor's presence and what they say and do only from clues from the discourse of the single speaker.

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3. The monologue is so organized that its focus is on the temperament and character that the dramatic speaker unintentionally reveals in the course of what he says.

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Of course there are clear disadvantages of the dramatic monologue as well. The very fact that the narrative perspective is so limited can make the poems appear frivolous and unnecessarily light-hearted given the dark subject matter (murder and/or madness, prostitution and poverty). Browning is especially known for dramatic monologues which certainly hide the intentions of the author just as much as they hide the intentions of the speakers. For example, in *My Last Duchess*, we ask ourselves, if Browning is making a serious statement about the treatment of women in Victorian Italy.

5.5 DRAMA

Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged. It is unlike poetry or prose. It is an art dependent on many other tools unlike a written text which has to do with words only.

Plays, on the contrary, involve ‘multiple art, using words, scenic effects, music, the gestures of the actors, and the organizing talents of a producer’ (*A Short History of English Literature*). It is written with the purpose of presenting a fiction or reality in front of people. Its main objective is successful representation of a plot to be viewed by audience. Therefore, the textual portion in a drama is always dependent on love and acceptance of the viewers.

An essential quality of drama is its objectivity. A play whether divided into acts or not, has plot, characters, background, theme, dramatic unities, techniques and so on. Besides them all, it must aim to please its audience and has to be acted by people in public. Its duration is short and everything has to produce an exemplary effect within the few hours on stage in a play: drama is ‘a composite art, in which the author, the actor, and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect’.

A play must seek perfect economy in the choice of words, actions, deliverers of those actions, time, and place, so that all may synthesize into bringing the desired end or effect. The novelist’s art is leisurely, but the dramatist’s art is too strategic to escape his limitations. He is always handicapped. His is a weaver’s hand because a play is shaped by both internal and external agencies.

A playwright cannot speak his emotions directly; he has to use his characters to express them. The action has to be divided into the share of some characters and every character must act the intended way to achieve the expected end. Then only a drama would be successful. The dramatist’s identity, behaviour, character and feelings need not be seeking direct expression. He has to maintain complete objectivity and impersonality.

In England, as a form of literary art, drama began in the Middle Ages. However, it is difficult to trace the exact period of its beginning in the English scene. When the Romans came to England, they set up huge amphitheatres and certainly, plays were being acted in those times. As the Romans left, the culture too came to a standstill. In the Middle Ages minstrels, clowns and tumblers used to sing long heroic poems or epics or ballads in praise of the court. They acted. Even their costumes were motley ones and were easily recognised as those welcomed figures at ceremonies, public places, the king’s court, or anywhere. They used to boost the morale and passionately

Check Your Progress

7. What is a dramatic monologue?
8. Name some prominent dramatic monologues written in English literature.

moved all those who heard them: it could be also traced as the inception of drama, yet it was not an organized establishment.

Undoubtedly, there has been an intricate relation between Christianity and plays when it comes to trace the origin or genesis of drama in England. In medieval England, the minstrels at church used to act stories from the Bible after the sessions of sermons would be over. It was done in order to entertain and impart on people the religious sentiments. Drama at this stage was acted and managed by the minstrels and clerics. The common cult of drama was not accepted by the then church and court because it exuded the message of too much freedom in the society, hence the Roman theatres were closed and condemned. Later on this style of acting by a person or two from church developed into a group of people consisting of priests and choir-boys acting biblical themes enthusiastically with words and chorus. These 'liturgical dramas' based on the birth of Christ developed as supporting church and the church promoted them on several festive occasions beside its normal proceedings. Liturgical plays used religious spectacles as their themes. Although church has been the authority to re-establish drama, soon it was felt that the interest in plays were larger than being restricted merely under the precincts of church, or considering it a mere religious activity. Dramatic enterprise proliferated. It also entailed the element of comic and variegated attires.

In England, if we go by the chronology, such religious plays have been valued as the greatest part of the national tradition and culture. They also became precursors of 'Morality' and 'Mystery plays'. In the Morality plays, people acted as virtues and vices. These plays were written by religious authors or church clerics. 'Everyman' is regarded as the most popular Morality play till the late fifteenth century. The Morality plays were based on religious lessons and they developed naturally. They mirrored genuine truth and realism and evoked pathos. In style and treatment, they were direct and sincere.

Between the proceedings of the church, a new birth of short and direct play was acknowledged, called the 'Interludes'. These Interludes were also based on the popular themes like the morality plays, but they were not allegorical in nature. Most of the times these Interludes were enacted to entertain the gentries of the period. These Interludes often slipped into depicting a theme, which was not a biblical narrative. 'Fulgens and Lucres' is an example of such an Interlude, but it is quite developed in its plot-construction. An Interlude had more entertaining dialogues, less number of characters, small plot and interesting stories to woo its audience. Especially, meant for the Tudor families, these Interludes were the combination of rough humour, complicated action, little instruction where happenings were mostly 'sudden and unexpected.'

At the same time, the English soil was witnessing the production of a new type of drama called 'Miracle plays,' the newest in growth of its kind. It was a forceful say which paved way for the modern drama that culminated into the productions contributed by the University Wits and Shakespeare. It is surprising and strange how native English drama, that started from the clerics acting in the outer precincts of a church, developed into Morality, Interludes and Mystery plays gaining the beauty as well as gaiety of essence, theme, structure, the dramatic unities, the various kinds, pathos, irony, humour and the art of sublimation in the hands of Marlowe and Shakespeare!

Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and

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ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature. The University Wits enunciated the art of drama in the forms of tragedy and comedy both with innovation and tradition in the Elizabethan Age. Then Shakespeare's Age followed together with Ben Jonson's 'comedy of humours'. The Restoration comedy of manners followed next, which tended to be on the verge of obscene, vulgar and socially disreputable that raised brows of common men, especially the Puritans.

Again drama developed its pace in the eighteenth century with Johnson's historical plays, but they were not that recognizable as their predecessors. In the twentieth century, William Butler Yeats brought drama back innovating the Irish theatre exploring the medieval age with Celtic undercurrents, and many followed his trend.

George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot were two major twentieth century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes. Twentieth century theatre introduced many new styles and trends in modern drama from all over the world. In the twentieth century English drama, trends dominated, which were subtle and thought-stimulating such as realism and myth introduced by the psychological studies inspired by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung (his theory of collective unconscious). With the insight of psychology, they expressed myth and 'a poetic form of realism' based on the search conducted by these two psychologists. They mention and aim at truth common to all humans.

Yeats and Synge with Lady Gregory aimed to portray and develop poetic realism describing the Irish peasant life. The audience did not accept their themes with a pleasant nod and their concept of poetic realism was doubtfully questioned by the spectators.

Following the steps of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, who created drama of ideas by using realism, George Bernard Shaw discovered the 'problem play' or 'drama of ideas' in England, where he picked up social issues or drawbacks and tried to give solution to them. It was Shaw who stressed on emancipation of women and promoted the thought of raising the importance of women in our lives rather than treating them as subordinate members of our society. Surprisingly, he himself preferred to stay single.

After the First World War, political theatre became a trend where social and political issues and propaganda became vehicles to reach the masses. The Women's Rights Movement of the 1930s was voiced by 'agitprop', which was a renowned political theatre. The Dada Movement was related to First World War. Ibsen's idea of 'realism' was related to representation of human behaviour as it was seen in real life: it mirrored the society that a human being observed, what we call the human nature. Such a play concentrated on the present and described every strata of population rather than idealizing or worshiping a hero. They picked up characters from normal life focusing on any gender, race or strata of the society.

Plays depicting social realism having backdrop of the First World War dealt with political consciousness describing rural poverty caused by the lack of right governing system where a class was too rich and the other was levied with heavy taxation resulting in economic depression. Shaw became its chief exponent.

Samuel Beckett's *Theatre of the Absurd* introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the

downplay of language. This theatre gave birth to many other types of drama like ‘Symbolism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Drama of Cruelty, Expressionism, and so on’.

Dadaism was a protest against colonialism and the subsequent First World War in most of the European nations. It was a movement carried by those literary artists who opposed nationalism. Dadaists were ‘anti-art’ or avant-garde who went against expressing too pleasing an art or value. There were mainly French, Swiss and German writers involved in this movement. Major dramatists like Yeats to Pinter were an inseparable part of the Symbolist or Aesthetic Movement in theatre. They used underlined symbolism as their plot or structure of a play. From plot to stage everything used to be stylised in a specific mood. The movement took surge in the beginning of the twentieth century to influence all the later generations which followed them.

Surrealist Movement was next to the Aesthetic Movement. Both these trends were founded in the mystic. Surrealist Movement changed the stage set up like the Symbolist Movement. In it, action sounded louder and words were downplayed. Such plays exhibited unsurmised happenings and surprise. Samuel Beckett was an outstanding surrealist. *Theatre of Cruelty* portrays ‘representational medium’ and is focussed on dealing with the current situations. They took the responsibility of ‘presenting’ and ‘representing’ both.

The art of ‘expressionism’ in theatre was the gift of the German playwrights. It either gave short, straight sentences, or long, and poetical speeches. Such plays would not specify names of characters and dealt with current reality looking forward to a safe and happy future, rather it aimed to incorporate ‘spiritual awakening’ presenting plot in various episodes.

The modernist approach of Bertold Brecht came up with ‘epic theatre’ with rejection of realistic theatre. He took inspiration from the Greek form of epic poetry for epic theatre. Jacobus describes it as a dramatic vision arrayed with ‘stark, harsh lighting, black stages, placards announcing changes of scenes, bands playing music onstage, and long, discomfiting pauses.’ Brecht applied that a play must signify to the audience as its own rather than alienating them to feel detached while watching it. He thought epic theatre plays would relate to people as their part, and be not just its silent spectators. Its theme would be theirs rather than a remote sense or relation to them. It often aimed at presenting a social issue.

5.5.1 Tragedy

The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of ‘classical tragedy’. Tragedy is a form of drama. ‘Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself...with incidents arousing pity and terror, with which to accomplish its purgation of these emotions.’ (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6). The origin of drama looks back to the period between 600 and 400 BC. It was during this period that poetry and drama both blossomed: both being complex art forms: both carving enormity of brilliance ever after. The most important dramatists of this period were Aeschylus (525–456 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC), Aristophanes (448–380 BC) and Euripides (484–406 BC). They are considered the pillars of Greek concept of art called drama. It is said the drama was conceived from the ‘songs and dances of ancient rites and religious festivals connected to the seasons.’

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Tragedy sprouted in Athens many years ago and has its base in the choral poetry. It is a Greek concept that Dionysius, the god of nature, died and took rebirth in a cycle each year. Thus, they performed a chorus in the form of hymn to pay tribute to him, named 'dithyramb'. Aristotle described that tragedy was born from this dithyramb, played by a solo actor called Thespis. The story goes that Thespis began to converse with dithyramb. The contextual meaning of the word tragedy is 'goat-song.' This goat was taken as a gift for that song.

Aeschylus, the great dramatist, was the one who initiated the art of tragedy in classical literature. He is taken as the original founder of European play. The subjects of his plays were man's relations with God and man's roles here on earth. His plays carried moral values and judgments profoundly. He produced around ninety plays among them seventy-nine are available in title and seven are expected to be existing too. His renowned drama is *Prometheus Bound* followed by a trilogy called *Oresteia*. Aeschylus's gift to the drama was addition of a second actor and reduction in the size of chorus.

Sophocles wrote more than hundred dramas among which only seven are available under these names Ajax (450 BC), Antigone (442 BC), Oedipus Rex (425 BC) and Electra (409 BC). Aeschylus was writing in the period of Greece's Golden Age of democracy, and Sophocles was the product of its climax. Euripides was the youngest among this famous trio of tragic Greek playwrights. As Sophocles added cry over man's fall, while exalting over the resumption of his spirit, Euripides portrayed common human beings with exceptional delineation and extraordinary sympathy, especially for the female.

Tragedy was chiefly concerned with men of importance and it voiced their downfall. But Euripides wrote tragedies and introduced 'tragi-comedies' varying into different types which can be aptly named romantic plays, melodrama or extreme comedies. His famous dramas are *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *The Trojan Women*, *Hecuba*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *The Phoenician Women* and *Andromache* beside other two portrayals of ghastliness and dementia called 'Electra and Orestes'.

Apart from Greece, the gift of tragedy travels from the ancient Rome where the name of Seneca (Lucius Annaeus Seneca, 4 BC-AD 65) finds the place of the first known tragedian. His plays displayed vigorous bloodshed and the element of horror containing a lot of aspects, which technically could not be staged. It was a combination of real life happenings or elements which a stage could not represent, especially the facts related to murder, cutting into pieces, showing heavy things to be carried from one to another, and the likes.

Seneca had a multiple persona who wrote plays, poetry, satire, philosophy and was trained in rhetoric, besides being a politician. He was banished from the kingdom of Claudius in AD 41 for committing adultery with the emperor's niece, whereupon he trained Nero the strategies of statesmanship. When Nero took over as emperor, Seneca was appointed his advisor. Finding Nero not under his guidance, he preferred retirement. His students blamed him of conspiracy and forced him to commit suicide. The tragic life and death of Seneca arouse terror and pity, as they were part of his plays in abundance. The Senecan trend called 'stoicism': an approach to drama which was devised during 3rd century BC in Athens. It was a popularly applied trend in Rome from 100 BC to AD 200. Stoicism made its influence on the Christian way of thought.

Seneca derived his inspiration from those heroic playwrights of Greece like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In England, all his available nine plays were translated during 1559–1581 during the Renaissance and Revival. His tragedies *Medea*, *Oedipus*, *Trojan Women*, *The Phoenician Women*, *Agamemnon* and *Phaedra* were motivated by the Greek masters of the Golden Age of classical drama. The master dramatists of the Elizabethan Age have been said to have read and shown their impact on their thinking and delineation of plays. It was his structure which was massively used in the English tragedies. Seneca framed his tragedies in the following ways:

- He constructed his tragedies in five acts.
- The hero who meets tragic fall displays no sign of fear toward death, rather he bears death with a strong heart and dignified grace.
- A foreboding of death or a ‘Cloud of Evil’ is vanquished by the ‘defeat of Reason of Evil’, which yields to ‘Triumph of Evil’ and finally as seen in *The Trojan Women*.
- The stage is full of corpses at the end of the play.

It was Seneca who became the role model for the Renaissance playwrights in the development of the plot. Thomas Kyd’s the *Spanish Tragedy* (1582–92) and Christopher Marlowe’s the *Jew of Malta* (1589/90) are specimen of Senecan tragedy. The standards of tragedy define that it would portray a hero of noble belonging whose tragic fall is developed through the structure of the play. The actions of the hero may have ruining consequences, which might not be their own making.

Tragedy states the sequence from high to low. In tragedy, a wrongdoing or vice might be punished. Tragic hero is often a mighty person who is warned through a tragic end that he must not abuse his power. Classical tragedies depict kings, Gods and demi-gods.

In contrast, comedy, which is the oldest form of drama, for it began almost as early as our existence, takes ordinary characters from life. When human society designed a structure where places were allocated or assigned to people of eminence, the emergence of tragedy is stated to have taken birth. Thus, tragedy is linked with the growth of hierarchical order when man began to fight for power and position. As a result of this, they wore the attire of the powerful, claiming themselves to be the powerful judges of humanity. They took providence into their hands and manipulated it into a wrong manner to decide who is right and who is wrong.

Aristotle’s (384–322 BC) *Poetics* (335 BC) studies and evaluates Greek dramatic art and discusses tragedy in comparison to comedy or epic poetry. His estimation founded tragedy like all other types; telling that tragic poetry is a mimesis (mirror of life or imitation). He believes tragedy is a serious art which enwraps undeviated accomplishment to serve its purpose.

Poetic mimesis is an action copied as presenting it like a replica undermining universality of theme and ideals unlike history where facts are strewn on paper straightaway. Poetry is a superior art form that exalts human soul. The end of tragedy is to achieve ‘catharsis’ in its viewers or readers, which must create and stimulate emotions like pity and terror. This catharsis should effect on the audience so much that they come out of theatre with a heaving heart, elevated soul and purified conscience with a heightened cognizance towards the behaviour of God and man. Catharsis is the moment in which the hero of the tragedy would suffer some dramatic and damaging change into his fortune.

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Although Aristotle himself differed from the idea of disastrous change that was how the tragic heroes would have shown as it is in the episode of Oedipus at Colonus. He divided tragedy into six main parts—fable or plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle (scenic effect), and melody (music). The former two are the most essential characteristics of a tragic drama. He has explained and analysed these parts and their extent as well as appropriate use in his poetic at length citing instances from the classic tragic plays of the Greek masters of the Golden Era, especially Sophocles. *Poetics* also discusses the art of Aeschylus, Euripides and many other dramatists whose works of art are extinct now. The extract below shows translation from Aristotle's *Poetics*:

Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and life, of happiness and misery. And life consists of action, and its end is a mode of activity, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is their action that makes them happy or wretched. The purpose of action in the tragedy, therefore, is not the representation of character: character comes in as contributing to the action. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of the tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be one without character. . . . The plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: character holds the second place.

According to Aristotle, the plot of a tragic play is an abstract idea of 'an arrangement of incidents' (Chapter-6). The story is made of the incidents which are termed raw material by him. The way these raw materials shape up into incidents, which construct a cogent and well organised whole, is called a plot. He asserts that 'the first principle, then, and to speak figuratively, the soul of tragedy is the plot; and second in importance is character'.

He believed that characters add into that dramatic destiny of a tragedy, so they are agents to support the action of the plot 'by character that element in accordance with which we say that agents are of a certain type' (Chapter-6). Further, he explained that 'poets do not, therefore, create action in order to imitate character; but character is included on account of the action' (Chapter-6). Tragedy means an imitation of an action.

Aristotle paid special attention on explaining plot, which must have a beginning, middle and an end. It must be a whole. The plot, therefore, should have 'exposition, conflicts, rising action, climax, falling action and catastrophe (dénouement)' in tragedy. A plot should contain single theme which must deal with the rise and fall of the hero's fortune and all the events should support in weaving that central idea. The hero is more or less a sufferer as things are beyond his control, or not the part of his nature. This is a major difference in the modern and the ancient concept of drama as in the classic tragedy; the plot and action are designed at the cost of the protagonist whereas the modern drama explores the psychological motivation of the hero. About the emotion that his suffering should arouse, Aristotle defines: 'pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves.' The central character should be endowed with goodness and characteristic flaws '... a man who is highly renowned and prosperous, but one who is not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice or depravity but by some error of judgment or frailty; a personage like Oedipus.'

The hero should not hurt the moral sentiments of the audience besides maintaining truth, his character and of stable behaviour. His characteristic weakness is called 'hamartia' by Aristotle. The protagonist's series of actions expose him

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to his tragic fall. These actions might be an outcome of his thoughtlessness or ignorance or improper decision. Although a tragic hero would be of noble and high birth with greatness, his hamartia dilutes his image of perfection. He suggests the three dramatic unities: the unity of time, the unity of place and the unity of action. He also mentions various styles, techniques and dramatic devices like 'reversal' (peripeteia) and 'recognition' (anagnorisis). One by one he mentioned the other five parts of tragedy, but plot to him played the foremost role. His *Poetics* was a product of a century after the death of the classical tragedians of Greece. His time saw unexpected changes in the Greek society and art forms.

5.5.2 English Tragic Plays

The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted. English tragedies receive inspiration from Seneca. *Gorboduc*, the protagonist, is a mythical emperor of ancient England. This play exhibits the use of blank verse for the first time in English drama, the art, which was later developed by Christopher Marlowe.

Drama saw its massive proliferation and development in the Elizabethan England during 1585 and 1642. The demand of drama was very much in the society and every seventeenth day a new play had to be staged. The Elizabethan tragedies follow the Senecan trend of construction and treatment. At this period, drama had just come out of its religious boundaries and saw a new birth of varieties. Therefore, the playwrights imitated the art of their classical masters and perfected it in order to develop their own style. The ten available plays of Seneca were translated. Of which these three *Troas*, *Thyestes*, and *Hercules Furens* were translated by Jasper Heywood.

Based on Senecan type, Thomas Kyd wrote the *Spanish Tragedy* in blank verse, which suited the stagecraft and used the theme of horror, crime and revenge motif which inspired Shakespeare's tragedies. Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) was the last dramatist among the University Wits from Cambridge whose short tragic life yet radical brilliance created and shaped English tragedy. His major tragedies include *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Doctor Faustus* (1592), the *Jew of Malta* and *Edward II*. Marlowe was ambitious and his plays amply embody this trait.

His *Tamburlaine*, a fourteenth century herdsman, gains power by being victorious over all his enemies and his lust for power becomes the reason for his tragic fall. He thrives in power, challenging God and men combined with his 'mighty line':

...the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

But contrary to the Christian ideals maintained in his *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe embarked on delineating a character, *Doctor Faustus* by using a German traditional tale of a magician who sells his soul to the devil for attaining the universal knowledge. *Tamburlaine* depicts the power which is challenged by physical encounters whereas *Faustus* explores the inner, introspective and psychological depths of the theme of the lust of power. Marlowe's description of the dramatic devices such as pathos and irony at the climax of the play is considered matchless:

Ah! Faustus
Now has thou but one bare hour to live,

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*And then thou must be damned perpetually:
Stand still you ever moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come:
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise afain, and make
Perpetual day, or let this hour be but
A year; a month, a week, or natural day,
That Faustus may repent, and save his soul
O lente lente currite noctis equi.
(O, gently gently run you horses of the night.)*

Shakespearean tragedy alone holds the foremost place in English letters of all ages as nothing surpasses it. The Elizabethan stage in the sixteenth century was studded with the oft-quoted dramas of William Shakespeare (1564–1616), an actor and shareholder in the theatre business. As a playwright, his success lay in his qualities which thematically encompassed 'loyalty and disloyalty, and their consequences on human life'. He beautifully paints human passions, and an uncommon discord between reason and feeling where, at last, reason loses its direction and fails. He describes the understanding of his art:

*And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A locan habitation and a name. (Act V, I, A Midsummer Night's Dream)*

He was an objective observer of human nature and his characters have freeplay of their own spirits with natural cadence of development. His characters never transcend human barriers of good and evil. They exist in a moral world. His plays were addressed to his audience and he manipulated the resources best to enrich stagecraft. His major tragedies are *Hamlet* (1603), *Macbeth* (1611), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), and *Coriolanus* (1609). They were all written between 1600 and 1606. His *Richard II* (1595), *Richard III* (1592), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and *Julius Caesar* (1599) are excellent historical or romantic tragic dramas. His period of tragedy is diluted with his other genres of plays. His tragedies have powerful diction, poetical outbursts, noble characters, each shows a serious conflict of a soul caught between reason and action, and each of his heroes exhibit a frailty, or prejudice of character. The hero's action is repentant at the dénouement section. The action of his heroes decides the destiny of their country too. His tragedies are deep studies of human psyche and his poetry. His tragic hero's central action and the portrayal of the world where he moves, affects the atmosphere. His plays please different levels of audience.

Hamlet, his early tragic drama, is a self-conscious scholar prince of Renaissance who is bright, of sad temperament and contemplative. He sketches the character of a man caught between his action and overdoing of thinking. Horatio's speech at the end is full of power of imagination:

*Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. (V, 2)*

Designed successfully for the stage, *Othello* is the story of a black moor who is too much suspicious of his wife: a white and very beautiful lady of noble being.

This weakness of his is well exploited by the villain Iago, an iconic character in the history of English dramas, who manoeuvres this frailty of the hero in such a manner that he kills his wife culminating into his suicide too, at the end of the play. And speaks of his misunderstanding pining over which he ended his life:

*When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one that not easily jealous, but being wrought
Purplex'd in the extreme. (V, 2)*

His poetry and artistry as a tragedian reaches the extreme of excellence and beauty in *Macbeth*. Macbeth is ambitious which makes him fall prey to avarice and subsequent murder of King Duncan provoked by his wife Lady Macbeth. He becomes the king according to the prophesies of the three witches. He kills many others to hide the secret of his first crime, while at last, he himself is slayed in the battle. His famous soliloquy is eloquent of his feeling of futility after achievements acquired by wrong manner:

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (V, 5)*

King Lear, his late tragic play, is about a titular person who becomes insane after dividing his property into two parts for two of his three daughters on the basis of their flattery. His decision brings tragic end to all.

In the period that followed Shakespeare, George Chapman (1559–1634), Beaumont (1584–1616) and Fletcher (1579–1625) wrote tragedies. But the 17th century dramatists wrote tragedies of excesses and unreal world, which partly irritated a certain sect of audience. John Webster's the *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi* are considered tragedies of revenge motif and excess of bloodshed. The great restoration playwright John Dryden (1631–1700) wrote heroic tragedies among which *All for Love* is a repetition of Shakespeare's theme of *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, Dryden has an exclusive gift of mastery of poetry and that is evident in his plays too. In the early 20th century, John Masefield and J. M. Synge (1871–1909) were writing tragedies beside other genres of drama. The Irish National Movement was invoked by W. B. Yeats (1865–1939), J. M. Synge, Sir James Barrie (1860–1937), and Sean O'Casey (1880–1964), writers of great ability. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904) is a moving tragic play.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen has been the most stupendous force behind the twentieth century theatre. George Bernard Shaw composed a satirical tragedy which won the coveted Nobel Prize for literature *Saint Joan* (1923). Shaw was a writer of problem plays, and his *Saint Joan* is also a sequel to expose the odds of the society. However, the use of the theme of a fourteen-year old 'maid' who is sacrificed on the blames of blasphemy or anti-God statements is full of irony and pathos. The climax is terrifying and thought-provoking. Under the cover of verbal wit and raillery, Shaw dealt with a very serious theme here. His tragic play *Candida* is

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brilliant too. T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) wrote *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Edward Albee, Arthur Miller (USA), Eugene O'Neill, and August Strindberg (Sweden) are some of the major thinkers and tragic playwrights of the modern English drama.

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5.5.3 English Comic Plays

The word 'comedy' has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle. The word is a mixture of merry-making and poet or singer. In Aristotle's *Poetics*, he discussed comedy as 'The passage on the nature of comedy in the *Poetics* of Aristotle is unfortunately lost, but if we can trust stray hints on the subject, his definition of comedy (which applied mainly to Menander) ran parallel to that of tragedy, and described the art as a purification of certain affections of our nature, not by terror and pity, but by laughter and ridicule.' (Rev. J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Classical Greek Literature*, London, 1895) Further, comedy refers to 'The classical sense of the word, then, was "amusing play or performance," which is similar to the modern one, but in the Middle Ages the word came to mean poems and stories generally (albeit ones with happy endings), and the earliest English sense is "narrative poem" (such as Dante's *Commedia*). Generalized sense of "quality of being amusing" dates from 1877.'

The purpose of comedy is to 'entertain by the fidelity with which it presents life as we know it, farce at raising laughter by the outrageous absurdity of the situation or characters exhibited, and burlesque at tickling the fancy of the audience by caricaturing plays or actors with whose style it is familiar. (Fowler)' *Dionysos* (360–340 BC) is a famous classical Greek comedy.

Aristophanes and Menander were chief writers of comedy plays who laughed at the politicians, philosophers and their contemporary artists. The art of comedy too is based on its classical Greek structure like tragedy: the first part had chorus, music and dance in flashy costumes, which represented the characters in the play normally called 'parodos'; and, the next phase was 'agon' when the main plot was exposed to the audience through verbal wit or debate; the third phase of comedy play was 'parabasis' when the chorus communicated directly with the viewers, and even spoke on behalf of the playwright; and, the last phase was 'exodos' when the chorus finished the play with another and final song and dance. The performers were professional actors who displayed a vast array of characters ranging from human to non-human representations in motley costumes and painted or masked countenances. Only two or three main actors were there in which one was the protagonist, and the others were not much significant to the plot. Classic comedy did not allow many main actors, so the actors had to carry many roles at the same time. Facial gestures, dresses and make-up were important tools to evoke fun.

Dramas in Athens were performed in the open air theatres. The stage used to be designed particularly for a comedy. The actors could enter the stage from various sides, even from the public arena. During the 5th century BC in Greece, on any festive occasion there would be a panel of ten judges to evaluate the performance of both tragedy and comedy dramas. The following is an extract from Aristophanes's renowned comedy:

*Oh would some god, with sudden stroke,
Convert me to a cloud of smoke!
Like politicians' words I'd rise
In gaseous vapour to the skies.*

(50, Act One, Scene One, *The Wasps* by Aristophanes)

Another extract from Aristophane shows the depth of comedy in the classical drama:

(On modern poets)

Small fry, I assure you, insignificant squeakers and twitterers, like a lot of swallows. A disgrace to their art. If ever they are granted a chorus, what does their offering at the shrine of Tragedy amount to? One cock of the hind leg and they've pissed themselves dry. You never hear of them again.

(159, Act One, Scene One, The Frogs by Aristophanes)

The difference between tragedy and comedy is that tragedy depicts the moral or heroic struggle of the protagonist ending in death or destruction whereas comedy aims to amuse through wit, ridicule, farce, satire and ends happily. Comedy exposed vices or frailties of the people or society through humour. Its end is of correction through wit and humour.

In England, Elizabethan dramatists tried their hands in the art of comedy of which the foremost name was that of poet, playwright and politician John Lyly (1553/4-1606) from Oxford. He had a natural gift for comedy which he exhibited best in his books *Euphues* or the *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580). His style was named 'euphuism.' His chief plays include *Endymion* (1591), *Campaspe* (1584), *Sapho and Phao* (1584), *Gallathea* (1592), *Midas* (1592) and *Mother Bombie* (1594). Most of these pioneer university wits tragedies and comedies served as inspiration to the later Elizabethans, and the writers of the following generations.

Tragedy and comedy complement each other as they blend together in life. And literature is but a just representation of human existence. Shakespearean comedies are often a blend of seriousness and fun. All his comedies indicate or wear a sober thread in its plot. They often tend to be ironical or satirical about elements of life and human nature. Shakespearean comedy has brilliant diction and songs. His dialogues are interspersed with metaphors, word play and clever phraseologies. Its major theme is love and pair romance. Often the characters are disguised or they change their outward appearance to achieve what they are looking for. There are obstacles in the path of these lovers which they overcome by their wit, wisdom and cleverness. His comedies have a more complex plot with multiple threads of sequences and finally untying into a harmonious whole. The characters prove the theme of moral uprightness and virtues at the end of the story, and the evil-minded characters are made to realise that they have been on a wrong path. But all these have a polite way of moulding incidents into a single whole.

His plots for comedies are more twisted and entangled than those of his history or tragic dramas. As it is in his tragedies that none resembles the other exactly in style or pattern, similar approach can be seen in his comedy plays which are all different. Variety of plot styles are intertwined with exuberant and copious flow of twirls in the structure to keep the audience excited and always in wait for the next moment. Usually, the climax of the drama takes place in its third act and the final scene makes the lovers accept or declare their love for each other. The characters, most of the times, hide their identities and feign some other name and role throughout the play cascading into different streams until they meet the final sea and reveal themselves to be what they are in reality. Virtue always leads the play and keeps a watch over cunning as well as deceitful characters. These tricks of false characters are played in order to avoid the schemes and plotting of the villains. For example, the plot of

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As You Like It drives all the important characters into the forest of Arden where they stay in disguised until the cloud of villainy is blown away by the auspicious wind and everything is fine.

Not only that, his female protagonists are specially clever in his comedies and tragi-comedies, who by their sheer wit, clever understanding of the facts, precaution, and wise manipulations of the situation at hand keeping an eye over future, turn the drama into perfect end. His chief comedies are *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Shakespeare borrowed his themes frequently from history but shaped them with his original genius which makes his art unrivalled. All his plays of all the three genres use acts and scenes according to the demand of the structure. Shakespeare experimented with themes, stagecraft, dramatic devices, plot construction, diction, poetry, characters and at the same time, assorted tradition with such uniqueness that his dramatic art becomes unquestionable. He was a keen observer and critic of human nature in all his plays. Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* says:

*Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. (V, I)*

That is how he perceived and justified all poets. Most of his comedies are placed under the category of romantic comedies. Away from Shakespeare's romantic world of fancifully magnificent and entertaining tales, there was another dramatist in the same age who wrote comedy vigorously to evolve a new style of drama. Ben Jonson (1573–1637) was a robust and powerful moralist who aimed his best to reform the classical comedy in English literature in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thriving through professions unlikely to adorn him with the gift of knowledge that he possessed, Jonson received recognition from eminent universities of England when he began to act in plays.

In comedy, Jonson adhered strictly to depict his own age with realism, romance and maintain the dramatic action with the three dramatic unities of time, place and morally sound theme. He focused on the plot innovation that drama should have a single scene using a single span of a day. He was held as a person strict with the rules of dramatic art:

*The laws of time, place, persons, he observeth,
From no needful rule he swerveth.*

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Jonson did not portray the goodness like Shakespeare did: Shakespeare painted the charming *Belmont* or *Forest of Arden* or the playfulness of Puck, but Jonson acquainted his audience with scoundrels and Thames in his play *Bartholomew Fayre*. He introduced comedy of humours and his first successful drama was *Every Man in His Humour* (1598). Jonson loved following classical methods and his characters were called ‘humours’ where they present aspect of moral nature throughout the play, which is subjected to mockery:

*when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits and his powers
In their confluxions all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.
(Every Man Out of His Humour, 1599, Quarto 1600)*

Jonsonian ‘static’ characters or types potently gripped their audience through whom he ridiculed the frailty or weaknesses of the society and human nature. Later on, when corruption, with the rise of the bourgeois, affected social life, Jonson became bitter in his comedies. His outstanding comedies are *Volpone*, *Silent Woman*, *Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fayre*. The *Alchemist* presents three characters—Subtle, Face and Doll—who are rogues, whereas *Volpone*, or the *Fox* displays avarice on a grand scale.

The Restoration playwrights took him for their model and later on, the master of oratory, the 19th century novelist Charles Dickens revived Jonson’s gift to the English letters. Jonson was an original genius and extremely learned craftsman. Among his contemporaries were Philip Massinger (1583–1640) and John Ford (1586–1639) with whose work theatre came to be closed during the period of Civil Wars.

Theatres opened again after 1660 when Charles II was restored on the English throne. In comedy, Restoration Era breathes its exuberance and excellence as a period apart from others. There were many types of styles tried by the writers of comedy in this age, but chief exponents of comic plays then were Sir George Etherege (1635–91), William Wycherley (1640–1716) and William Congreve (1670–1729).

Etherege’s *The Man of Mode* brought the concept that comedy would not obligate to sketch a moral world, it would often negate romance, but only portray the gentry of the day. It would paint the contemporary ladies and gentlemen as they were their witty repartee and the city life full of ‘amorous intrigues.’

Wycherley explored Etherege’s style with keener interest and observation. To his immoral and obscene world he blended the dramatic devices of satire and mockery. He successfully exploited his study of Molière and Ben Jonson. His famous comedies are the *Country Wife* (1672–3) and the *Plain Dealer* (1674).

The most brilliant among these Restoration writers of comedy plays is William Congreve (1670–1729). He avoided the deep exposition of the society which Wycherley styled by going back to use of ‘surface gaiety’, as done by Etherege. Congreve’s sparkle was immediately recognized and valued by the audience. He never ended on being too boisterous as he was a very careful artiste. His major contribution is the *Old Bachelor* (1693), *Double Dealer* (1694), *Love for Love* (1695) and *Way of the World* (1700). His specialities as an artist were his wholeness of vision of a narrow world with dexterous accuracy of its delineation of values. In

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his world, there was no fight between good and evil, but the elegant was victorious over the unsophisticated, wit surpassed the dull and dignity overcame roughness. He does not let sentiment, or morality penetrate his city drawing rooms or sitting parlours where witty conversations, fashionable ladies and gallant gentlemen flirted with each other exposing the vices of London men and manners reckoned as the foremost symbols of culture.

George Farquhar's the *Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) served the purpose of a link between the comedy of manners of his age and the upcoming 18th century novels. John Dryden, the greatest poet, critic and playwright of the period in his *Marriage à la Mode* (1672) gives his estimation of the Restoration comedy:

*Why should a foolish Marriage Vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now,
When passion is decay'd.
We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could:
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But, our Marriage is death when the Pleasure is fled:
'Twas Pleasure first made it an Oath.*

The noteworthy 18th century comedies were John Gay's the *Beggar's Opera* (1728), Richard Steele's *Tender Husband* (1705), George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731), Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), Richard Sheridan's *Rivals* (1775), *School for Scandal* (1777) and the *Critic* (1779). The art of comedy gradually saw decline in its values and style as it travelled from 16th to 17th and 18th centuries.

The 19th century is known for novel and poetry as theatre did not have any noteworthy participation in literature during that period. The style of probing into a social problem descended onto English drama through Henry Arthur Jones (1851–1929) and Sir A. W. Pinero (1855-1934) of which the later had a sustained and successful career as a playwright. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and George Bernard Shaw were the most prominent voices of the period during the first three decades of the 20th century. Wilde's famous comedies are *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). His *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a light humoured play where he has tried to revive the art of Congreve. Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) brought out a stark realism of his contemporary life dealing with issues of society. John Galsworthy (1867-1933) also tried his hand into writing drama, however his novels are more perfect pieces of his art. His works are *Man of Property* and *The Silver Box* (1906).

The Abbey Theatre in Dublin was thriving with swarms of viewers when Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats together tried to revive the traditional Celtic folklores combined with fertile imagination and mystical tinge of the Medieval Age in the dawn of the 20th century. Yeats' plays *Countess Cathleen* (1892) and the *Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) recalled mysticism and country tradition of his motherland. John Millington Synge (1871-1909) had a more profound approach towards theatrical artistry in comedy. He expressed his travel experiences through dramatic craftsmanship in comedies like the *Playboy of the Western World* (1907).

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All the tragedians and comedy writers were part of promoting the Irish National Movement. George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was ahead of all these nationalist artistes who alone raised their voices against the flaws in social structure. He was a staunch moralist and although his plays are categorised as Romantic in tradition, he maintained his form of drama to be a vehicle of his sparks that would reach each nook of the stubbed humanity. Shaw had a very successful career as a dramatist. He was an outspoken genius who never feared anyone in his lifetime. He laughed and ridiculed at the oddities of human nature and social behaviour ‘in full-throated ease’ and suggested possible amendments for the problems with which he dealt in his plays.

His dramas portray ‘life force.’ Shaw held the ideals of Socialist Fabians to his heart. He lived ideally and showcased ideals in his plays too. He was a lively, witty as well as a brilliant person who displayed these qualities in diction, form, art, themes, moral message and creative intelligence. His verbal wit is put parallel to Congreve’s and Wilde’s. He possessed an unusual clarity of vision of the social ills, which he mixed with comedy with the excellent touch of irony and command over language. For all his uniqueness, Shaw remains matchless an artist in the history of twentieth century English drama. He began as a dramatic critic with his *Our Theatre in the Nineties*. His first play was *Widowers’ Houses* (1892) and till 1949, his *Buoyant Billions* was being staged, when he was ninety-three.

Shaw voiced out contemporary themes in his plays mixed with realism and wit. His task was that of an observer and teacher in his plays. His plays are not the mechanical products of sapless age and straining realism, but were absolute entertainers. His gallery of characters does not escape a single profession or walk of life, which does not receive reproof or criticism. He created brilliant dramas incessantly one after another, more than sixty in number, of which the exceptionally charming ones are *Devil’s Disciple* (1897), *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893), *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *You Never Can Tell* (1897), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), *Man and Superman* (1903), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor’s Dilemma* (1906), *John Bull’s Other Island* (1904), *Fanny’s First Play* (1911), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), *Geneva* (1938), *Saint Joan* (1923), the *Apple Cart* (1929), *Too True to be Good* (1931), *On the Rocks* (1933), the *Millionairess* (1936) and *In Good King Charles’s Golden Days* (1938-9).

Shaw fought for the ideas of equality of men and women besides being a democratic liberal and politically ideal mind. His dramas are like those musical shows which engage and leave us into a thoughtfully recharged world.

After Shaw, the major English comedy playwrights were Noël Coward (1899-1973) with his *Hey Fever* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design for Living* (1932), *Present Laughter* (1942) and *Blithe Spirit* (1941); Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) with his absurdist comedy *Waiting for Godot* (1955); Harold Pinter (1930–2008) with his *Birthday Party* (1958); Tom Stoppard (1937-) with his *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966). Many of these famous dramatists wrote short plays for radio and television in the latter half of the twentieth century like Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard and John Mortimer.

5.5.4 English Tragi-Comedies

In literature, the term ‘tragi-comedy,’ means a play with serious conflict but happy resolution. There has been no specific definition assigned to the type, however,

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Aristotle defined this genre of play of serious action ending happily. The Roman dramatist of comedies, Plautus (254 BC to 184 BC) coined this term in his play *Amphitryon* where a character Mercury used 'tragicomoedia.' Plautus declared:

I will make it a mixture: let it be a tragicomedy. I don't think it would be appropriate to make it consistently a comedy, when there are kings and gods in it. What do you think? Since a slave also has a part in the play, I'll make it a tragicomedy.

In the context of England, the concept of tragi-comedy was a romantic play with no strict regulations to follow the classical unities of time, place and action. It blended all types of characters both high and low, and captured unbelievable or marvellous action. The plays encompassed shades of tragedy and comedy, the two elements we find in our everyday life. William Shakespeare used tragi-comedy with dexterity of graceful dramatic art. His *Merchant of Venice* (1605) is an excellent example of this art category where Antonio's life is saved by the clever Portia, or else it would have been a tragedy where he had to lose his life in the hands of Shylock. His other tragi-comedies include *Winter's Tale* (1611), *Cymbeline* (1623), *Pericles* (1619), *The Tempest* (1611), *Two Noble Kinsmen* (in collaboration with John Fletcher 1634) and *Measure for Measure* (1604). The last one is labelled as 'dark comedy' because it depicts grim action. Shakespeare's contemporary Fletcher wrote *Faithful Shepherdess* (1608).

The style tragi-comedy aimed at no profound action, it presented moderate sentiments, moderate passions, moderate amusement, pretension of conflicts and happy conclusion. Together Beaumont and Fletcher composed *Phylaster* (1610) and *A King and No King* (1611).

The drama in the Jacobean Age was considered obscene. It was censured by the puritans and theatres showcasing the plays were closed in 1642 owing to the reaction from the people.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England in 1660, theatres reopened but there were no immediate potent tragi-comedies. In the 18th century, Sir Richard Steele wrote the *Conscious Lovers* (1722). Later, George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731) and Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) became the famous vehicles of this genre. They called it *Sentimental Comedies*. The 20th century plays by Shaw and Wilde are excellent specimen of tragi-comedies. Shaw explained in his preface to *Major Barbara* (1905) how 'the tragi-comic irony of the conflict between real life and romantic imagination' was essential to the completion of the dramatic art.

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's *Wild Duck* (1884) is a famous tragi-comedy. Anton Chekhov of Russia was skilled in the art of tragi-comic dramas. In 1962, Edward Albee wrote *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Thomas Stearns Eliot's dramas in the first half of the 20th century are great proponents of this genre. His *Cocktail Party* (1949) and the *Family Reunion* (1939) extend the style of tragi-comedy.

5.5.5 One-Act Play

The term came into prominence to refer to one-act plays written in the late nineteenth century, though this form existed long before the term emerged. The Little Theatre movement was a major reason behind the popularity of these one-act plays because they supported and popularised experimental drama. This form of play has a limited

number of characters and very few scenes. The play is short but comprehensive as it revolves around a single incident; it has two or three characters and has no sub-plots or minor characters.

Jeffrey Adams' *Shooting Tori* (1996) is a ten-minute political comedy whose language is American English. It is set inside an elevator on a late afternoon in October. *Turned Tables* (2000) by Hugh Aaron is a 12-minute realistic drama written in English and is set in Rio de Janeiro. David Matthew Barnes's play *Clean* (2002) is a fifteen-minute comedy-drama written in English which is set at a bus stop in Beverly Hills, California, USA on a Wednesday afternoon. *Vultures* (2002), written by Christine Emmert is a 40-minute black comedy in English, is set in a New York apartment building.

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5.6 ESSAYS, NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

An essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, persuades to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain (M. H. Abram).

5.6.1 Essay

It is a short piece of writing reflecting a writer's own point of view about a particular subject. It may have diverse elements as its focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, or criticism of life, events or happenings.

Essay is 'a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range' (Oxford English Dictionary). A Philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. It is subjective because it is a literature of self-expression (W. H. Hudson).

Examples: Alexander Pope's (1688–1744) *An Essay on Criticism* (1711) and *An essay on man* (1734) are essays in verse being an exceptional variation to the form. John Locke's (1632-1704) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), *Two Treatises on Civil Government* (1689), *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) are a few great examples of essay writing.

Objective: An essay should be brief, precise, argumentative, fact or philosophy-based, and logically satisfying. It should explain a certain aspect of a subject. Francis Bacon's essays are the best examples of the kind.

Philosophical Essay

The word 'philosophy' means study of the nature and meaning of human life in its entirety. It is a particular set or system of beliefs resulting from the search for knowledge about life and the universe. It is a set of beliefs or an attitude to life that guides somebody's behaviour (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). If an essay is concise, clear or abstract analysing of a particular subject reflecting strong logical currents through it, it is called a Philosophical Essay. It relates more to an intellectual activity than a physical one. It shows the views of a person who has explored a specific subject-matter deeply through immense research.

Check Your Progress

9. Name the two major dramatists of the twentieth century who used drama to convey their ideas.
10. Name the major English tragic plays.
11. Give examples of one-act plays.

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Objectives: In a philosophical essay, the object of the writer is constructive having a positive vision, usually in the defence of a cause. That cause may exist already, or may be an assumption. Besides it may be a disagreement or a critical agreement reflecting a philosophical point of view, standing against a purport with a set of logic of the writer. In any of these, a philosophical essay must argue having strong reason and evidence as its background.

Basic Requirements/Elements

A philosophical essay should begin to search and establish a view in the context of a problem. It should have a definite point of view — either for or against the given argument. The problem and the person in its defence or disagreement should focus on a particular point of view based on assumptions sprouting from the problem itself. Its implications, critical assessment and a critical defence with a past, present and future should be part of the essay. It should provide support to that particular subject of philosophy or idea. The range of a philosophical essay is very vast.

Plato's (429–347 BC) *The Republic* (380 BC) argues that knowledge equals virtue and he defends his cause by giving logical support to it. If he states that half of the population should be prepared for army in a nation, he means then only the rest in that nation may go to have a sound sleep and proper development. Aristotle (384–322 BC) argues in his essay '*Poetics*' (335 BC) that all art is *mimesis* and he proves the point that all art imitate life. To prove this he gives a long list of arguments which rule the formal ground of any literary writing. Such essays were relevant not only to their own period but to all the times.

Structure: A philosophical essay should have the following features:

- **Clarification:** should explain and create a lucid picture of the issue to be discussed.
- **Justification:** The essayist can either present another reference and justify it with his own views or should illustrate and justify his personal stand with strong arguments,.
- **Evaluation:** The argument should be evaluated once again in order to reach a plausible conclusion.

A philosophical essay should have a purpose, an argument, facts, negative or positive stand, a unique view, a critical connectivity or chain of thoughts in relativity. The pattern of the essay should be:

Purpose → justification → argument → evaluation.

Eminent Philosophical Essayists

Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Francis Bacon, John Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, John Donne(John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Matthew Arnold, and Karl Marx are some eminent philosophical essayists.

The Spectator, *The Story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus* from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1694), Aristotle's *Poetics*, Plato's *The Republic*, Francis Bacon's *Of Reading, Of Studies, Elements of the Common Law of England, Advancement of Learning*, John Locke's *Glorious Revolution of 1688*, and Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* are some famous philosophical essays. Mark Twain, George Orwell (1903–1950), E. M. Forster, and Toni Morrison are modern philosophical essayists.

Scientific essay

A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based. The facts should exist or should have proof to prove its occurrence. In a scientific essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study that the essay explores.

The main elements of a scientific essay are as follows:

- A scientific essay is about a branch of science.
- It is objective.
- It deals with fact and truth.
- It uses specific terminology related to the branch of science.
- It is fact- based and has a page limit.
- It is a formal essay.

Famous scientific essayists: Charles Darwin, Sir Issac Newton, Louis Pasteur, Michael Faraday and Ernst Rutherford are some famous scientific essayists. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Michael Faraday's *The Classical Field Theory* and Rutherford's *The Structure of the Atom* are famous essays in this genre.

5.6.2 Novel

Novel is a literary form of art that is a recent development. It came to picture in the eighteenth century in English literature. It is an extended fictional narrative in prose having a plot, characters and a theme. It is published in print on paper. It should be of a considerably longer length. Novel comprises of a subject matter and a theme that should appeal universally. Novel is a sustained story in prose having characters and events usually imaginary. It has two primary aims: entertainment and instruction.

Elements

Plot, character and atmosphere — A novel is a complex narrative. It should create something new. Every novel is intended to display a certain plot around which the story moves. It should present an array of characters and a protagonist. The portrayal of different characters is something that adds colour to its plot. It should create an excitement or tension in the atmosphere. The building of tension refers to its beauty and art of handling. It should add some pathos to attract the sympathy of the readers. It should convey an idea, or emotion, or a message, or moral. It must engage the reader and should elicit emotion and sympathy in the reader. It should be simple and imaginative, rhythmic and structured.

Language, style and imagery: Language is a technical device. A novel should use simple prose full of imagery, humour, symbol, metaphor, sarcasm, irony, and pathos and like tools to make it sound more effective and engrossing. It should use a style and develop a technique. It should be rich in symbolism. It should evoke images into the reader. It also should build an atmosphere and create an effect. A tone and rhythm should be maintained throughout the story. Its rhythm should have gravity according to scenes and situation. It must invoke an idea and develop a theme by exposition, crisis and resolution. It might be inspired by some other work of literature or philosophy. It may be creative and carry a novel idea also. In this manner, there are certain important features that a novel should have. It should maintain the three classical unities: Time, Place and Action. A novel is an

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extended narrative different in form than a short story, or novelette or novella. The difference of form lies in its magnitude for a novel has a wider range of characters, complex plot or plots, atmosphere and more sustained exploration of character and motives compared to other forms of shorter narrative. Its beginning is cited from the eighteenth century and it is considerably a new emergence as a literary genre. But in short history of only two and half centuries, novel has developed a wide variety of subject treatments, technique, and styles.

Origin: Novel is a Roman word which is derived from the medieval term romance. However, the English name for this form is taken from the Italian novella meaning ‘a little new thing’ which was earlier a short tale in prose. In the fourteenth century in Italy, there was a popular trend for such tales that were both serious and scandalous. We have the example of Boccaccio’s Decameron. This set an example for the generations to follow. The concept of novel has broadened in the modern age. The term ‘Novella’ (in German ‘Novella’) is used for a shorter composition called Novelette: a prose fiction which has shorter length than a novel, like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. It is of middle length.

Historically, the tradition of prose romances is a very old phenomenon. They were written by the Greek writers in the third and second centuries A.D. Generally they dealt with the story of separated lovers who encountered many dangerous adventures and escaped what could damage them and came to be reunited at the end. These Greek prose romances influenced the European literature time to time. The important examples of these Greek romances are: *Aethiopia* by Heliodorus and the pastoral narrative *Daphnis* and *Chloe* by Longus. In England, Thomas Lodge’s *Rosalynde* on which Shakespeare based his *As You Like It* and Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*, were the English pastoral romances of the Elizabethan age.

Like pastoral romance, Picaresque narrative can also be called the predecessor of novel. It began in the sixteenth century Spain. The Frenchman Le Sage wrote the famous picaresque prose called the ‘Gil Blas’ (1715). The style has originated from the Spanish word ‘Picaso’ which means ‘rouge’. Therefore a picaresque narrative is a prose-tale which typically concerns the escapades of a careless, unworried, flippant, easy going rascal who lives by his own wisdom without making a change in his nature through the long series of events and adventures. Although Picaresque fiction deals with a rogue’s story of adventures, it is based on realism and is divided in episodes. They are a humorous satire on human nature. In England, Thomas Nashe’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) is the first example. It may be called the harbinger of the English novels. The Spanish writer Cervantes’s great prose narrative *Don Quixote* (1605) which is quasi-picaresque influenced the English writers most. It is also credited for giving birth to the modern English novel. Following this prose narrative, Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). *Robinson Crusoe* marked the beginning of the modern English novel. Don Quixote is an engaging crazy young man who tries to live by the ideas of chivalric romance in his everyday life and explores the relations of illusion and reality in human life. Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer* (1876) and Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* are among noteworthy examples of this genre. This form of prose narrative turned into what we call the modern novel.

Development of novel: As a literary form, novel broke from the tradition of prose romance or narrative which used timeless stories to focus on the unchanging moral truths. This modern meaning of novel has been an outcome of an intellectual atmosphere shaped by the great seventeenth century philosophers Descartes and

Locke. They laid stress on the importance of individual existence and also felt that reality can be discovered if an individual does use his or her own senses. Dependent experiences were not needed. In this manner, the novel emphasized specific as well as observed details in the form of prose. It also individualised its characters by placing them into a time frame and space. The subjects selected for a novel reflect the popular eighteenth century concern with the social set-up of an individual's day to day life.

The modern novel saw its birth in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722): The former deals with the life of a man portrayed in the tradition of picaresque; the latter is about a woman protagonist who is a thief. Both are based on the tradition laid down by Cervantes. The English writers made innovations into the type created by Cervantes. So in the English picaresque tradition, the episodes are individual connected with each other and arranged serially. It is because they happen to one person who is the protagonist. But the protagonist in both of these works is set so in a realistic background that the story looks like a portrayal of everyday life. In this regard, Defoe is called the originator of realistic novel in English literature. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740–41) displayed a different style of novel writing. It is ranked as a sentimental novel exploring the psychology of a woman under certain emotional circumstances. It was written in the form of epistles and so it is called an epistolary novel. Richardson is often categorised an originator of the novel of character. This kind of fiction penetrated deep into an individual's emotions and psyche. This work is marked by deft handling of plotting of emotional and sentimental events. His second novel *Clarissa* (1747–48) is a better handling of art experimenting with the same methods. Therefore, it can be stated that Defoe and Richardson were the two most significant pillars who established the modern form of English novel. They were also those who did not idealise the legendary great figures, mythological stories, history, or consider any of them as the subject for their novel. They saw life as it was and characters for their plot were chosen from real lives in England at that time. The English novel saw a marked growth in their hands.

Growth as a form: In the Renaissance, the essence of Humanism was the greatest outcome. This had been a frequent practise in the English literature and it served the important part of the eighteenth-century novel. In this period many reformers were working hard for the uplifting of the common man. The world was becoming modern due to the Industrial Revolution. It gave birth to the rise of the middle class and they demanded a form of literature which could satisfy their emotions and dealt with their problems. Novel emerged as a form to meet their demands. Earlier the eighteenth century literature focused on the high class people but the English novel described the life of the middle class. The eighteenth century literature focused on poetry and drama which are rather the constrained forms having strict rules to follow. But novel was an easy reading with simple, lucid prose which was easy for the new emerging audience to understand because they were not intellectually so high. The reason why novel became a popular choice instantly as it came to public notice was because of this. Novel was not only simpler to read but also less allusive and it had an interesting story to convey a wide range of characters, incidents, events. It had dialogues and narration which appealed a greater audience. Novel in the hands of Austen, the Gothic writers and the Victorians, the form was practised vigorously. This replaced the other forms like poetry and drama in the Victorian age as it had a greater range of audience. It shows that the demand of novel had surpassed the difference of intellectual entertainment which poetry and drama could furnish. It was the reason why novel became the central form of literature. Even

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an ordinarily educated man could enjoy the form and attain the pleasure of reading. As it depicted the life of an ordinary man, people could associate themselves with the stories mirrored in it. It was because of its readership which aimed at the middle class population chiefly the women and servants, novel became more famous than any other form of art. It described the domestic and social concerns.

Vehicle of experiment: The English novel from *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela* only were vehicles of experimentalism. For example, Robinson Crusoe was not in reality a rogue as the picaresque tradition meant neither Pamela had been a Princess but a servant woman. In this manner thematically, this form originated as an experiment and rebellion against the set norms of themes and characterisation. In the realm of the art of narration too, the form had been experimenting. It not only brought innovation in the theme and characterisation by introducing realism and a wide social range but also in the technique of writing. In the beginning different modes of presentation were tried by authors. The role of the narrator proved very important in the art of conveying a new technique. In a story, the narrator is the person who becomes the representative of the writer and forms connection between the writer and the reader. The novel as a literary form emerged experimenting with the art of narration. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* are written in first person narration, both being fictional autobiographies. Moll Flanders introduced the use of poetry in its prose. Robinson Crusoe has dates like in a diary and a table of good and evil in it which renders it the look of the record of regular account of events in a person's life.

Richardson's *Pamela* is the novel written in the form of letters. But later on their contemporary Henry Fielding introduced the third party omnipresent narrator in his novels. That was a different form of narration. His novel *Tom Jones* (1749) is one of the world's greatest valuable pieces of art. Earlier his *Joseph Andrews* (1742) too had used the same third party narrative technique which is the most popular way of storytelling. It has been used mostly by the modern writers. His works mentioned are in the picaresque narrative tradition. The nineteenth century was the period which witnessed the development of novel as a form of art. There were eminent writers such as Austen, Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot who used the same narrative technique of omnipresent narration and gave their stories a touch of life. In this technique, a narrator looks at the story plainly without being involved in the emotions of the characters or taking the side of the author. Through this technique, the author can reveal the thoughts of any character with more freedom and can have more liberty of expression. The Victorian novelist Henry James, generally regarded as modern, invented a new technique of narration called the 'point-of-view' in which the mind of his characters became the focus of interest of the novel. Often it was seen through a single point-of-view, the development of the story took turns around the same point-of-view. In this kind of novel, the reader is supposed to have full knowledge of an event. His famous novel *Portrait of a Lady* is an example.

Later in the twentieth century, the stream of consciousness is another innovation in technique. Begun by Dorothy Richardson, this narrative technique saw its edge in the hands of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. In the stream-of-consciousness technique, the narrator follows the images captured by the human mind, bit by bit. It will be put in the narrative form as our mind would connect to that specific image. In this manner the prose seems rather an unexpected series of fall of events and unconnected. In this kind of prose usually one character is chosen whose record of consciousness would be put in the narrative. Likewise, even the art

of narration, apart from the plot and other technologies, saw centuries of development and innovation in the art of narration in novel as a literary form.

Diverse trends: Novel as a literary form is one of the most popular genre of English literature of this time. Its popularity is the most compared to other literary genres. Different trends as explored by various authors have made this literary form more close to people's choice than any other form. For this, one does not need to fall into any technicality except for those written by a few very innovative experimentalists. It has also tried to cover all the spheres of human feelings and behaviour in its compass. Novel has many trends beginning from rogue or picaresque novel, realistic novel, sentimental novel, novel of humanism, historical novel, biographical novel, allegorical novel, romantic novel, Gothic novel, science fiction, pseudo-scientific fiction, social novel, novel of character, novel of morality, psychological novel, stream-of-consciousness novel, regional novel, novel about naturalism, crime novel, detective novel, etc. Like this every author has some of the peculiarities and there are additions by his or her works in the whole literary form of novel writing. Therefore its range has been proliferating as ever, as the form becoming popular day by day. Every bookstall will have maximum number of novels it at all rather than the poetry or drama.

The basic aim of novel: Novel is a literary form of art which provides its readers an escape from reality as well as a form of entertainment. Novel aims at conveying a story with fictitious characters, plot, theme, setting, time, place, action, message, imagination, etc to engage the reader. Its basic goal is to appeal reader with a fine story and good reading. It began to please and entertain the readers. It has many significant parts. In other words, novel is composed of various important components.

As every great work of art has its construction, novel too has ingredients. The most important aspect of a novel is its plot.

5.6.3 Short Story

A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background. There are similar fictional forms of greater antiquity—fables, folktales, parables.

The short story is a comparatively recent development in English Literature. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* and *The Tale of Melibee* are attempts at prose stories. In Italy, however, Chaucer's friend, Boccaccio had written his own tales contained in the *Decameron*, in prose with much greater success. In the eighteenth century, Steele and Addison evolved the tale with a purpose to drive home a moral but this is again different from the present day tale of 'impression' or 'idea'.

The short story is a favourite form of present day writing. Short story became famous as a genre in the nineteenth century. People confuse it with novella which has some resemblance to this genre. Novella is a shorter form of a novel. But short story comprises fewer characters, less incidents and a single plot.

Brief narratives have been in existence throughout history of mankind some of which are jests, anecdotes, studied digressions, short allegorical romances, moralizing fairy tales, short myths, and abbreviated historical legends. However, according to the definition of the term short story as the nineteenth and twentieth

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century writers have stated, none of the above qualifies to be accepted as a short story. But they do make up a large part of the milieu from which the modern short story emerged.

Short story, as a genre, has been largely ignored. With hardly any critical acclaim, the most valuable studies of the form that exist are often limited by region or era (e.g., Ray B. West's *The Short Story in America*, 1900–50).

Irish short story writer, Frank O' Connor, has recently endeavoured to give this genre a defined status. He is of the view that stories are a means for 'submerged population groups' to address a dominating community. Most other theoretical discussions, however, are predicated in one way or another on Edgar Allan Poe's thesis that stories must have a compact, unified effect.

The short story is not merely a greatly shortened novel. It shares the usual constituents of a novel—plot, character and setting. The number of characters is limited, and only a single significant episode is touched upon. Crisp narration is its essence. The setting is also not elaborate. Character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but seldom fully developed. The emphasis is more on creating a mood rather than the telling of a story.

It developed as a distinct literary genre only in the 19th century in the works of writers such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, Heinrich Kleist, Edgar Allan Poe, Prosper Mérimée, Guy de Maupassant, and Anton Chekhov.

A short story to be able to hold the reader's attention should not cover a long time span. The theme could be a single event that turns out to be the decisive element in a person's life. Each character introduced is crucial to the story as it adds a new dimension. The number of characters introduced should be kept to the minimum as too many characters would take away from the intensity of the plot. The best stories are the ones that follow a narrow subject line. Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace*, O. Henry's *The Gift of Magi* are very interesting short stories.

5.7 SUMMARY

- Literary terms are words used in, and having specific meaning in discussion, review, criticism and classification of literary works such as stories, poetry, drama, and essays.
- There is no authorized list of such words.
- The root of the word 'ode' lies in the Greek word 'aeidein' which means 'to sing' or 'to chant'. This form is a part of the lyric poetry tradition.
- William Wordsworth's poem, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* is an excellent example of a Pindaric ode in English.
- Lyrics in Latin literature are found as early as in first century BC by Catullus and Horace.
- The form of elegy originated in ancient Greece as lamentations for the dead. Elegies can be simple, encomiastic, reflective, critical or pastoral.
- The sonnet form was introduced by Wyatt and Surrey in the 16th century in English. The traditional Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is a fourteen-line poem with an octave and sestet.

Check Your Progress

12. Define an essay.
13. What is a scientific essay?
14. What is a short story?

- William Shakespeare is widely known in literary circles as the famous playwright of English literature. He has thirty-seven plays to his credit; all of them with varied themes and characters. In addition, he has also written three narrative poems and 154 sonnets.
- Edmund Spenser is an English poet. He is known for his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* which is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty. He is known for his experiments in the stanza form.
- John Donne is recognized as one of the prominent metaphysical poets. Metaphysical poets are largely cognizant for their use of metaphysical conceit in their poems. Metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor that combines two immensely diverse ideas into a single idea, often using imagery.
- Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded a new era in English Literature with their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This period came to be known as the Romantic period. Wordsworth defined poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquillity.
- G. M. Hopkins is one of the prominent poets of the Victorian period. However, his experiments with the poetic form have categorized him as a modern poet. He got converted to Catholicism and became a priest.
- Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature. This is one of the oldest forms of poetry as well. An epic is often defined as a lengthy poem that recounts the adventure of a hero or a great war.
- Virgil's *The Aeneid* is an example of a literary epic. Virgil was asked to write a grand epic to celebrate the glory of the Augustan age in Rome by Emperor Augustus.
- Though *The Canterbury Tales* cannot be considered as a true epic, yet it has incorporated several features of an epic. This is also a long narrative poem written in iambic pentameter.
- *The Rape of the Lock* written by Alexander Pope is a famous mock-heroic poem. A mock epic or mock-heroic poem is a kind of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the epic genre, but applies it to narrate a commonplace or trivial subject matter.
- A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and so either it is called a folk ballad or traditional ballad. These narrative pieces were composed by a single author and sung to all types (literate and illiterate) of people.
- John Keats's poem *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is a typical example of a literary ballad as it follows the typical example of a ballad. The poem is divided into twelve quatrains that follow the rhyme scheme of abcb.
- Satire is a literary genre which makes use of humour, exaggeration, ridicule or irony to criticize a particular topic in the context of contemporary issues. Poetry is seen as a powerful vehicle for satire.
- The dramatic monologue is the prominent genre of Victorian poetry. It is considered the most significant innovation of the age rather we can say that it highlights the age. It has been widely used by a number of poets like Alfred Tennyson, Algernon Swinburne, Felicia Hemans and Augusta Webster.

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- Browning's monologues characteristically consist of nonstop narrative spoken by a single character to a definite listener. It is the character created by the poet who is speaking his thoughts and not the poet himself.
- Drama is an ancient form of art written in prose or verse accompanied by various tools and techniques meant to be staged. It is unlike poetry or prose. It is an art dependent on many other tools unlike a written text which has to do with words only.
- Probably the development of drama owed its growth to new scholars from the universities in England and the Renaissance, which forcefully pushed the active and ambitious minds to explore and inculcate the classical literature.
- Samuel Beckett's *Theatre of the Absurd* introduced the existentialist theory that abstract existence played great role in life above everything in it. This type of drama in being was essentially poetic and full of imagination and exhibited the downplay of language.
- The definition and genesis of tragedy goes back to the classical literature of Greece. Aristotle, the master-craftsmen, is held as the father and preceptor of 'classical tragedy'. Tragedy is a form of drama.
- The rise of tragedy in England goes back to the Elizabethan Age when *Gorboduc* (1561) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton was acted. English tragedies receive inspiration from Seneca. *Gorboduc*, the protagonist, is a mythical emperor of ancient England.
- In the period that followed Shakespeare, George Chapman (1559-1634), Beaumont (1584-1616) and Fletcher (1579-1625) wrote tragedies.
- The word 'comedy' has an ancient and classical background ahead of tragedy, which means an amusing spectacle. The word is a mixture of merry-making and poet or singer.
- An essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, persuades to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain (M. H. Abram).
- A philosophical essay should begin to search and establish a view in the context of a problem. It should have a definite point of view — either for or against the given argument.
- A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based. The facts should exist or should have proof to prove its occurrence. In a scientific essay the writer uses certain terminology related to certain branch of study that the essay explores.
- Novel is a literary form of art that is a recent development. It came to picture in the eighteenth century in English literature. It is an extended fictional narrative in prose having a plot, characters and a theme.
- A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background. There are similar fictional forms of greater antiquity — fables, folktales, parables.

5.8 KEY TERMS

- **Baroque period:** The term baroque has been widely used since the nineteenth century to describe the period in Western European art music from about 1600 to 1750.
- **Sprung rhythm:** It is a poetic metre approximating to speech, each foot having one stressed syllable followed by a varying number of unstressed ones.
- **Blank verse:** It is a verse without rhyme, especially that which uses iambic pentameters.
- **Pandemonium:** It refers to wild and noisy disorder or confusion; uproar.
- **Incremental repetition:** It is a device used in poetry of the oral tradition, especially English and Scottish ballads, in which a line is repeated in a changed context or with minor changes in the repeated part.

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5.9 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. An ode usually has three segments: strophe, antistrophe, and epode.
2. Lyric Poetry is an umbrella term for any poem which is short and conveys personal feelings and opinions, has a single speaker and possesses a song like quality. It could be elegy, ode, sonnet song or hymn.
3. Spenser's *Daphnaida* was modelled on Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* and is an example of a simple elegy.
4. A famous epic poem written by Edmund Spenser is *The Faerie Queene*.
5. The essential criteria of an epic poem are as follows:
 - The poem has to be long and all the lines should be in a particular meter.
 - The subject matter of the poem should be serious.
6. A ballad is a song that tells a story. It was traditionally sung orally and so either it is called a folk ballad or traditional ballad.
7. Dramatic monologue is a kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent 'listener' of one or more persons.
8. Some prominent dramatic monologues written in English literature are Tennyson's *Ulysses* (1842), Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi* (1855) and T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917).
9. George Bernard Shaw and Thomas Stearns Eliot are two major 20th century figures who used drama to convey their ideas, exploring different themes.
10. The major English tragic plays are *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), *Dr. Faustus* (1592), *Hamlet* (1603), *Macbeth* (1611), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1606), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), *White Devil* and the *Duchess of Malfi*.
11. Jeffrey Adams' *Shooting Tori* (1996), *Turned Tables* (2000) by Hugh Aaron and David Matthew Barnes's play *Clean* (2002) are examples of one-act plays.
12. An essay is a short piece of writing reflecting a writer's own point of view about a particular subject. It may have diverse elements as its focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of

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an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, or criticism of life, events or happenings.

13. A scientific essay is objective in style and is devoted to recounting of facts and events. It should be fact-based.
14. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background.

5.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the three varieties of ode in English?
2. Define an elegy.
3. List the salient features of a Petrarchan sonnet.
4. Name the famous literary epics.
5. What are the essential features of a ballad?
6. What are the characteristics of a dramatic monologue?
7. Write a short note on English tragic and comic plays.
8. Name some eminent philosophical essayists.

Long-Answer Questions

1. 'Lyric poem in sixteenth century gained prominence through sonnets composed by Sir Philip Sydney and Shakespeare.' Explain the statement.
2. Analyse the contribution of various English poets in the development of the sonnet form.
3. 'Epic poetry is one of the genres of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature.' Discuss.
4. Critically analyse *La Belle Dame sans Merci* as a literary ballad.
5. Why is poetry considered a powerful vehicle for satire? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Robert Browning is the master of dramatic monologues. Give examples to substantiate your answer.
7. Explain the growth and development of the novel as a literary form in English language.
8. 'The short story is a comparatively recent development in English Literature.' Discuss.

5.11 FURTHER READING

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READING PROSE AND FICTION

BA (ENGLISH)

BENG 403(E)

Third Year



RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Reading Prose and Fiction

| Syllabi | Mapping in Book |
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| Unit II- Novel - I <ul style="list-style-type: none">– R.K. Narayan - The Guide | Unit 2: Novel - I: R.K. Narayan (Pages 19-80) |
| Unit III- Novel - II <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Jane Austen - Pride and Prejudice– Desai - Fire on the Mountain | Unit 3: Novel - II: Austen and Desai (Pages 81-107) |
| Unit IV- Short Stories <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Edgar Allan Poe - The Cask of Amontillado– Virginia Woolf - The Duchess and the Jeweller– K. Mansfield - The Fly– R K Narayan - The Trail of the Green Blazer | Unit 4: Short Stories (Pages 109-144) |
| Unit V- Practical Criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Appreciation of an unseen prose passage. | Unit 5: Practical Criticism: Appreciation of Unseen Prose Passages (Pages 145-171) |

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INTRODUCTION

Prose is the most fundamental form of written language. It applies common grammatical structure and a natural flow of speech. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement enhances its usage in spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. Fiction on the other hand is the most popular form of literature present in today's world. It is any narrative that deals with events that are not factual, but rather imaginary. It is often applied to theatrical and musical work.

The content of this book *Reading Prose and Fiction* is divided into five units. It will discuss some of the prominent writers in prose and fiction such as, George Orwell, R.K. Narayan, Jane Austen, Anita Desai, Virginia Woolf, and many more.

The book has been written in the self-instructional mode wherein each unit begins with the Objectives of the topic, followed by an Introduction to the unit before going on to the presentation of the detailed content in a simple and structured format. Check Your Progress questions are provided at regular intervals to test the student's understanding of the topics. A Summary and a set of Self-Assessment Questions are provided at the end of each unit. Answers to Self-Assessment Questions have also been provided which would help the students assess their progress.

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UNIT 1 PROSE

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 George Orwell: About the Author
 - 1.2.1 The Prevention of Literature: Critical Appreciation
- 1.3 J.L. Nehru: About the Author
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- 1.5 Summary
- 1.6 Key Terms
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- 1.9 Further Reading

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature as a term is used to describe written or spoken material. It consists of anything from creative writing to technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used while referring to works of the creative imagination, including fiction, drama, prose, etc.

Prose is the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. There are many prose forms. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches. Each form of prose has its own style and has to be dealt with in its own particular way. Travel writing is also one form of prose. Through this, we get a first-hand account of the travels of the writer, the places he has visited, and the experiences he has encountered. Speech is vocal communication with the purpose of conveying something. In this unit, you will get acquainted with three prose writings of famous writers, i.e., George Orwell, J.L. Nehru and N.C. Chaudhuri.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse George Orwell as an essayist
- Analyse Orwell's 'The Prevention of Literature'
- Describe the life and works of Jawaharlal Nehru
- Critically analyse 'Homage to Gandhi'
- Examine N.C. Chaudhuri 'Money and the Englishman'

1.2 GEORGE ORWELL: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The effects of the Second World War are clearly visible in the literature of that period, reflecting the spirit of revolt and the feeling of distrust. Established literary figures like Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and George Orwell rightfully satirized the socio-political insecurity and instability among the masses by depicting the feeling of futility, gloom and despair.

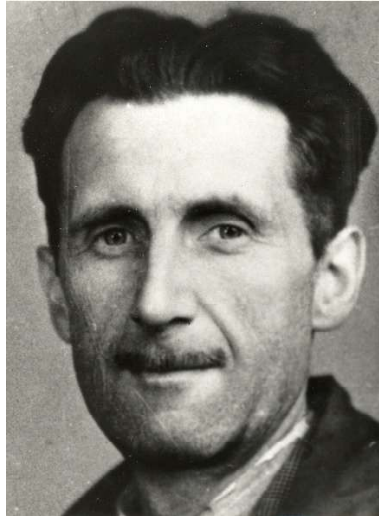


Fig. 1.1 George Orwell

George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell. His childhood was not a happy one as he did not have pleasant memories of his parents. Even his school life at St. Cyprian's was very miserable and lonely. He won a scholarship to Eton despite his depression at school.

For some time, he worked as an assistant to the District Superintendent of Police in the capital of upper Burma and then resigned and returned to England in 1927. He worked at various positions and also participated in the Spanish Civil War. After the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, he became very famous and financially prosperous for the first time in his life. Another famous work *Nineteen Eighty Four* was published in 1949. However, he did not live long enough to enjoy his popularity and succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis in 1950, at the age of 46.

List of Works

The following is the list of the prominent works of George Orwell.

Novels

- 1934 – *Burmese Days*
- 1935 – *A Clergyman's Daughter*
- 1936 – *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*
- 1939 – *Coming Up for Air*
- 1945 – *Animal Farm*
- 1949 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

- 1933 – *Down and Out in Paris and London*
- 1937 – *The Road to Wigan Pier*
- 1938 – *Homage to Catalonia*

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1.2.1 The Prevention of Literature: Critical Appreciation

‘The Prevention of Literature’ is an essay printed in 1946 by the English essayist and writer George Orwell. The essay deals with the freedom of thought and expression; especially in an atmosphere where the intellectuals were not speaking against the communism of the Soviet Union. Orwell noted that intellectual liberty in England was under attack from three sources, i.e., totalitarians, monopolies (radio, films, etc.), and bureaucracies. By bureaucracies, he meant particularly the Ministry of Information and the British Council, which employed writers, while assuming that the writers could have their opinions dictated to them. The main focus of Orwell’s essay was on the intellectuals who should be strong in their defence of individual integrity, but who were not speaking out. Orwell stated that the left-wing authors and academicians were turning a blind eye towards all the events which would project the Soviet Union in a derogatory manner. The left-wing intellectuals had accepted a kind of self-censorship to preserve their ideologies before the need for objective truth.

Summary of the Essay

Orwell starts his essay by recalling a meeting of the PEN Club, which was held in defence of the press, where the speakers were mostly concerned with the issues of obscenity and in presenting the matter that praises the Soviet Russia. In a footnote of his essay, Orwell acknowledges that maybe he has picked a bad day, but this provides an opportunity for Orwell to discuss about the issue of freedom of thought and the enemies of intellectual liberty. He mentioned the enemies of freedom of thought in England to be the monopoly of radio, control of the press in a few hands, bureaucracy and the unwillingness of the public to buy books. At the same time, Orwell was extremely worried about the freedom of the writers being weak and their failure to defend this dominance. The main issue was the right to report contemporary events truthfully. According to him, a decade ago, it was necessary to defend freedom against Catholics and Conservatives, however, now it is necessary to defend it against Communists who claim that there is ‘no doubt about the poisonous effect of the Russian mythos on English intellectual life’.

Orwell mentioned the Spanish Civil War, the Ukrainian famine and Poland as topics which have been ignored by pro-soviet authors because of the existing orthodoxy. Orwell stated that prose literature was unable to grow under totalitarianism, just as it was unable to grow under the oppressive religious culture of the Middle ages. However, under totalitarianism the doctrines are unstable, which means that the lies always have to be changed to keep up with a continual re-writing of the past.

Orwell stated that poetry can survive under totalitarianism for several reasons, whereas the prose writers have lost their power by the destruction of intellectual liberty. In the essay, he has tried to speculate the state of literature in times to come. According to him, the totalitarianism prevailing in the society will not provide enough encouragement to the literature. Moreover, he observed that people were willing to spend time and money on various other sources of recreation, but were reluctant to do the same for

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literature. In the essay, he has condemned the Russophile intellectuals as they were not worried about the state of literature and adopted a completely uninterested approach in order to maintain their privileges under the dictatorial situations. Orwell strongly believed that in the absence of freedom of thoughts, literature will not be able to survive or flourish. He also blamed the intellects for the state of the literature as they were themselves driving it to such a situation.

Extracts from the Essay

In our age the idea of intellectual liberty is under attack from two directions. On the one side are its theoretical enemies, the apologists of totalitarianism, and on the other its immediate, practical enemies, monopoly and bureaucracy. Any writer or journalist who wants to retain his integrity finds himself thwarted by the general drift of society rather than by active persecution.

The journalist is unfree, and is conscious of unfreedom, when he is forced to write lies or suppress what seems to him important news: the imaginative writer is unfree when he has to falsify his subjective feelings, which from his point of view are facts. He may distort and caricature reality in order to make his meaning clearer, but he cannot misrepresent the scenery of his own mind.

Political writing in our time consists almost entirely of prefabricated phrases bolted together like the pieces of a child's Meccano set. It is the unavoidable result of self-censorship. To write in plain vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox.

Responses towards Orwell's Essay

There were many authors who responded towards Orwell's views about the state of literature. Randall Swingler, a communist poet, reacted to the essay by giving his views in his article that 'The Right to Free Expression' in Polemic 5. Swingler agreed with Orwell, as he also felt that an author needs to take a strong stand against all situations or persons where the freedom of an intellect is at threat. He agrees with Orwell's views on the way dictatorships in Soviet Union tried to implement policies to curb cultural freedom. In spite of his agreement with the essay, he felt that due to the high degree of 'intellectual swashbucklery', it was difficult to completely respond to the essay. Swingler felt that Orwell had made several claims in the essay which he was unable to provide enough evidence and they seemed more like sweeping statement and uncorroborated declarations. This response by Swingler was not taken well by Orwell and he considered it to be a mocking personal attack on himself. Orwell began to socially avoid Swingler for the response he presented about the essay.

Orwell's essay was reviewed by Christopher Sykes; in fact, Sykes even studied his other works and finally established that his essays were very good and made a lot of sense, but at the same time they seemed to be slightly exaggerated and all his views were not supported with facts. He stated his views in following words; 'They contain much admirable sense, but they contain too some over-stated views, and some prophecies as doubtful as those of John Burnham.'

Critical Analysis

During the period of World War II, Orwell began to start feeling about the prevailing censorship and he started to express his feelings through his writings. Orwell was able to identify the sources for the censorship and openly spoke about them in his essay 'The

Prevention of Literature'. To a large extent, he blamed the intellectuals of the time as they were allowing the Ministry of Information and the British Council, who provided monetary aid to writers so that they could make them write in their favour. He felt that the left-wing authors and intellectuals were allowing self-censorship and were willingly preserving ideologies which were hindering the flourishing of the literature.

Orwell has always been very worried about the contents of political writing. He had commented about the state of writing in his essay 'Politics and the English Language', which was published in 1946. Orwell felt that the language of politics had extremely depreciated and it only contained weasel words which acted as a camouflage and undermined the true extent of the happenings. The language used in the texts was able to hide the real meaning of the actions and the dealings. False statements were considered to be the true and brutal acts like murder were also presented in a positive manner.

The essay 'The Prevention of Literature' was a reaction to all the indecencies which were taking place at that time. The essay has been described as one of Orwell's most expressive deliveries and his attempt to assert decorousness. While attending the PEN meeting, Orwell was upset at the prevailing situation because he felt that it was permitted to talk or print texts related to sexual context, but the same liberty did not apply to political situations. He felt that this clearly points towards lying low attitude adopted by the intellectuals of the contemporary society who were not concerned about the suppression of their freedom of thought. Orwell could not fathom this behaviour, hence he openly criticised the state of affairs through his essay and completely blames intellectuals and calls them weak. Orwell sets high standards for himself and felt that writing should be done in simple language and fearlessly. He stated his views in the following words; 'To write in plain, vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox.' His standards are clear from his subsequent works where he took full care so that the 'Prevention of Literature' could be prevented. The freedom of thought is visible in his books like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*.

1.3 J.L. NEHRU: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nehru was born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani at Allahabad in India. He was the first of three children to the couple. His father being a barrister was actively engaged in the Indian independence movement. He had also served as the President of Indian National Congress, twice.

Nehru received most of his primary education at home from several tutors and governess. At the age of sixteen, Nehru was enrolled at the Harrow School in England after which he got admission at the Trinity College, Cambridge where he earned his honours degree in natural science. He was highly influenced by the writings of Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, J.M. Keynes and G.M. Trevelyan who shaped much of his political and economic thinking.

After attaining his graduate degree, Nehru relocated to London in 1910 and enrolled himself at the Inns of Court School of Law where he studied law for two years. After completing his bar examination, he was offered to be admitted to the English bar, but Nehru returned to his homeland in 1912 and started practicing law as a barrister at the Allahabad High Court and gradually, he involved himself in Indian politics.

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Check Your Progress

1. List the various kinds of prose.
2. When was George Orwell born?
3. List some of the prominent novels of George Orwell.

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Fig. 1.2 Jawaharlal Nehru

Nehru's contribution to India's freedom struggle

At the time when Nehru joined Indian National Congress, he was not happy with its functioning as it was dominated by the English knowing upper class elite, yet he participated in the civil rights campaign initiated by Gandhi. Nehru condemned the Indian Civil Service for its support of British policies radically. He was not happy with the slow progression of the nationalist movement, so he joined his hands with aggressive nationalist leaders who were demanding Home Rule for Indians. He argued for self-government and a status of Dominion within the British Empire as enjoyed by Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand. In 1916, Nehru met Gandhi for the first time and nobody knew that this relationship would turn for the lifetime of the both. Under Gandhi's tutelage, Nehru was raised to the position of General Secretary of the Congress. Nehru not only contributed to national movement of India, but also gave the freedom struggle an international outlook in 1927 when, he attended the congress of oppressed nationalities in Brussels in Belgium.

Nehru appealed for complete independence, but he was objected to by Gandhi who proposed a dominion status for India in two years' time frame. When Gandhi's plea was rejected, and so was Nehru's presidency over the Lahore session in 1928, Nehru demanded for complete independence. This resolution made him the most significant leaders of the independence movement. Due to his participation in the salt Satyagraha, he was put into prison with a large number of nationalists. During the World War II, Nehru demanded for full assurance for India's independence and also the share of power and responsibility in the central government, but the British did not oblige. In 1947, as India enjoyed the British departure from the Indian soil, it also suffered the pain of partition as the British had decided to divide the country into two-India and Pakistan.

Nehru's contribution to the country as a Prime Minister

Nehru was appointed the head of the interim government. Though he opposed the partition of India initially, due to Jinnah's powerful opposition, communal violence and political disorder, he was forced to accept this decision. Pakistan was formed on 14 August 1947 and Nehru became the Prime Minister of India. Nehru propelled India towards technological advancements and innovations. He also professed equality for all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. He brought many radical changes in domestic, international and social policies. Nehru established several industries and also advocated for a mixed

economy where the government controlled public sector co-existed with the private sector. He was passionate about education. He believed that only education can bring reformation in young India. Under his administration, he established many higher institutes for learning including All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and the National Institutes of Technology (NIT). He brought free and compulsory education to all children in his five year plan. Nehru also laid the stepping stone for the foundation of National Defense Academy, India. He realized the importance of defence and tried to equip the nation with the best modern equipment. Thus, Nehru toiled hard for the fast growth and development of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru as a Prose Writer

Nehru was not only a chief Indian spokesman for political affairs, but also a great thinker and writer of India. Next only to Gandhi, his writings and speeches have brought a new shape of things to be followed in the years to come. In his writings, his mind ranges over all human problems with equal interest. An avid reader, he inspires the youth of India to be proud of their national heritage along with the rational points of the scientific temper.

Nehru's contribution is immense to Indo-English literature. He has enriched the store of Indian writing in English through voluminous works like *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* (1930), *Glimpses of World -History* (1934), *An Autobiography* (1936), 'India and the World' (1936), *The Unity of India* (1941), *The Discovery of India* (1946) and *A Bunch of Old Letters* (1958).

As an Indo-English writer and as a politician, Nehru had chosen a vast area for his works. The crux of his writing comes from the freedom struggles of India. Hence, he came across several people with their different languages throughout India, more especially the languages of Northern India. The following words from *The Discovery of India* like shikar, the satyagraha sabha, khilafat committee, moulvis, ulema, charkha, kuttagar, lathi charges, bania, to quote a few indeed, show his deliberate liking for the use of Indianised lexis items. Sometimes this code switching from English to Hindustani root words like 'Bramanisation' and 'Sahib log', develops a new syntax of sentence-formation. At time, he quotes the entire sentence in original form in order to emphasize his point. However, his language as a prose writer is simple and easy to grasp in spite of its complex structure. He has a wonderful mastery of language which provides a concrete shape to his prose writing.

Nehru as a Democrat

Jawaharlal Nehru was no Caesar, despite his obvious imperiousness. 'We want no Caesars' he said, when dictators were fashionable in Europe and many were fascinated by Hitler's or Mussolini's dazzling conquests of power. He had been a democrat for a long time before he took to the practice of parliamentary democracy. Nehru had watched with amusement and indifference, the burlesque of the Council entry programme of his father and others. He was an agitator and a soldier in the livery of freedom. He could not think of democracy without transfer of power and the sensation of real self-government.

For him, freedom of the people came first, freedom to shape their freedom as they liked, and they were not an abstraction. He thought of them as millions and millions of individuals, each with his individuality, each master of his fate; in spite of the exhilaration

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he felt before crowds, he did not think of them in mass or as groups. The ardent spirit with which he threw himself into the freedom struggle and the many battles he fought for civil liberties were a part of his passion for individual liberty, as a condition of national freedom.

Jawaharlal Nehru made no secret that he enjoyed power, not for itself, but because it enabled him to make some history. Power does not rise from a vacuum, from adventurism or from the magic of personality. To be real, it must be a part of social power. He derived his power, not from the electorate, not even from Parliament, but from the appeal to the mass mind which he achieved as a part of the social processes which Gandhi had released and he accelerated. He achieved leadership through rational means. However, he was a democrat by faith and self-discipline and was no less successful than Gandhi, because he was always prepared to take his chances in the inner party struggles of the Congress party.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to articulate the idea of a Constituent Assembly long before such an assembly was set up under the Cabinet Mission scheme. A Constituent Assembly had for him the implications of a revolution; and in spite of the limitations under which the Constituent Assembly met and the intransigence of the Muslim League, he sought to endow it with revolutionary temper, and when freedom was not yet in sight, he sought to make it the instrument of revolution, not merely political but social and economic. He could see that it was not enough to have a constitution, a concept of territorial integrity, and armed forces to defend it.

The basis of the Constituent Assembly was the sovereignty of the people, and it was something more than a phrase for him. His speech on the 'Objectives Resolution' was one of the greatest he ever made, not only eloquent in words, but inspiring in its amplitude and depth. India was to be an Independent Sovereign Republic, wherein all the power and authority of the republic, its constituent parts and organs of the government were derived from the people. Justice, social, economic and political, was to be guaranteed; there was to be equality of status and of opportunity; freedom of thought and expression and other freedoms were enumerated.

Despite his legal training, Nehru's mind was not legalistic and he did not profess to be learned in law, even in constitutional law, but he left his impress on constitution making, and even he could not make it as simple, easy and short as he would have liked. He thought much about its content and made provision for the future. The constitution had to be given the flesh and blood of an economic base, if it was not to be a paper constitution; it must serve the needs of the people, if it is not to be treated as a scrap of paper; and it must work, if it was not to break up. The problem was to make a nation from a confused, distraught people, and Jawaharlal Nehru sought to fit all problems into the framework of national unity. India was still a land of many races and religions and languages, and the diversity of its composite culture did not disturb Jawaharlal Nehru. He rather welcomed it as he understood the long drama of the past, of an India changing, but with a continuity of tradition, and he also understood the transitional nature of the present and the unfolding of the future. The concept of a monolithic state in the name of oneness of culture was not acceptable to him, and he rejected the imposition of any majority culture. Behind the forms of democracy which the country was adopting, he saw the spirit of it in all its complex yet simple processes.

Nehru treated the Parliament with deference and respect because he believed in the virtues of parliamentary democracy, in the value of good precedents, and in the laying down and carrying out of policies with the consent of the people or their

representatives. It was not easy, for with vast reserves of illiteracy the country had started with adult suffrage. However, he knew that there was no other way. With many limitations, he enabled three general elections to become an impressive demonstration of the working of the world's largest democracy. After all, any democracy, whatever the forms and the rules, is government by deliberation, and it demands capacity for debate, and he taught this lesson ceaselessly. Democracy must ensure good government; it must allow criticism and correction; it means balances and checks.

He had, however, no new fanciful notions about democracy. To him the content was more important than the form. He sometimes suggested reform and thought aloud about better methods. However as a democrat, he waited for a consensus to develop. He did not think of a party less democracy; he rather thought that a party system would help principled working. Among his feats was the way he preserved the strength of the Congress and used it as a mighty instrument of his purposes.

The democracy which developed under Jawaharlal Nehru was not Jeffersonian or Jacksonian democracy or even the slavery-free democracy of Lincoln. It was a twentieth century democracy based on social and economic equality, trying to develop the temper of peace and prepared to undertake an industrial and technological revolution. The democratic process cannot be free unless it is freed from the grip of vested interests. Parliamentary democracy in this sense was Jawaharlal Nehru's dream. Whatever its failures, whatever the setbacks whatever the variations that are possible, he largely fulfilled that dream.

1.3.1 Homage to Gandhi: Critical Appreciation

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru made a speech to the entire nation after the assassination of Gandhi on All India Radio. He gave an extempore speech and it was very emotional. Nehru started the speech by saying, 'The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. He feels very helpless and says that he has no appropriate words to help them overcome their grief. In a state of grief, Nehru feels it is important to realise the threats from communalism and he warns the people about it. He urges them to stay united and peaceful, as he feels that this will be the best way to pay homage to Gandhi as he sacrificed his life so that India could be united and be free from violence. All through, Nehru equates Gandhi to an everlasting inspiration, foreseeing that the path he showed will guide people in times to come.

'That light will be seen . . . the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present; it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.'

In the speech, Nehru feels that just praising Gandhi about his greatness and kind-heartedness would not be the correct homage to him. According to him, his vacuum will always remain in lives of all Indians. In his speech, he stated that:

'A glory has departed and the sun that warmed and brightened our lives has set and we shiver in the cold and dark. Yet, he would not have us feel this way. After all, that glory that we saw for all these years, that man with the divine fire, changed us also— and such as we are, we have been moulded by him during these years; and out of that divine fire many of us also took a small spark which strengthened and made us work to some extent on the lines that he fashioned. And so if we praise him, our words seem rather small and if we praise him, to some extent we also praise ourselves. Great men and eminent men have monuments in bronze and marble set up for them, but this man of divine fire

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managed in his life-time to become enshrined in millions and millions of hearts so that all of us became somewhat of the stuff that he was made of, though to an infinitely lesser degree. He spread out in this way all over India not in palaces only, or in select places or in assemblies but in every hamlet and hut of the lowly and those who suffer. He lives in the hearts of millions and he will live for immemorial ages.'

Nehru felt that such great people can be praised by following the path that they showed. He stated that just words of praise will not be enough and adequate, but if the people remain united, worked hard and worked towards developing the country that will actually be true homage as his sacrifice will not go waste.

Nehru called this phase as a period of darkness, which will soon pass, if the people continued to follow the principles of Gandhi.

'All we know is that there was a glory and that it is no more; all we know is that for the moment there is darkness, not so dark certainly because when we look into our hearts we still find the living flame which he lighted there. And if those living flames exist, there will not be darkness in this land and we shall be able, with our effort, remembering him and following his path, to illumine this land again, small as we are, but still with the fire that he instilled into us.'

Nehru felt that Gandhi was one of the greatest symbol of the country who will be remembered in future as well.

'The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate past, it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.'

Nehru felt that building monuments in the name of Gandhi were not required as he lived in the hearts of the people and they were going to remember him without a physically made structure.

Critical Analysis

Nehru's work was considered as a superior illustration of oration. The speech was well appreciated not only because of the content, but also the usage of language. The book contains totality in its paragraphs and themes. It contains a poetic selection of terms which enhance the theme and give a meaningful image to the content. Nehru has adopted a very peaceful style of writing which gives a very soothing effect to the situation. He takes care to be sensitive about the grief of the people, but at the same time does not fail to inform them about the continuing threat of communalism and the only way to stop it will be to remain united.

Check Your Progress

4. Whose writings influenced Jawaharlal Nehru's thinking?
5. What propelled Nehru to become a highly significant leader of the Indian freedom struggle movement?

1.4 N.C. CHAUDHURI: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

One of the most famous writers of English in India, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897 and was educated in Kolkata. He started his career as a clerk in the Indian Army, but later was able to obtain the job of secretary to the freedom fighter Sarat Chandra Bose, the older brother of Subhas Chandra Bose. Chaudhuri went on to contribute articles to popular magazines and became a renowned author in English and Bengali. Chaudhuri also worked as a journalist and

editor and was the political commentator for the All India Radio for some time. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975 for his biography on Max Müller.

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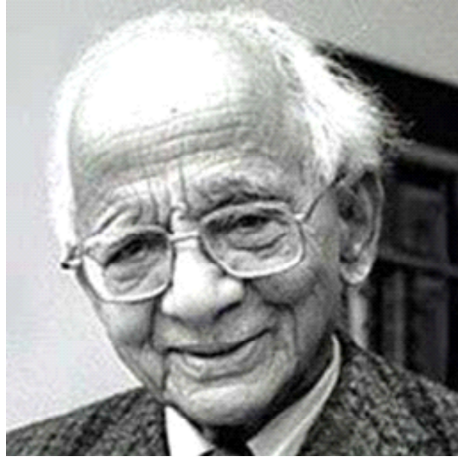


Fig. 1.3 N.C. Chaudhuri

Along with his many achievements, Nirad Chaudhuri was also an extremely polarizing figure. He was accused of being anti-Muslim and supporting the ideology of Hindu extremism. In this regard, he made some inflammatory statements after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. However, his most well-known controversy was regarding his most famous book called *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The book courted controversy in newly independent India because of its dedication which stated:

“To the memory of the British Empire in India,
Which conferred subjecthood upon us,
But withheld citizenship.
To which yet every one of us threw out the challenge:
‘Civis Britannicus sum’
Because all that was good and living within us
Was made, shaped and quickened
By the same British rule.”

The dedication infuriated many Indians and Chaudhuri was accused of praising the British over India. The ensuing controversy resulted in him being thrown out of government service, deprived of his pension and being blacklisted as a writer in India. Chaudhuri himself denied that he had praised the British Empire, explaining that the dedication was written in a mock imperial rhetoric style which he used to condemn the British for not treating Indians as equals. Along with this controversy, he was also accused by the family of Subhas Chandra Bose of having leaked information to the British regarding the whereabouts of Sarat Chandra Bose, leading to his arrest.

After the controversy over *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Chaudhuri moved to England where he received enormous literary success, receiving the Duff Cooper Memorial Award, the only Indian to have received the prize. Chaudhuri was awarded the title of the Commander of Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth II in 1992. He died in 1999 at the age of 101 in Oxfordshire.

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1.4.1 Money and the Englishman: Critical Appreciation

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Like all his other works, the essay 'Money and the Englishman', also features the west. In this essay Nirad Chaudhuri has tried to understand the attitude of the people of England towards money. He felt that money played a very essential role in every society and people living in that society. According to him, people could sacrifice most of their passions, except money as it was essential for the survival. The author was not able to judge the attachment of Englishmen towards money as there were no direct indicatives. Hence, he felt that he would have to find some indirect method for investigating their attachment. In England, the money mindedness was not visible through their religious or social attitude as it is in India. Indians worship goddess Lakshmi who is the symbol of wealth. Most households in India have a place which is meant for worship. Chaudhuri was not able to locate any such area in homes of the British. In the essay, he clearly specifies that with all this he is not trying to assert religious attitudes of the people of the east and the west, but actually just trying to understand their outlook towards such an important aspect of life.

Chaudhuri also mentions that people in England are very prompt in paying their dues irrespective of their financial status, whereas in India the rich are more reluctant to pay their dues even though they have more resources. He has stated in the essay that 'everybody was not only expected to pay his dues promptly and regularly, but also, generally speaking did so. In our society the willingness to pay decreases as the capacity to pay increases'. Another aspect about money, which makes him excited is that the banks and shops are considerably more tolerant and trustful in matters of money.

The author is amazed by the honesty he witnesses in the economic and money-making matters. He has called this as a virtuous quality. Nonetheless, the people of England restrain from any type of money-talk. Whereas this is not the case in India; people freely talk about money. On a lighter note, the author stated that in India money-making is as open as love-making in West. The people in England consider it impolite to talk about money related issues or nature of business publically; people who indulge in such conversation are considered to be capitalists, who get pleasure only in discussing financial matters. The author realises that talking about money in the West is considered as a negative aspect of the English personality. The economic world is essentially divided into two groups—one group believes in saving money and the other group consists of people who enjoy spending money. One group consists of penny pincher and the other of the compulsive shopper. He has stated from producing point of '...love for money in order to be enjoyed must be restricted'. The sight is changed when it comes to expenditure—'On this side there was as much assertiveness as there was secrecy on the other.' The author identifies spending to be the optimistic need of the people in West and saving as a remedial measure.

Through the essay, Chaudhuri tries to offer an understanding about the attitude of the people of England and of Indians when it comes to money. He feels that people of India like to hoard money, whereas English people spend money in a systematic and strategic style. In India, money is one and the same as enticement, passion and anxiety. The author also talks about the assortment and lavishness of merchandise in shops in England and he feels that a person who has no clue about his requirements will go crazy while shopping. The essay mentions that a hierarchy can be seen in the shopping pattern of the English people as they shop according to their financial status. He mentions that people belonging to the middle-class will not be at ease if they had to shop in Bond-Street and would prefer to go to Cambridge, where the things in the shop will suit their

pockets and they will not experience awkwardness. The author has further elaborated that even the shop assistants are well-dressed in shops at Bond-Street.

The author being a tourist is able to experience both the shopping experiences to the fullest and he states in the essay that ‘I can hardly say how it gladdened the heart of a spendthrift in both principle and...my means...to find myself in a country in which spending was respectable. I liked the English people for their devotion to spending—that’s the way the money goes.’ The essay gives a detailed view about the financial matters of the west and mentions about the experiences of the author during his stay. He realises that the English people live very stylishly and are constantly striving for a better standard of life. He has stated that ‘the best use of money is to spend it on the good things of life.’ He also comments at the end that this philosophy about money is not adopted by the Indians as they are constantly busy in saving money rather than spending it on good things in life.

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1.5 SUMMARY

- George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell.
- He worked at various positions and also participated in the Spanish Civil War. After the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, he became very famous and financially prosperous for the first time in his life.
- ‘The Prevention of Literature’ is an essay printed in 1946 by the English essayist and writer George Orwell.
- The essay deals with the freedom of thought and expression; especially in an atmosphere where the intellectuals were not speaking against the communism of the Soviet Union.
- The essay ‘The Prevention of Literature’ was a reaction to all the indecencies which were taking place at that time. The essay has been described as one of Orwell’s most expressive deliveries and his attempt to assert decorousness.
- Nehru was born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani at Allahabad in India. He was the first of three children to the couple.
- As an Indo-English writer and as a politician, Nehru had chosen a vast area for his works. The crux of his writing comes from the freedom struggles of India.
- Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to articulate the idea of a Constituent Assembly long before such an assembly was set up under the Cabinet Mission scheme.
- The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru made a speech to the entire nation after the assassination of Gandhi on All India Radio.
- Nehru’s work was considered as a superior illustration of oration. The speech was well appreciated not only because of the content, but also the usage of language, the book contains totality in its paragraphs and themes.
- One of the most famous writers of English in India, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897 and was educated in Kolkata.
- After the controversy over *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Chaudhuri moved to England where he received enormous literary success,

Check Your Progress

6. When was Nirad C. Chaudhuri born?
7. When did Nirad C. Chaudhuri receive the Sahitya Akademi Award?

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receiving the Duff Cooper Memorial Award, the only Indian to have received the prize.

- Like all his other works, the essay 'Money and the Englishman', also features the west. In this essay Nirad Chaudhuri has tried to understand the attitude of the people of England towards money.
- Through the essay, Chaudhuri tries to offer an understanding about the attitude of the people of England and of Indians when it comes to money.

1.6 KEY TERMS

- **Bar examination:** A bar examination is a test intended to determine whether a candidate is qualified to practice law in a given jurisdiction.
- **Communalism:** Communalism usually refers to a system that integrates communal ownership and federations of highly localized independent communities.
- **Extempore:** An extempore speech is an impromptu speech which the candidate is required to make on a topic given then and there.

1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches.
2. George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India.
3. The following is the list of the prominent novels of George Orwell.
 - 1934 – *Burmese Days*
 - 1935 – *A Clergyman's Daughter*
 - 1936 – *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*
 - 1939 – *Coming Up for Air*
 - 1945 – *Animal Farm*
 - 1949 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
4. Jawaharlal Nehru was highly influenced by the writings of Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, J.M. Keynes and G.M. Trevelyan who shaped much of his political and economic thinking.
5. Nehru's demand for total independence after the Lahore session in 1928 propelled Nehru to become a highly significant leader of the Indian freedom struggle movement.
6. Nirad C. Chaudhuri was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897.
7. Nirad C. Chaudhuri received his Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975 for his biography on Max Müller.

1.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the life and works of Jawaharlal Nehru.
2. What are Orwell's political views in his essay 'The Prevention of Literature'?
3. Write a critical summary of 'Homage to Gandhi'.
4. Write a short note on the life of Nirad C. Chaudhuri.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the merits and demerits of George Orwell as an essayist.
2. Explain the purpose of politics and the English language.
3. How does Nehru react to Gandhi's death and how does he finally reconcile himself to it? Discuss.
4. Critically analyse the speech 'Homage to Gandhi' by J. L. Nehru.

1.9 FURTHER READING

- Panda, H. 1997. *Selections from Modern Prose*. Hyderabad: Universities Press (India) Private Ltd.
- Liebler Naomi Conn. 2006. *Early Modern Prose Fiction: The Cultural Politics of Reading*. London: Routledge.
- Hudson, W.H. 2006. *Introduction to the Study of Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd.

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UNIT 2 NOVEL - I: R.K. NARAYAN

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 R.K Narayan: About the Author
- 2.3 Social Aspects of Indian Society in the Novel
- 2.4 Major Themes
- 2.5 Major Characters in *The Guide*
- 2.6 Narayan's Technique of Writing
- 2.7 Critical Appreciation of the Novel
 - 2.7.1 Brief Overview of Other Works by R.K. Narayan
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Key Terms
- 2.10 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.11 Questions and Exercises
- 2.12 Further Reading

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses R.K Narayan's novel *The Guide*.

R.K. Narayan is one of the most famous and widely read Indian authors of the twentieth century. His literary pursuits are evident of the mundane joys of ordinary life and are known to be full of humour and compassion. He was born in Madras (present-day Chennai) on 10 October, 1906. Narayan's father was a provincial headmaster and due to his transferable job, Narayan spent his initial years with his maternal grandmother Parvathi at Madras. It was during this time that he studied at the Lutheran Mission School and the CRC High School. Once his father was appointed the headmaster of Maharaja High School in Mysore, Narayan moved back with his parents and went on to complete his graduation from the University of Mysore.

In the year 1935, Narayan began his writing career with *Swami and Friends*. It has been observed that not only *Swami and Friends* but most of his works are set in the backdrop of a fictional town called Malgudi. Not only has the Indian culture been described intricately in Narayan's writings, but it also possesses a uniqueness of its own. He was a gifted author who immaculately described the simplicity of olden days and how people tried to cope with the changing world.

Some of R.K. Narayan's famous works include *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *Malgudi Days* (1982), and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993). *The Guide* is another remarkable achievement of his career. This novel not only won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958, but was later adapted into a movie and a Broadway play. *The Guide* reflects the tragicomic aspect of the modern Indian penchant for half-baked philosophy. Other notable works include an autobiography which was published in 1974 titled *My Days* and a shortened English prose version of the Mahabharata in 1972.

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R.K. Narayan was bestowed with many honours and awards during his writing career which spanned over six decades. Besides being nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1989, Narayan won the Padma Vibhushan, one of India's highest civilian awards, in 1964. He also received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958 for *The Guide*. In 1980, the Royal Society of Literature honoured Narayan with the AC Benson Medal and in 1982 he was made an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Apart from these awards, Narayan was conferred honorary doctorates by the University of Mysore, Delhi University and the University of Leeds.

R.K. Narayan is a renowned author who is credited with introducing Indian culture to the rest of the world and is regarded as one of India's greatest English language novelists. Though Narayan's work has been often criticized for being too simple in prose and diction, he has managed to gain international visibility based on his highly-localized novels that are usually set in the fictional Mysorean village of Malgudi—the single most endearing 'character' created by Narayan.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe Narayan's development as a writer
- Discuss Narayan's role as an Indian English novelist
- Explain the social context of the novel
- Identify the major characters of the novel
- Analyse the concept of emancipation of woman in *The Guide*
- Explain Narayan's theory of karma and moksha in relation to *The Guide*

2.2 R.K NARAYAN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Let us begin by discussing R.K Narayan's life and works.

Among the Indian writers in English, R.K. Narayan has a special place in Indian history. As a novelist, he maintained India's essence in all his works rather than adopting traditional western style. Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan was born on 10 October 1906 to R. V. Krishnaswami Iyer and Gnanambal at Purasawalkam, Madras. It was a congested, noisy and dusty downtown locality. The large family of Iyers included many uncles, brothers, sisters and cousins. Narayan himself was the third of eighteen children of his parents. The household included grandmothers and grandfathers on both mother's and father's side besides grand uncles and aunts. This was because of the practice of intermarriage between the sister's and brother's children. Narayan himself was looked after more by his maternal grandmother addressed as Ammani, rather than by his own mother. His grandmother was a great influence on his life. She affectionately called him Kunjappa, a name that he was called by among his family. She took on the responsibility of educating him, teaching him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. English was the language spoken in their house. According to R.K. Laxman, Narayan's youngest brother, grammatical errors the siblings made were not looked upon too kindly. During his stay with his grandmother, Narayan attended many schools including the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam, the C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Reading was a passion for Narayan and his early reading included

the works of Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy. At the age of twelve, Narayan took part in a pro-independence march. His act was frowned upon by his uncle. The family was not inclined towards politics as they regarded all governments as wicked.

Narayan's Education

Narayan studied at his father's school and disappointed his family's emerging middle-class aspirations as he failed his first attempt to qualify for the graduate course in Arts.

When his father was transferred to the Maharajah's Collegiate High School, Mysore, Narayan too shifted there to be with his family. Narayan delighted in the well-stocked library at the school as well as his father's own and intensified his reading habit. It was at this time that he started writing as well. After a failed attempt at the university entrance exam, he spent a year at home just reading and writing. He cleared the exam in 1926 and joined the Maharaja College of Mysore. A formal education did not seem to suit him as he took four years to complete his graduation, a year more than normal. He would have pursued an MA degree but was dissuaded by a friend who was convinced this would kill his interest in literature. Instead, he took to teaching in a school but walked out when he was asked by the headmaster to act as a stand-in for the physical training instructor. With this experience came the realization that, for him, writing was the only career. He then made up his mind to stay at home and concentrate on writing novels. His first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*. In the meantime, he never faltered in his resolve to write for a living; he also tried to make ends meet by freelance journalism and keeping odd jobs. He kept on writing and submitting stories for newspapers and magazines.

Narayan's Career

The completion of his first novel did not bear immediate fruition as, for Narayan, it was not easy to find either a publisher or a reading audience. In 1933, while on vacation at his sister's house, Narayan met and fell in love with a fifteen year old girl Rajam, who lived nearby. Astrologically and financially they were mismatched but with great difficulty Narayan managed to obtain parental approval and married her. Subsequent to this, Narayan joined a paper called *The Justice* as a reporter. His strict rebellion against the caste-difference in India, especially between a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin, was displayed in this newspaper which was dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. As part of his job, he was exposed to a variety of people and various causes. Earlier, Narayan had sent the manuscript of a novel to a friend at Oxford, who showed it to Graham Greene. It was this first novel, '*Swami and Friends*', which brought him into contact with Graham Greene. The first novel of Narayan was published again in 1935 under Greene's care in England. Greene also advised Narayan to shorten his name to enable it to be easier for the English-speaking readers. In his first novel, he attempted to be a realist and used his own experiences in the form of a story. Though it elicited favourable reviews, sales figures did not go up. The Indian publishing industry in the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s was not very well organized. There were not many readers of Indian fiction in English. This meant small or non-existent means to support oneself as a writer.

In 1931, after trying to interest all available publishers in his short stories and after trying to find a job in the newspaper *The Hindu* as a trainee reporter, he had a book review and short story published in *The Indian Review*. In 1933, *Punch* published his short satirical article, 'How to Write an Indian Novel.' In 1934 and 1935, he worked as the Mysore reporter for *The Justice*, the official organ of the non-Brahmin movement.

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Towards the end of the 1930s, Narayan started to contribute regularly with short stories and other pieces to *The Hindu*. This paper published many of his short stories and essays. During the latter half of the 1980s, Narayan's work was published in the magazine, *Frontline*. These included some essays, short stories, and three novels in a serial form. During the middle of his literary graph, Narayan had a fruitful association with *The Illustrated Weekly* and *The Times of India*. R.K. Laxman, India's greatest cartoonist and the writer's youngest brother, was also deeply associated with these periodicals.

Narayan did not have a bright academic career and after unsuccessfully trying to become a railway officer and bank official, he gave up. He also had a brief stint as a teacher, which too did not meet with much success. He gave up his gloomy living quarters and went home. As Narayan was struggling with a writing career, he couldn't contribute financially to household expenses. The lot fell on his elder brother who literally had to burn the midnight oil to keep the family going. Narayan stayed at home, typing the script of a play on a noisy typewriter, while his father, along with others, were certain that he was wasting his time trying to make a living as a writer.

His next novel was *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) which is a picture of his own college life and experiences. In this book, Narayan described how marriages in India are finalized based on horoscopes and how a wife bears all animosities of her husband in the social contract of marriage. A different publisher on the recommendation of Greene published it. Soon '*The Dark Room*' (1938) was published which dealt with the theme of domestic disharmony. In his third book, he wrote about a dominating husband whose wife was a victim of his oppression. Narayan's first three books dealt with socially accepted practices. In 1937 after his father's death, he accepted a commission from the Government of Mysore, which was a proposal to write a book to promote tourism in the state.

Narayan as a Successful Writer

Narayan is unusual among Indian authors writing in English in that he has stayed contentedly in his home country venturing abroad only rarely. He rarely addresses political issues or tries to explore the cutting edge of fiction. He is a traditional teller of tales, a creator of realist fiction which is often gentle, humorous and warm rather than hard hitting or profound. William Walsh regards him as one of the most distinguished novelists, writing in English in the Commonwealth. He regards his style as an original blend of Western method and Eastern material, and he succeeded in the way that only a talent of the finest kind could, in making Indian sensibility wholly at home in English art.

As is the case with many successful people, Narayan did not find instant success in his literary career. His life was one of struggle. He had to eke his living out of the paltry sum he got by writing stories and essays for various newspapers. His luck changed when his first story based on Malgudi titled *Swami and Friends*, was read by Graham Greene. With Greene's financial help it was published in England. This was a turning point for Narayan and his career took an upward swing after that. His writings delighted millions around the world. In all, he wrote twenty-nine novels, all based on Malgudi, and numerous short stories. His novel, *The Guide*, won him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award (given first time ever to a book in English).

Narayan's wife, Rajam, died of typhoid in 1939. Narayan mourned her deeply and was in distress for a long time. Their daughter, Hemalatha, was only three years old at that time. This tragedy affected his life considerably. It also formed the base for his

next novel, *The English Teacher*. Like the first two books, this is also largely autobiographical, and is part of an unintentional trilogy with *Swami and Friends* and the *Bachelor of Arts*. Narayan has acknowledged that *The English Teacher* was almost entirely an autobiography, with different names for the characters and the change of setting in Malgudi. He also explains that the emotions expressed in the book reflected his own at the time of Rajam's death.

Malgudi Days, his first collection of short stories, was published in November 1942. *The English Teacher* was published in 1945. In the interim period, due to the war, Narayan was cut off from England. During this time, he started his own publishing company and named it Indian Thought Publications. This company still thrives today and is managed by his granddaughter. His literary career picked up rapidly and he was read right from New York to Moscow. With popularity came money and in 1948, Narayan was now able to commence construction of his own house on the outskirts of Mysore. The house was completed in 1953.

As a Great Artist

Narayan is the great artist who has achieved greatness by recognizing the limitations of his range, and keeping within them. Like Jane Austen, he achieved greatness by working on his, 'two inches of ivory'. He knew only one particular region most intimately, and he rarely went out of it. He himself belonged to the middle class, intimately knew only this class, and so draws his characters from this class alone. He studied men in relation to each other and not in relation to God, or religion or politics, because such relationships were outside his range. Contemporary Indian politics rarely entered his novels. Gandhi and his freedom movement were introduced only in one of his novels, *Waiting for the Mahatma* and the result was rather unfortunate. Further, his range was limited by his comic vision, and so only such aspects of life were selected as were susceptible to comic treatment. It is for this reason that the passions, 'the stormy sisterhood', are eschewed and attention is confined to the surface reality of life. There is no probing of the subconscious or the unconscious. Narayan does not soar high because such soaring is incompatible with the comic mode. His problem is to give the reader a picture which strikes him as typical of everyday reality. For this, he depends on attraction. He, therefore, excludes from his picture such aspects of reality as not susceptible to comic treatment. His picture of life is always true to facts but to those facts only at which a reasonable being can be expected to react. He is also careful to survey his subject matter from an angle from which its comic aspects are most prominently visible.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, better known as V.S. Naipaul, a Trinidadian-born British writer of Indo-Trinidadian descent, currently resident in Wiltshire, called Narayan 'the Gandhi of modern Indian literature'. Oral literature in the vernacular languages of India is of great antiquity, but it was not until about the 16th century that an extensive written literature appeared for his mystical, community-oriented themes. If Raja Rao is termed as a novelist of metaphysics, Narayan is often applauded as a painter of vivid Malgudi, a microcosm of Indian social milieu. He has always been claimed as a novelist par excellence in matters of social criticism of India. However, little has been written on how Narayan incorporates the most profound of Indian thoughts, philosophies and spiritualism in general and theory of *Karma* in particular, in his novels. In an interview, R.K. Narayan says: 'To be a good writer anywhere, you must have roots - both in religion and family. I have these things'.

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Narayan's Place in Indian English Literature

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R.K. Narayan is considered one of the three best Indian authors writing in English; the other two are Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan's fiction contains a unique blend of Indian mysticism and English form. He narrates tales in a traditional way. His fiction is realistic and this comes across as gently humorous rather than being too philosophical. The fictional town of Malgudi is the setting for most of Narayan's stories. The people there are simple and humble, and represent the middle class. Narayan was not a devout Hindu, and has accused Westerners of wrongly supposing that all Indians are deeply spiritual beings. However, he did have deeply spiritual experiences after the death of his young wife.

His perfect objectivity is to be contrasted with the partiality of Mulk Raj Anand for the underdog of society, whose propagandist and spokesperson he is in every one of his novels. That is why his novels have grown dated, while those of Narayan's have a perennial freshness about them. They have the universal appeal of all great art. He is to be contrasted with Anand in another way also. His novels are not disfigured by any such literal translations of regional words and idiomatic expressions, of the coarse and the vulgar, as many pages of Anand. Narayan's work remains not only an object of study in the academy, but also a source of delight for readers across the English-speaking world and in translation to several languages. Besides, Narayan and Raja Rao, having mastered the language and the technique of the craft of novelist writing, have uniquely deployed their particular genius. Raja Rao, who wrote in the symbolist tradition of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce and E.M. Forster, used the large and overflowing symbols in his works. On the other hand, Narayan is generally recognized as the master of comic, portraying life and characters of Malgudi with subtle humour and delightful laughter.

The most remarkable fact about Narayan was that once he came up with his fictional South Indian town, Malgudi, he stayed with it for life. All his inventiveness and philosophical resources were invested in this small town, now familiar to millions of people in and outside India through his short stories and novels, not to mention TV series, and films. Graham Greene's famous line: 'Without Narayan I wouldn't know what it is like to be an Indian' has shaped virtually all criticism, either providing elements that concur to his role in approximating India to the western readership of questioning the basis for his realism and avoidance of overt politics.

Narayan's Death

During his final years, Narayan spent quality time with N. Ram, the publisher of *Hindu*, discussing about various significant topics. However, he was admitted to hospital in May 2001. A short while before he was to be put on a ventilator, he had intended to start writing his next novel. It was to be a story about a grandfather. Being very choosy about the notebooks he used, he asked N. Ram to get him one. But his health deteriorated and he could not commence his new novel. He died on 13 May 2001 in Chennai at the age of ninety-four.

When *The Guide* was published in 1958 by Methuen in London and by Viking Press in New York, Narayan was already a fairly well-known writer in India, England and the United States. His previous novels, *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952) and *The Printer of Malgudi* (1957) had gained him a faithful reading audience.

Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships—relationships within the family circle and relationships centering around sex and money—are his ever-recurring themes. According to Narayan, wisdom is not gained through meditation or by spiritual contemplation, but by going through the experiences that life has to offer. The law of life is unavoidable. The law comes into operation the moment we detach ourselves from our mother's womb. All struggle and misery in life is due to our attempt to arrest this law or get away from it or in allowing ourselves to be hurt by it. We are blinded by our attachments. Every attachment creates a delusion and we are carried away by it.

Narayan also strongly believed in the life which was lived in correlation with tradition and philosophy, and deviation from it brought suffering and dissatisfaction. The human relationships presented by Narayan in his novels have originated from Indian tradition and philosophy. As William Walsh points out, 'The family is the immediate context in which his sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for able subtlety and conviction with which family relationships are treated'—that of son and parents and brother and brother in *The Bachelor of Arts*, of husband and wife and father and daughter in *The English Teacher*, of father and son in *The Financial Expert*, and of grandmother and grandson in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. The closeness of relationship between the adults and children, and the absence of watertight compartments between the worlds of the two, constitute the basis of these novels. However, the action is developed through the conflict between the ego-centricity of an individual member and the family's claim on him.

Narayan's presentation of characters and their relationships with one another achieve a philosophic overtone. He presents the characters in the light of the most contemplated universal theory of *Karma* as devised by The Bhagvad Gita, a Hindu epic. Narayan's characters achieve a synthesis of flesh and spirit through the philosophic interpretation of their own mundane activities.

R.K. Narayan: A Comparative Analysis

The literary achievements of R.K. Narayan have been a matter of great research. Many have compared his work to different writers. For instance, amongst his contemporaries, Narayan was one of the first Indians to have his work published outside India with the exception of Arundhati Roy and Salman Rushdie. Before we analyse and compare Narayan's work, it would be apt to describe the unique features of his writing style. His writing was considered to be simple and unpretentious with a dash of humour. Narayan mainly focussed on ordinary people and his writings usually remind the reader of people who are a part of their daily life, such as the next-door neighbour, cousins, friends, postman, etc. It was this focus on ordinary people that the readers are able to relate to the story as it unfolds. Narayan had a very different approach from his contemporaries and was able to give a detailed version of the Indian society without making changes in his characteristics or the simplicity of his subject. His writings seem to be devoid of the current trends in fiction writing and therefore are unique in its own sense. Narayan's work is said to have gentle Tamil overtones and he also employed the use of nuanced dialogic prose. Critics who have evaluated Narayan's work consider it to be descriptive and less analytical. They point out that his objective style is rooted in a detached spirit which provides a more authentic and realistic narration. His experience

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of life coupled with his attitude provided a unique blend of characters and actions, thus creating a connection with the readers. The reference of Malgudi, a fictional town in his writings has been described as a stereotypical small town, where the basic norms of tradition and superstition still apply.

Comparative Analysis of R.K. Narayan's work

Anton Chekhov: He was of Russian physician, dramatist and author and is considered one of the greatest short story writers of his time. Chekhov was a practicing doctor throughout his literary career. In the initial stages of his literary career, Chekhov wrote merely for financial gains and it was not until his creativity and literary ambition took a hold of him that he began to produce quality work. Chekhov is known to have made some formal innovations in the evolution of modern short story writing. His works represents the stream-of-consciousness technique which lacked the moral bearings of a traditional story structure, which is sometimes difficult for the readers to comprehend.

R.K. Narayan has been considered the Indian Chekhov due to similarities in their writing styles which comes out in the simplicity, beauty and humour of tragic situations. Greene in an earlier introduction in *The Bachelor of Arts* somewhat underscores the bittersweet flavour of Narayan's humour when he comments that 'Sadness and humour in the later books go hand in hand like twins, as they do in the comedies of Chekhov.' In support of Greene's view, William Walsh gives a similar response as he says, 'Narayan's novels are comedies of sadness, calling up the name of Chekhov rather than anything in English literature as Graham Greene pointed out.' The stark difference comes out in the form of comprehension as Chekhov's writings were sometimes difficult for the readers to understand, however readers could easily relate to Narayan's work as his stories were based on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala: She was born to Jewish parents in Germany in 1927. Her family immigrated to Britain to escape the Nazi regime. She later married an Indian Parsi in 1951, and settled in Delhi. It was here that she started her literary career, writing mostly about her new life in India. Jhabvala's writings were considered to be of high quality and she penned numerous novels, such as *To Whom She Will* (1955), *Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1957), *The Householder* (1960) and *Get Ready for the Battle* (1962). With the Merchant-Ivory Productions, she penned numerous hits like *The Householder*, *Shakespeare Wallah*, *Heat and Dust*, etc.

Jhabvala and Narayan have very different themes and styles running through their novels. Though Jhabvala was born in Germany, yet both authors wrote about India. However, Jhabvala based most of her characters as individuals deciding between western life and tradition Indian lifestyle whereas Narayan based most of his stories in a fictitious town called Malgudi with his experience in life running as the central theme. Their distinct themes are evident in their novels. For instance, In *The Interview*, Jhabvala tells the story of man who is trying to decide whether he really wants a job that pays well but is boring and strict. Similarly, Narayan in the short story *A Horse and Two Goats*, describes an old man from the village Malgudi who is poor. While sitting on the pedestal of a statue of a horse, the old man, meets a foreign tourist who wants to buy the statue and tries to negotiate with the old man. But due to miscommunication the old man thought that the tourist wanted to buy his two goats.

Nikolai Gogol: He was a Ukrainian-born Russian dramatist and novelist. Gogol's writings are considered to be influenced by surrealism. Another characteristic of Gogol's writings was his impressionist vision of people and reality. He was well-read and well-

travelled and this is evident from his books. His literary achievements make him one of the preeminent figures of the natural school of Russian literary realism. Some of his well-known works 'The Portrait', 'The Carriage', 'The Overcoat', *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* and *Taras Bulba*.

The only similarity in Narayan's work and Gogol's work is the factor of realism. Anthony West of *The New Yorker* considered Narayan's writings to be of the realism variety of Nikolai Gogol. Another similarity is seen in their writings is their experience in life which they have subtly placed in their works. For instance, Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* is influenced by his Ukrainian upbringing, whereas, Narayan's work is very reflective of his South Indian roots. Since they were a century apart, their viewpoint and perception on the mundane occurrences in life differ to a great extent.

William Faulkner: He was an American writer and a Nobel Prize laureate who worked in different fields of media as he wrote novels, short stories, play, poetry, essays and screenplays. Most of his stories are set in a fictional town Yoknapatawpha County, based on Lafayette County, where he spent most of his childhood. He is considered one of the most important writers of Southern literature in the United States with the likes of Tennessee Williams, Mark Twain, Harper Lee, and so on. According to some, Faulkner was known for his experimental style with meticulous attention to diction and cadence. The 'stream of consciousness' is evident in his writings along with the presence of emotional, complex and sometimes even grotesque characters like slaves, slave descendants working class, poor agrarian class, etc. Two of his works, *A Fable* (1954) and his last novel *The Reivers* (1962) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

The most striking similarity between Narayan and Faulkner is the use of a fictional town-in Narayan's case Malgudi and the creation of Yoknapatawpha County in Faulkner's work. Faulkner's Southern American roots are evident in his writings as are Narayan's South Indian roots in his writings.

Guy de Maupassant: He was a famous 19th century French writer and was considered one of fathers of modern short story. He was born to a prosperous bourgeois family and lived with his mother after his parents separated. Maupassant's literary works were marked by objectivity, a highly-controlled style and to some extent by sheer comedy. Most of the times, his stories were built around simple episodes from day-to-day life which revealed the hidden sides of people.

Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri who compares Narayan to Guy de Maupassant says that both authors possessed the ability to compress the narrative without losing the general theme of the story. She also points that both Narayan and Maupassant have a common theme of middle-class life running through their stories. Their writings reflect their own experiences with life on the whole. Due to his ability to captivate readers, Jhumpa adds that Narayan provides the readers something novelists struggle to achieve in hundred or more pages, i.e., a complete insight to the lives of his characters. It is due to this reason that she also classifies Narayan in the same league as O. Henry, Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor.

Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao: Along with R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao complete the trilogy of leading figures of early Indian literature in the English language. M.K. Naik in the book *Critical Essays on R.K. Narayan's the Guide: with an introduction to Narayan's novel* says that Narayan is a novelist of individual man whereas Mulk Raj is the novelist of a social man and Raja Rao is a novelist of the metaphysical man. According to Naik, man's relationship with reality is the main theme running in Raja Rao's novel, while man's nexus with other men in an established social,

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economic and political order is the chief concern of Mulk Raj. However, Narayan's writings are primarily preoccupied with man's fillings of the life role assigned to him by tradition and environment. Though all of them deal with man and his surrounding, these authors differ in the treatment of their characters.

2.3 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE NOVEL

Let us now discuss some of the social aspects of the Indian society as seen in *The Guide*.

Unforgettable Characters

Narayan has been repeatedly compared to Dickens and Chekhov. The comparison with Dickens stems from the creation of a vast gallery of unforgettable characters; with Chekhov for the structure of the stories. Interestingly, both these writers have often been accused of being sentimental. However, Narayan's works could hardly be described as sentimental. It is his ability to convey the idiosyncrasies of his characters that belonged to all walks of life that places him in the Dickensian tradition. The most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world is that it comprises small-time cheats, street vendors, small businessmen and drifters, who together form a gallery of Indian characters. These are characters who are far from the stereotypes of extreme poverty or spiritual exoticism attached to the subcontinent.

Borderline figures like Raju in *The Guide*, for example, make the reader aware of this down-to-earth aspect of life that pervades his work. In most of his novels and short-stories, Narayan showed a special ability to make the rhythms and intricacies of South Indian life accessible to people of other cultures not only within India, but across the globe. Central to this achievement was the creation of Malgudi, the fictional South Indian town, full of ordinary men and women made memorable by his writing.

Indianness

The novel is an essentially Western art form, but Narayan has successfully used it to express Indian sensibilities. Narayan's works are a curious blend of Western method and Eastern material. Narayan's Indianness is seen in various ways. It is seen in his simple and traditional mode of narration, which is straightforward and chronological, even in *The Guide*, where part of the story is narrated by Raju and a part by the novelist. It is also seen in his exploitation of such Indian motifs as cobras, *devdasis*, Bharata Natyam, gurus, sadhus and swamis. It is also seen in the setting of the novel. Malgudi is a typical Indian town gradually and steadily transforming from a semi-agricultural town to a big city. This transformation is a symbolic one; representing the change that was taking place in India as a whole. Malgudi has its own distinct individuality. It is but a small representative of the Indian social system, the Indian way of life and also of the Indian values cherished and followed through the ages. The residents of Malgudi, despite their local trappings - are essentially human. Therefore, they are related to humanity. In this sense, Malgudi is everywhere.

Malgudi is a territory Narayan was fond of. Nobody has succeeded in identifying or locating it yet, although several attempts have been made to identify and locate it. More than one critic has regarded Malgudi as one of the characters in Narayan's novels.

Check Your Progress

1. What was R.K. Narayan's first published work?
2. When was *Malgudi Days* published?
3. List some of the prominent novels of R.K. Narayan.

It is essentially a lower middle-class town with its schools, temples, hotels, printing shops and the neighbouring Mempi Hills, with its usual beggars, conmen, confident tricksters, bogus sadhus and others. It is indeed, a microcosm of India, and not a regional town. William Walsh calls it, 'an image of India and a metaphor for everywhere else'.

In the words of A. Hariprasanna: 'Narayan creates his fictional world of Malgudi as an essentially Indian society or town. The Indianness and Indian sensibility pervaded the whole place. Narayan's Malgudi is also a microcosm of India. It grows and develops and expands and changes, and is full of humanity, drawing its sustenance from the human drama and is enacted in it.'

Indianness is seen in R.K. Narayan's stress on the family which is assigned a place of central importance in each of the novels. As William Walsh points out, 'The family is the immediate context in which his sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for the subtlety and conviction with which family-relationships are treated—that of son and parents and brother and brother in *The Bachelor of Arts*, of husband and wife and father and daughter in *The English Teacher*, of father and son in *The Financial Expert*, and of grandmother and grandson in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. The closeness of relationship between the adults and children, and the absence of watertight compartments between the worlds of the two, constitute the basis of these novels. But the action is developed through the conflict between the egocentricity of an individual member and the family's claim on him.

Indianness is seen in the way Rosie, despite being in an unhappy marriage, tries to make up for her momentary infidelity by owning up to her mistakes and asking for pardon. The importance given to marriage in India is brought out in Rosie's relationship with Marco. The Indianness is seen in the way Raju's mother depends on her brother to put some sense into Raju. She does not mind her brother coming and scolding her son because in the absence of her husband, she gives him the respect due to an elder male. The Indianness is seen in the way Velan is eager to take advice from an unknown Swami because learned men or Swamis are considered highly respected in society. He laps up everything that Raju tells him ignoring the fact that he has served a sentence in prison. Indianness is seen in the fact that Marco is educated and progressive enough to marry Rosie who belongs to a family of Devadasis. However, he is still the true Indian male who cannot tolerate his wife pursuing dance or being unfaithful to him. He does not pardon his wife even though she confesses her mistake.

Indian Economy

Narayan studies the Indian economic problem very clearly and thereby gives us several economic groups. While Marco and Rosie represent the well-to-do class, Gaffur and Joseph denote the low wage earner. In the character of Sait, the money-lender, we find a wealthy person, one who amasses and hoards wealth thriving upon the troubles of other persons. Then there are the rich lawyers, who make pots of money at the expense of the clients. This class is shown through the character of the star lawyer who represents Raju in the case instituted by Marco against him. Further, the whole episode in which Raju is taken to be the saint is set on the axis of economic life. The poverty of the masses gathering about the hero in the pillared-hall is shown threadbare. These people are so poor that they do not have the advantage of education and that invariably leads them to live a life of superstition and misery. Narayan, in one way, mocks at the prosperity of Raju by making him fall and deceive even his beloved Rosie.

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Superstition

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There are several typical Indian scenes in *The Guide*. Raju goes to a *pyol* school; Rosie dances to the tune of a gourd flute imitating the movements of a king-cobra; the scene of a fasting swami brings thousands of superstitious visitors who believe that the fast will bring rains to the drought-infested region. They combine pilgrimage with a picnic. There are also typical Indian situations like the one between Raju and his mother on the question of his marriage, and the attempt of his uncle to bully and brow-beat the young man. Another such situation is the reluctant swami's phenomenal popularity when the decision of his fast to bring the rains is announced. All these scenes and situations build up the colour and atmosphere and evidence not only of the author's Indian sensibility but also his intimate knowledge of the life the middle class Indians lead.

The Indianness of Narayan is again seen in his treatment of the credulous and superstitious villagers of India. They believe in sadhus and any fraud can easily cheat them and make them worship him as a Guru or Mahatma. Raju is able to deceive them quite easily; they worship him, heap food and other offering upon him. They accept him as their spiritual guide and mentor. When there is drought and famine, their reaction is typically Indian. The continued absence of rains evokes fantastic speculations from the villagers. One villager wants to know if the 'rains fail' because, 'the movement of aeroplanes disturbs the clouds', while the other seeks to know if 'the atom bombs are responsible for the drying up of the clouds'. This reveals a peculiar aspect of Indian life, the remarkable co-existence of science and superstition, knowledge and ignorance, mythology and weather prediction. When cattle stop yielding milk and fail to drag the plough through the furrows, when sheep look scurvy and bony and when wells and earth dry up, the harmony of human relationships is acutely disturbed. 'They quarrelled over the water-hole for priorities, and there was fear, desperation and lamentation in their voices.' In all these matters, their responses are entirely Indian.

We also witness another instance of superstition when Rosie is referred to as the 'snake-woman' in the novel. Rosie's role as 'Mohini' in Raju's life is confirmed by her obsession with snakes. The role of snake-women as enchantresses is common in the Indian mind-frame. The conversation between Rosie and Raju's mother—a traditional Indian woman steeped in religious and folk beliefs—reinforces this notion:

'Everything was so good and quite - until you came in like a viper. . . . On the very day I heard him mention the 'serpent girl' my heart sank.'

Simplicity of Rural Population

In *The Guide*, we have many references to rural India and the defects that characterize rural population. The rural population is simple and unsophisticated. Even a casual and commonplace remark by Raju is enough to make them wonder about his profound wisdom. Velan is a typical representative of rural India. The main cause of their sufferings is their illiteracy.

In India, a significant section is still influenced by the Western culture. Marco belongs to this section and is different from say an Indian businessman. His thoughts, attire, perspective and mind-set are different from that of the average middle class person or the average rural folk. To quote from the novel: 'He dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition—with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket and a thick helmet over which perpetually stretched a green, sheeny, waterproof cover giving him the appearance of a space traveller.' Through Raju's father, Narayan presents the picture

of an Indian shopkeeper of low standing. This typical Indian businessman is uneducated and cannot give proper education to his children.

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

Illiteracy

Narayan portrays the heart-rending plight of the illiterate and superstitious villagers of India who have blind faith in holy men and saints whom they worship. The villagers at Mangala consider a former convict, Raju, their mentor and guide and, they are convinced that if he fasts for them, they will be blessed with rains. They are agriculturists who entirely depend upon the rains for irrigating their fields. There can be no worse disaster for them than the failure of rains leading to drought and famine. Streams and rivers dry up, animals and people start dying for lack of water and food. Merchants start hoarding the essential commodities and later sell them at inflated prices, leading to clashes. Discontentment and resentment are the natural consequences of such a situation, this is followed by rioting. Not regarding the drought as a natural phenomenon, people turn to holy men who take recourse to penance, fasts and *yagnas* to propitiate the rain god. In all these respects, *The Guide* is a faithful and vivid picture of Indian life in both its theme and atmosphere.

Narayan never forgets to allot considerable space for discussing the eternal problem—the system of education in India. In *The Guide* we have references to the rural schools at two different places. First Raju gets his education at the hands of his poor schoolmaster who uses outdated methods. He says: ‘I had to go over the contours of the letters with my pencil endlessly until they become bloated and distorted beyond recognition.’ Next, under the guidance of Raju, the people of Mangala start a school. In the beginning, very few boys come to the school as it is a ‘crocodile place.’ Here Narayan delineates the unworthy schoolmaster with his characteristic bad manners very realistically.

The Fast that Transforms

Raju, the inhuman monster, and an ex-convict, is readily accepted as a Swami, and when he undertakes the fast they hail him as their saviour. Their reaction to the fast itself is typically Indian. In India, every event and situation, even the grimmest, is turned into an occasion for feasting and merrymaking. They organize feasts to celebrate a death. As the person fasting is on the verge of death, a large crowd gathers on the banks of the river—women, children and men—and they eat, drink and make merry. The temples with their holy men present a strange sight in India. Indians, especially the rural folk, are so credulous that they take a man with a long beard to be a Sadhu and worship him intensely. Raju, the ex-convict, faces a similar problem. First, in order to make both ends meet, he feigns the role of a saint. But at the end, owing to the play of circumstances, Raju becomes a true saint by sacrificing his life for a noble cause. Even this transformation from pusillanimity to magnanimity is also not abrupt and unreal. Gradually, he develops a peculiar strength in him and begins to think: ‘if by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?’ Thus, he climbs the ladder, slowly, step by step; reaches the stage of a Mahatma and then sags down. Here, Narayan is evidently making use of the Indian myth of a sinner becoming a saint. Valmiki, Pundarika, Vemana and Bilvamangala are only a few well-known examples. Raju is an admirable version of the same Indian myth.

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Order-Disorder-Order

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As mentioned earlier, Narayan renders Indian sensibilities in a western form. However, his Indianness is best seen in his theme. According to Indian belief, if custom, convention and traditional modes are violated there comes disorder and chaos. Any deviation from the traditional norms results in disorder. Order and normalcy are restored only when there is a return to the normal, which is also the traditional. The story of the novel is used to illustrate the rhythm of order-disorder-order. There is a lot of disorder in Raju's life when Rosie walks in. As a result of his involvement with a married woman, who is also a dancer, his mother leaves him and he is shunned by his Uncle and society. Though Raju and Rosie manage to amass wealth, they are unable to live in peace. Rosie pays for being unfaithful to her husband and Raju pays for getting involved with a married woman, for disrespecting his mother and for getting into bad company and habits. He ends up doing the unthinkable, gets arrested for forgery and spends two years in prison. He attains some peace only when he leads a simple life.

Love, Sex and Marriage

Love, sex and marriage play a significant role in the life of any individual and so they are present in *The Guide* also. Like a drama, Raju's love also has a beginning, a middle and an end. In the beginning, Raju pines for the embrace of his beloved, Rosie. In the middle, his love looks intense for a time and then to a certain extent the motive of monetary gain prompts him to commit forgery—a terrible felony. That is almost the end of his love. Like a typical Indian, Narayan touches 'sex' and never goes deep into the psychology of sex like D. H. Lawrence. He only brings the lover and the beloved together and his job ends there. Regarding marriage, the novelist has taken a radical view of the subject. Rosie and Marco's marriage is flawed by incompatibility. Though both are artists in their own spheres, due to lack of understanding, this catastrophe takes place. Although, Marco's educated and progressive outlook is seen in the fact that he marries Rosie, his first love is his work. He seems to be keeping a wife only for his personal comfort. He is oblivious to her feelings, interests and desires and remains busy with his academic pursuits. The woman in Rosie is insulted and hence she reacts in this manner.

Corruption

Narayan has depicted the problem of corruption which is so much a part of India. Even a school teacher is shown to be corrupt. Raju's father sends him to a *pyol* school so that his son's bad manners are eradicated but the teacher, an old man, is very abusive. The boys are unruly and make a lot of noise. Once, they even enter the master's kitchen and make fun of him. They are then forbidden to enter his house. The old teacher is paid one rupee per month for each boy. However, the boys frequently bring some eatables for him, and in this way, he is able to make both ends meet. At another point of time in the novel, Raju, due to his greed for money, forges Rosie's signature and violates the code of conduct for which he has to suffer a lot. His greed leads him to corruption. He spends Rosie's hard-earned money on gambling and drinking.

In order to save him from court, Rosie has to hire the services of a lawyer who is corrupt. He charges very high for Raju's case. The lawyer she engages to defend Raju has 'his own star-value' and is expensive 'His name spelt magic in all the court halls of this part of the country'; he has saved many hardened criminals and lawless hooligans by setting at nought the laboriously prepared case by the prosecution. He takes up Raju's case 'as a concession from one star to another—for Nalini's case' But he has to

be paid in cash for every court appearance and put up in the best hotel in Malgudi when he comes there to defend Raju. In his own way, he is an 'adjournment lawyer'. He could split a case into minutes and demand as many days for microscopic examination. He would keep the court fidgeting without being able to rise for lunch, because he could talk without completing a sentence; he has a knack of telescoping sentence into sentence without pausing for breath. He arrives by the morning train and leaves by the evening one, and until that time, he neither moves off the court floor nor lets the case progress even an inch for the day—so that a judge has to wonder how the day has spent itself.

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2.4 MAJOR THEMES

Let us now examine the major themes of the novel.

Family Relationships

Narayan's novels are studies in human relationships, particularly family relationships. Of relationships within the family, the father-son relationship is most frequently studied. In *The Guide*, Narayan has studied the relationship between Raju and his father. When Raju gets into bad company at the constructions site, his father is concerned and enrolls him in a school. On this issue, there is a clash of ideologies. Raju wants to study at the Albert Mission School. His father feels that in this school, Christianity is imposed on the students and they are forced to convert. So, against Raju's wishes, he decides to send Raju to the pyol School. The headmaster of that school is a very abusive man and his language is no better than the labourers at the construction site. Soon Raju discontinues school and helps his father in running the stall at the Malgudi railway station. After his father's death, Raju is left to manage the stall alone. He now also has to look after his widowed mother.

All goes well until Raju's involvement with Rosie. When Rosie comes to live in his house, Raju's mother is against keeping a woman who has left her husband. Raju disregards his mother's feelings and ultimately she has to leave the house and go to live with her brother. Here, it can be seen that Raju gives more importance to Rosie than his old, widowed mother.

He is even ready to go against his uncle to whom his mother turns for advice and help in the absence of a senior male member in the family. In traditional Indian households, the children never went against the word of the father or anybody old enough to take the place of the father. Raju decides to stand up against anyone who opposed his relationship with Rosie.

As his art matured, Narayan's study of human relationships became more complex and intricate. Such complex relationships which he explores, are those which centre around sex or money. These relationships are of particular importance in *The Financial Expert*, *The Guide*, *Man-Eater of Malgudi* and *The Sweet-Vendor*. In these novels money and sex appear in different guises, and are explored and studied from different angles. Excessive preoccupation with either money or sex is an aberration which results in discord and disharmony—in the disruption of normal family life, for instance—but peace and harmony ultimately return and normalcy is restored. This is so much so the case that the disruption of the accepted order and the ultimate restoration of normalcy may be said to be the central theme of the novels. In fact, Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships—relationships within

Check Your Progress

4. What is the most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world?
5. List some of the social aspects of Indian society that can be seen in *The Guide*.

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the family circle, and relationships centering round sex and money—are his ever-recurring themes, and we can learn from them how to establish right-relationships. Life must be accepted and lived, despite its many shortcomings, follies and foibles. This may be said to be the Narayan message, but it has to be gleaned by each reader according to the light that is in him.

Narayan's fictional characters have their mooring in Malgudi. This town of Malgudi is a traditional one visited by Lord Rama, Laxmana, Sita, Hanuman and Goddess Parvati – the mythical gods and goddesses to Buddha, Sankara and Gandhi – from the mythical to the real. According to P.S. Ramana, Narayan has studied a character first on the test of social order, i.e., in the context of his community, set up and social environment; secondly, he studies a character in relation to himself. An analysis of their life reiterates the claims of their foregrounding in Indian moral and social value system. Narayan's vision illuminates numerous significant themes, which are discussed in this unit as follows:

- The place of woman in a traditional society
- The moral limitations of a materialistic way of life
- The consequences of flouting accepted codes
- The psychological and ethical implications of some Hindu concepts as ascetic purification, *Yoga*, renunciation, non-attachment, *Maya* and the cyclic progressions of life and death
- The great Indian theory of *Karma* and the various paths of achieving *Moksha* or self-realization

Rejection of Traditional Norms: Its Consequences

In *The Guide*, Narayan develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins. The corruption-by-outsiders theme is this time initiated by the tourists, Marco and his glamorous wife, the dancer Rosie. Raju's love for Rosie is delineated as a consuming obsessive passion, fundamentally destructive and terrible. We find that Raju comes into conflict with traditional morality as he seeks to realize his aspirations. The result is that the accepted order is disturbed, and there is chaos and disorder. He seduces Rosie and thus is guilty of immorality and corruption. When she comes to live with him, conventional morality is violated, and there is displeasure all around. The neighbours are annoyed, and his widowed mother is obliged to leave the home of her husband and go away with her brother. Raju does not attend to work, has to give up the railway stall and soon is in financial trouble. He is unable to pay his debts and has to face prosecution in the law courts. He is an egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. We must not act as Raju acts, we must not be over-possessive, self-centred, extravagant or jealous. Thus, the violation of conventional norms creates chaos and disorder in his own life and in the life of his social environment.

In R.K. Narayan's novels, there is a rebellion in the characters who violate the social norms, but this rebellion is followed by a return, a renewal and a conformity to the social set-up. Violation of traditional norms leads to disruption, misery and unhappiness. In *The Guide*, Marco snaps his conjugal tie with Rosie when he comes to know of her intimacy with Raju. It is nothing short of infidelity. He says to her:

‘But you are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics.’

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

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The traditional world of Malgudi has its own custom of arranged marriage which is settled by parents after negotiations and matching of horoscopes. In Indian society, marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and a spiritual union. It has been sanctified by society and sanctioned by tradition. Men and women living together as husband and wife outside wedlock are regarded as sinners and hence do not enjoy or receive any social acceptance or recognition. It is therefore sacrilegious to violate the sanctity of sex. Illicit relationship is considered to be a stigma on those who are engaged in this kind of relationship. In *The Guide*, Rosie, after separation from her husband, lives with Raju as his wife under the assumed name Nalini, without marrying him. Raju's mother who is an orthodox woman is dead against her son's way of life with Rosie. She says to Raju:

Why can't she go to her husband and fall at his feet? You know, living with a husband is no joke, as these modern girls imagine.

She doesn't want the tainted woman to stay in her house. It is a moral as well as social sin. But Raju has no regards for his mother's sentiments. So she leaves the house forever. In course of time, Raju's love for Rosie is replaced by love for money which leads him to forge her signature resulting in his arrest. Their relationship is finally severed. Thus, their romantic love not only causes miseries and sufferings to them but also to their families.

From Selfishness to Selflessness

Raju's evolution from a tour guide to a spiritual guide forms the central theme of the novel. The title of the novel, *The Guide*, has two implications. It brings out the two roles played by Raju. One, as a tourist guide, where he is impulsive, undisciplined and given to self-indulgence; and the other, after serving a sentence and converting to a holy man who thinks over life philosophically, is careful and self-disciplined. There are two stories in the novel. One is Raju's relationship with Rosie and the other is his relationship with the villagers. In the opening scene, Raju is sitting by the temple talking to Velan, one of the villagers who mistakes him to be a holy man. The novel then moves back and forth with accounts of Raju's life as a holy man told in third person, and Raju's account to Velan of his previous career as a tour guide and lover, which is told in the first-person. Raju plays a dual role, that of a saint and a sinner. But it should be noted that he is at no point in the story a complete sinner, nor a complete saint. Raju's character strikes a chord of sympathy in us. The title leads us to the question of who is the guide and how does he guide people. Raju is first a tour guide as he shows the interesting sights of Malgudi to people who come to visit the town. He also plays guide to Rosie as he is instrumental in helping her find a way to fulfil her dreams. We should not, however, mistake Raju as a political or moral guide who leads a community. All his actions are self-centred and while guiding people he keeps his interest in mind all the time.

It is now that spiritual regeneration takes place. Raju rises above his self. He recognizes the claims of humanity and learns to live and die for others. He may die, but his very death is his spiritual re-birth. Raju has matured, has achieved self-realization and self-fulfilment and has died into a new birth. His example shows that salvation and regeneration, the realization of one's highest aspirations, comes not through self-seeking but through self-negation and self-effacement. One must learn to live and die for others, before really noble and worthwhile achievement becomes possible.

The major theme of transmigration of the human soul from the clutches of 'maya' or ordinary desires to attain 'nirvana' or self-realization is amply demonstrated by the

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author in the novel. Raju embarks on life's journey as a man who is self-centred and attracted only to material things. He is fascinated by the world of 'maya' and would do anything to achieve it. In the end, self-realization is achieved as he sacrifices his life for a moral duty which he believes is ordained for him from God.

Emancipation of Women

Rosie is a complex character and Narayan uses her to talk about women liberation.

Rosie feels suffocated in her marriage and tries her utmost to emerge in her own right as a woman who is talented and artistically inclined. She is married to Marco, an archaeologist, whose only interest is the academic research he is pursuing. He has come to Malgudi to study some caves. He is busy in stone statues but does not value human relations. Rosie is not at all interested in the 'Cold, old stone walls' that so excite her husband. Rosie meets Raju, a local tourist guide and it is in his company that Rosie finds happiness and reasons to laugh and enjoy life. Rosie and Marco are incompatible; they never see eye-to-eye on any subject. Marco has no interest in Rosie's love for classical dance. It is Raju, who later encourages her to emerge from her shell and bring forth her talent.

According to Narasimaiah, she is the only character in the novel who changes and grows and recovers from folly as the novel progresses. To quote his own words, 'It is strange that Rosie is completely free from Narayan's ironic handling. Considering she was a highly educated woman—a Master of Arts—and a married woman at that, and in the Hindu society too, and considering, above all, that Narayan is operating within the framework of traditional Hindu society whose code of conduct he largely endorses, it is curious that Rosie's departure from that code invites no adverse comment. In all fairness to Rosie though, R.K. Narayan tries to show how the instincts of a faithful wife were not dead in her. Quickly realizing her mistake, a repentant Rosie tries to mend fences with Marco. 'I realized I had committed an enormous sin..... My mind was greatly troubled. I didn't want anything more in life than to make my peace with him. I did not want to dance. I felt lost...'

After studying Rosie's character, we can conclude that women have a fixed place in society. They have to be economically dependent on their husbands and silently tolerate the treatment meted out to them. This situation prevails in all levels of society in India. Such is the practice of gender inequality. As long as Rosie allowed herself to be confined within the walls of her husband's existence, she suffered silently. But when she emerged from its confines, she was able to prove her worth as a classical dancer. Though R.K. Narayan had to face controversy for dealing with an issue like extra marital relations, his attempt to portray emancipation and empowerment of women, through the character of Rosie, was indeed a brave effort.

Rosie is the one character in the novel who seems to offer a singular example of recovering from folly as the novel progresses. In fact, she has always been dignified, noble and the very picture of ideal womanhood in spite of her loss of chastity—there is enough atonement for it and that is what matters. And significantly, this has been achieved by as serious a treatment of the character as any novelist in the tragic mode may have done. This seems to be that of almost all the women characters of Narayan—they are not many, though, in all his novels taken together. But especially in the way he takes care to preserve Rosie from inner taint, Narayan seems to be affirming what has been hailed in the Indian tradition as the feminine principle in life—the primary process of a woman's life as it incorporates the rules and values of natural law.

Raju is an egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie both sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts, but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and self-centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. It is, as if, Raju were being held up as an example of the disorder which follows quick upon the heels of any violation of the accepted order.

Raju's self-confidence and nonchalance enable him to be quite comfortable in jail. But nemesis overtakes him soon after. He plays the role of a Swami, exploits the credulity of the simple people of Mangala who bring to him rich offerings of food. He lives on them as a parasite, and expects food from them even when they themselves are victims of famine and drought.

This is certainly inhuman and monstrous. He is a fraud who deceives himself as well as the people of Mangala. But he is soon caught in his own trap. He is compelled to undertake a fast to bring down the rains. It is during the course of his fast that Raju achieves a measure of self-awareness and identifies himself with the community at large: 'For the first time in his life, he was making an effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested. He felt a new strength to go through the ordeal.'

Transition from Illusion to Reality

Does Raju finally manage to transform himself into a true 'swami'? Perhaps this passage suggests an answer:

The sky was clear. Having nothing else to do, he started counting the stars. He said to himself, 'I shall be rewarded for this profound service to humanity. People will say, "There is the man who knows the exact number of stars in the sky. If you have any trouble on that account consult him. He will be your night guide for the skies."' He told himself, 'the thing to do is to start from a corner and go on patch by patch. Never work from the top to the horizon, but always the other way.' He was evolving a theory. He started the count from above a fringe of the Palmyra trees on his left-hand side up the course of the river, over to the other side. 'One.... two.... fifty-five....' He suddenly realized that if he looked deeper a new cluster of stars came into view; by the time he assimilated it into his reckoning, he realized he had lost sight of his starting point and found himself entangled in hopeless figures. He felt exhausted.

This passage is very important as we see how slowly Raju progresses from a regular guide to someone who guides the progress of souls. The title of the story now assumes a far deeper meaning. The novel moves on from being the story of an ordinary guide known as 'Railway Raju', to the story of someone who has more significance. The above paragraph also shows Raju's transition from fantasy to actuality. In the act of counting the stars, or trying to assess what is intangible, Raju is trying to work out the vastness of life. For once in his life, Raju is thinking about something so deeply knowing that there is no material gain to be had from this. His life now goes beyond its personal limitations and encompasses a wider sphere.

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The Guide, in essence, is the story of a man's travels through the trials and tribulations of life. He goes through all the complexities life has to offer. He has to face various illusions before he can achieve universal truth. The concept of moksha, or freedom, then applies here.

According to the Hindu philosopher and theologian Shankara, existence is a struggle for the 'Atman' (the individual self) to become a 'Brahman' (the pure being). It is where the atman is prevented from reaching the ideal state of Brahman because of 'avidya' or ignorance, which drives us into the arms of maya (illusion) where we blindly seek our true self. Through the proper knowledge of Vedanta, however, the individual soul recognizes the limitless reality forever existing behind the cosmic veil of maya, realizes that its own true nature is identical with Brahman, and through this self-realization achieves moksha. This freedom is vast and knows no bounds and can eventually unify us with the cosmos.

Class Difference

Narayan achieves the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide* mainly through the symbolism of Rosie's name. The non-traditional name is the marker of Rosie's social hybridity, through which the novelist gives a realistic and truthful representation of the social norms and prejudices in India. In this respect, Rosie's failure to give the name of her father locates her social identity as belonging to a family of devadasis—'I belonged to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers... we are viewed as public women... we are not considered respectable, we are not considered civilized.' It may seem ironic that both Raju's mother and uncle seek to view Rosie in terms of social class:

Are you of our caste? No. Our class? No....After all, you are a dancing girl. We do not admit them in our families.

They judge her according to their social norms, instead of examining her individual merits. It is shocking that in their prejudice they completely ignore Rosie's other identity as an educated woman with an M.A in economics. Rosie's Westernised name and her association with the symbol of snake mark her social exclusion; Marco's satiric name and appearances also symbolizes his detachment from reality; and various other personality traits also symbolize a move from the time-honoured orthodox Hindu belief to a modern urbanized society. The use of symbolism, when combined with realism of the novel, unfolds a wide spectrum of walks of life in a modern society of India through Narayan's meticulous attentions to details of characterization.

Theory of Karma

R.K. Narayan upholds the old traditional values of life prescribed by the ancient Indian culture and embodied in Indian epics 'Shastras', 'Puranas', myths and mythologies. He presents his concepts of traditionalism through the middle class life of Malgudi an imaginary small town in South India, which forms the background to all his novels. Narayan's novels show that success and happiness in life lie in the acceptance of the Shastras and the Vedic values. The main purpose of human life is suggested as a journey in quest of self-identity or emancipation from the miseries of life.

The theory of Karma is enunciated in the life of Raju the protagonist. According to Hinduism, it is a foregone conclusion that an individual lives and dies in accordance

with his karma and vasanas (impressions the personality has gathered from its own thoughts and actions of the past or previous lives). Desires and thoughts which spring forth from one's vasanas make it appear inevitable. John Updike observed in the *New Yorker*, 'As a Hindu, Narayan believes in reincarnation — a universe, infinite rebirths. . . He surveys his teeming scene from the perspective of this most ancient of practiced religions' (134).

The theory of karma holds the view that the present existence of an individual is the effect of the past and its future would be the effect of its present existence. Raju, in *The Guide*, attempts several possible explanations for the movement of events in his life. What he says with a painful self-awareness shows his faith is pre-ordained fate. 'It's written on the brow of some that they shall not be left alone. I am such one....', Rosie in *The Guide* believe in Karmic laws according to which everyone has to bear the consequence of his deeds. She thinks that she has led a religious life and she has not deliberately committed any sin. So she will not be punished in the other world. This should be her strong faith in the theory of 'karma'. When Raju in *The Guide* is arrested on charge of forgery, Rosie [Nalini] tells him 'I felt all along, you were not doing right things. This is 'karma' what can we do?' Joy and sorrow, reward and punishment are all the results of one's deeds done in the past. The 'karmas' of human beings influence, control and condition their lives. Every action good or bad has its reaction.

Narayan says that wisdom is gained by going through the experiences life has to offer. Meditation or spiritual reflection cannot be the cause of that wisdom. There is a law that life follows and this becomes operational the moment we are born. This law affects all our actions, whether we struggle or are miserable or try to avoid being hurt by it. Loneliness is the absolute truth. Attachments are our undoing. They affect our rational thinking. Raju tries not to let this law affect him. He holds great value to attachments, whether it is love for a woman or material comforts. In the end, however, realization strikes him and he gives up attachment or worldly comforts and finds that in doing so, he is a happier person.

The Bhagvad Gita and its *Karma* philosophy regard self-realization or enlightenment as the ultimate goal in a man's life, although the methods for the attainment of this goal may vary from man to man. Soul, i.e., Atman acquires unanimity with the Supreme Soul or Almighty who is *Paramatma* or God. *Moksha* is a state of moral and intellectual perfection transcending the distinction between good and evil, between doubt and faith, between being and non-being. This goal is attainable in present life as per the teachings, sayings of the Upanishads and *Jivan Mukti* or liberation. In the end, when the individual who has reached this stage, dissociates himself from physical accomplishments, he becomes *Brahman* itself; that is final release or *Videha – Mukti*.

Narayan has very artistically interwoven various thoughts of the Bhagwad Gita in his novels. He has presented the theory of renunciation, and liberation or *Moksha* in *The Guide*. Raju, the tourist guide is initially entrapped in the illusory world when the materialistic *Charvaka* philosophy—an atheistic, materialistic and hedonistic thought, named after *Charu* or *Brhaspati*, which admits the existence of this world (*loka*) alone—guides and governs his life. He commits the crime of forging Rosie's signature and is accordingly punished and sent to the prison. His foul deeds pay him. He receives his ill fate as per his evil *Karma*. But landing into prison, he finds time for his moral and social transgression. The prison accrues to him an ideal opportunity to journey into the innermost regions of his soul and shake off his material and social illusions. Thereafter, evolution in the character of Raju is a ceaseless and ongoing process.

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Narayan's presentation of characters and their relationships with one another achieve a philosophic overtone. He presents the characters in the light of the most contemplated universal theory of *Karma* as devised by the Bhagwad Gita, a Hindu epic. Almost all Narayan's characters demonstrate the growing pains arising from the dissatisfaction with their mundane lives. Narayan's characters achieve a synthesis of flesh and spirit through the philosophic interpretation of their own mundane activities.

Life is full of twists and turns and one never knows what may happen. Raju's life takes an unexpected turn when, after his release from prison, he is forced to become a saint for the people of Mangala. This happens when he takes shelter in an old temple a little out of the town. Velan becomes his disciple. Raju keeps up the pretence of being a swami and speaks to the villagers on various issues. He talks to them about religion and tells them about teachings of the Ramayana. He talks to them of cleanliness. He even prescribes medicines and settles disputes and quarrels involving property. He sees to it that the school is reopened in the temple premises. He plays the role of the Swami to the best possible extent, but once again he is overtaken by the inexplicable eventualities.

When he tells Velan's brother to convey the message that he will not eat till they stop fighting over a minor matter of selling and buying, it is misinterpreted that he will not eat until it rains. This now becomes a turning point in Raju's life and events are not in his control anymore. He is expected to bring rain. People expect that his penance would appease the rain god and bring relief to the drought-stricken countryside. Raju tries to shake off this responsibility but is caught in a trap. Eventually, the fake swami turns into a real one.

It is in times like this that one realizes it is 'divinity that shapes our ends.' As said by Emerson in a memorable poem named *Brahma*, it is the 'One behind the many' that is responsible for one's life:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass and turn again.

The resolution to chase away the thoughts of food gives him 'a peculiar strength.' It further forges his thoughts towards keeping a genuine fast.

Salvation

Raju, the swami, has been fasting for many days. On the twelfth day, he stands in the water with Velan's assistance. He feels very weak. He tells Velan that he hears 'rain in the hills'. Saying this, he falls down. Narayan leaves the reader to wonder at the significance of this. Does Raju really die or does he simply collapse due to weakness. Does it actually rain or is it his delusion. But the end is not important. What is important is that only when Raju gives up thinking about himself, that he becomes detached with worldly things. 'Maya' does not affect him anymore; he has no use for material pleasures. He has done something noble for a valid cause and by this he has achieved self-actualization. He is now well and truly a 'guide', albeit one of a far superior kind than before.

When the mirror of understanding is cleansed of the dust of desire, the life of pure consciousness is reflected on it. When all seems lost, light from heaven breaks, enriching our human life more than words can tell.

V. S. Naipaul in his book, *A Wounded Civilization*, remarks: 'Narayan's novels are less purely social comedies I had once taken them to be than religious books, at times religious fables, and intensively Hindu.'

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

Theme of Marital Disharmony

The relationship between Rosie and her husband Marco in *The Guide* is strained because they live on different planes. Rosie is devoted to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere 'street acrobatics'. He is obsessed with his archaeological surveys and studies. He is stern, self-centred and self-righteous. Rosie's longing for sharing of ideas and ambitions is dismissed by Marco as a foolish woman's sentiments. He is more interested in the carvings on the walls, stone figures and caves but neglects the throbbing, pulsating heart of his wife. Raju wonders how Marco could be uninterested in a woman like Rosie. He observes 'dead and decaying things seem to loosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs'. The longing for companionship and communication brings her close to Raju. She is starved of affection and yearns for recognition and acknowledgement of her artistic talent. Her first obsession is dancing. Raja wins her by appreciating her art, by praising her talent and by encouraging her.

In spite of Marco's indifference and cold behaviour Rosie tries to be a dutiful wife. She becomes all the more solicitous towards her husband after her new intimacy with Raju. That she is pricked by guilty conscience is evident in her frequent mention of her duty to her husband.

For Marco, life is nothing but a serious intellectual pursuit. He fails to perceive Rosie's passionate attachment to the art of dancing. He is totally prosaic in his approach to life. This attitude of Marco has a stifling effect on Rosie. It is at this time that chance brings her the companionship of Raju.

In the Marco-Rosie relationship, one gets a feeling that Marco is not given fair treatment. It is either through the eyes of Rosie or Raju that the reader views and understands Marco. His creator did not give him an identity. It is Raju who nick names him Marco Polo. It is true that Marco fails to live up to Rosie's expectation and desires. But one wonders why Rosie should complain when she was neither forced to marry, nor tricked into giving up dancing.

Theme of Separation and Loneliness/Pattern of Order and Disorder

Almost all Narayan's principle characters experience loneliness and alienation. This loneliness and alienation comes in their lives because they are dissatisfied with their lives. However, the period which they spend in loneliness and alienation is fruitful. Marco and Rosie in *The Guide* suffer from separation and loneliness which teach them to face the bitter truths of life. Raju, the guide denounces the material life and turns spiritual and introspective during his lonely hours in the jail. Narayan has projected the theme of separation in his novels in order to incorporate the philosophic vision of India. This vision has been preached by most of the Indian scriptures through the theory of self-realization.

Moreover, Narayan strongly believes in the life which is lived in correlation with tradition and philosophy and deviation from it brings suffering and dissatisfaction. The human relationships presented by Narayan in his novels have originated from Indian tradition and philosophy. The severing of relationships and the emotional trauma that follows is delicately and realistically handled in the novel. The novel manages to convey how delicate the husband-wife relationship is. The relationship between Marco and

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Rosie in *The Guide* is not based on traditional philosophic values as devised by Manu in Manu Smriti – devotion, submission, mutual respect and proper understanding. This couple does not share this kind of bond and therefore, their relationship does not become everlasting. Narayan presents the characters passing through a period of struggle and transition but towards the end, they attain a new vitality which provides them with a new interpretation of ordinary situations.

In his presentation of human relationship between two human beings, there is order in the beginning, an order that does not last. The order is replaced with chaos when his characters come in conflict with other characters in some unexpected situations and under certain circumstances. However, at the end they attain the life full of spiritual and mental peace as they learn a lesson that human and social values preached by Indian philosophy are mandatory for any human being to achieve salvation and self-realization. It is these values that help one to maintain his/her equilibrium in times of disorder, clash of motives and conflict.

2.5 MAJOR CHARACTERS IN *THE GUIDE*

Let us discuss some of the characters in R.K Narayan's novel *The Guide*.

Narayan is the creator of a whole picture-gallery of 'the immortals of literature. A number of life-like memorable figures move in and out of his novels, and once we have been acquainted with them, we can never forget them. In his novels, he focusses on the instincts of people of from all classes and all walks of life. His characters indulge in various professions and are leading their lives in their simple and quaint ways.

Raju

In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles, till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity. Raju's career from a railway guide to a Mahatma brings out the truth of the statement that, 'Raju never did anything; things always happened to him. His entire career illustrates the drill of a passive character from one role to another'.

Raju has apparently nothing heroic about him. In fact, he is an anti-hero, a common man with just a tinge of the uncommon in him. He is a simple, very ordinary and not extraordinarily smart character. A transformed, shapeless character who easily picks up the suggestions of others; his personality is in fact a product of other people's convictions. He is extremely susceptible to the suggestions of others, and this plasticity of response determines his career and ultimate destiny. Raju's character is a mixture of many traits, some of which are even contradictory.

From a stall-keeper, Raju turns into a tourist guide. He is shrewd, intelligent and observant, and he soon acquires little bits of knowledge by reading the old magazines and books which he stocks, and by talking to the passengers who come to his stall. He is a fraud who does not know much about Malgudi and its environs, but he pretends to know everything. He never says 'no' to any customer. He freely changes and distorts facts to please the tourists. The result is that his fame spreads and he comes to be known as 'Railway Raju'. His self-confidence and nonchalance pay him rich dividends, and he never worries about the many distortions in which he has indulged and the untruths he has told. He deceives, lies and adopts crooked ways to fleece the unknowing tourists.

Raju would have remained a successful tourist guide all his life but for the arrival of Marco and Rosie in Malgudi. Raju is fascinated by 'the divine creature' that he

Check Your Progress

6. List the significant themes of *The Guide*.
7. How has Narayan achieved the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide*?

perceives Rosie to be and wins her heart by his sympathy and consideration, as well as showing keen interest in her art. Both of them are born romancers and the novel celebrates the coming together of two similar temperaments.

Raju is a typical confident man of Indian tales; he betrays those who confide in him. Thus he seduces Rosie, even though Marco has great faith in him, is kind and generous to him, and leaves him to look after his wife as he pursues his archaeological studies. He does not hesitate to ruin the domestic life and happiness of a man who has confided in him, paid him handsomely and has treated him as a family member. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily.

Raju is so despicable that he appears almost to be the antagonist of the novel until its concluding pages. Raju is arbitrarily cruel, hypocritical, and manipulative from his earliest recounted youth. He manipulates his father into taking him into town; he abuses a local cattle-boy for entering his private play-area; he lies to and takes advantage of tourists; he steals Rosie from Marco; he makes Rosie miserable, chasing away her friends, and becoming pretentious (even forging her signature on a legal document, rather than let her have any contact with Marco); finally, he takes advantage of the villagers in order to get food. These are hardly traits one would ascribe to a 'hero'. He displays greed and materialism matched only by narcissism and hypocrisy, so that he loses even his closest friends; only sudden money saves him, and he soon loses that as well.

In the third stage of his career, he becomes a convict, and even this role he performs with enthusiasm, becoming an ideal prisoner. This was the one act that Raju did voluntarily and deliberately, it did not happen to him. But Raju was bewildered that such a trivial action should bring down such frightful consequences on his head. When out of jail, we find him playing the role of a Swami or Mahatma. He plays this role to perfection, for basically there is not much difference between the role of a railway guide and that of a spiritual guide. The same eloquence, the same ability to make grand, mystifying statements, the air of knowingness, enables him to play his new role with such success. Although he is a fraud and a rogue in reality, he appears every inch a Mahatma. He sits on slab of stone as if it were a throne. Raju felt he was attaining the stature of a saint and later he felt he was growing wings.

Not once does he deliberately try to pass himself off for a holy man, but when he finds that people want to believe in his spiritual power, he cannot disappoint them. It is the public reposition of faith that compels him to act and die a holy man even though he had no inclination towards either option. Raju is both an Indian enigma and a key to the mystery and myth. Here a man has lesser claim to his privacy. He lives more for others and is guided by external considerations and compulsions and is defined in spite of his disinclination and indifference.

It is not clear to the reader whether it rains due to Raju's penance. Also, the change of heart that Raju undergoes has not been given much importance by Narayan. He makes it seem as if that is the least he could do to atone for his sins. He doesn't give more than a few lines to mention this. It is a moment of great disturbing beauty, in which we know something larger and more affecting than the working out of an individual destiny in an inhospitable world.

Why, then, does Raju almost fail to be the hero of *The Guide*? It seems impossible for any character such as Raju to redeem himself and earn our respect. In order to do so, he must display a fundamental change of heart regarding the villagers, and must take dramatic steps to prove his devotion to this new philosophy. We finally see these changes

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only eight pages before the end of the book. It is not, in fact, until the last page of the book that Raju displays the characteristic that confirms his heroism, courage.

The Guide has an element of the picaresque, but it is not a picaresque novel in which there is no such transformation and spiritual rebirth. Raju is redeemed by becoming a martyr for the sake of others; there is no such redemption in the ease of the picaro in a picaresque novel. The most interesting character in the novel, Raju is a hero who is not heroic, except at the very end. He is a mixture of good and bad qualities, but he is not a villain except, perhaps, in one instance when he forges Rosie's signature on a legal document sent to her by Marco. Raju is potentially a tragic figure and, given his character, there is perfect inevitability in what happens to him.

Rosie

Rosie, in the novel, overshadows Raju whereas Raju remains the pivot for the whole part of the novel. Rosie is a very complex character. She is moody, impulsive and ambitious. These frail aspects of her character have been glossed over in the novel. It was because the character of Rosie was ahead of its times. To imagine a woman leave her uncaring and impotent husband and live with her lover in his house was impossible in the era of sixties. Though she has been represented as a rebellious woman, her rebellion has been justified in such a way that it finds consonance with the novel. To humanize her and get the sympathy of the viewers with her, Marco has been demonized. This is the reason why it is difficult to understand her in the novel but still easy to comprehend.

She is the heroine of the novel. She has a charming and fascinating personality. Raju falls in love with her at first sight and says, 'she was not very glamorous, if that is what you expect, but she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned, eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice' Her arrival at Malgudi, with her husband Marco, plays havoc with the life and career of Raju, the popular Railway guide.

Born in a family of dancing girls, she knew who her mother was but not her father. She is given a college education and is an M.A. in Economics. She is flattered that a man like Marco should wish to marry her, and is devoted to him in spite of his impotence and priggishness. But her inherited feeling for dance cannot be suppressed, and when she gets a chance to perfect the art, she seizes it. Her giving way to Raju is understandable. She might have resisted her physical urge if her husband had been at least kind and considerate: but his inhuman coldness, Raju's evident admiration and the opportunity so conveniently provided by her husband, result in what seems a foregone conclusion. When that husband throws her out and she has no other place to go to, she comes to Raju. More than the attraction of sex is the desire to perfect her and realize herself fully in her God-given gift. She does not take long to achieve eminence. When Raju wants her to give performances she is not unwilling. But with fame come unceasing demands on her time and energy. She has to fall into a routine and go round and round like a bull yoked to an oil-crusher. Her weariness of it all is like that of any film star: She is being exploited but sticks it out.

It is through the character of Rosie in *The Guide*, that Narayan truly takes up and treats the concept of women's emancipation. Rosie attempts to break free of the restrictions that her husband has imposed on her. Her husband, an archaeologist, is busy with his research and exploration and has no value for living beings. Rosie's encounter with the enthusiastic tourist guide Raju, at Malgudi railway station proves to be the turning point of her life. Rosie and her husband, Marco are two very different individuals

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and function on different planes. In the initial stage, he aggressively defies the wishes of his wife who desires to see a king-cobra. He snubs her. 'Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake-your interests are morbid.' On the other hand, Rosie has a distaste for 'Cold, old stone walls'. Marco was not interested at all in Rosie's talent of classical dance which was encouraged by Raju.

In all fairness to Rosie though, R.K. Narayan tries to show how the instincts of a faithful wife were not dead in her. When she finds that her husband has produced a masterpiece, she cuts out his picture from the *Illustrated Weekly* and puts it on her dressing mirror.

She is surprised by Raju's behaviour in the matter of the book, and later by the forgery. But she does not walk out on him. To get him out of the mess into which he has got, she dances day and night and is willing to go round like a parrot in a cage, or a performing monkey.

Raju exploits Rosie for his own advantage and narrow, selfish ends. He says: 'I had monopoly of her and nobody had anything to do with her She was my property.' And a little later,... 'I did not like to see her enjoy other people's company. I liked to keep her in a citadel.' Raju takes all the credit for her success, and is of the view that she would not be able to do without him. But he is soon disillusioned. She rises to new heights of popularity and stardom without him. He is amazed at her extraordinary vitality. He realizes that neither he nor her husband matters at all to her.

The rift is cemented when Raju is arrested for forging Rosie's signature on a legal document sent by Marco's solicitors over the custody of a jewellery box. Rosie is hurt. She promises to pawn the last of her possessions to defend Raju in court, but tells him categorically that she won't have to do anything with him after that. Rosie proves to be true to her word. She engages the best lawyer from Madras to defend Raju and has to undertake numerous dance engagements to pay the star lawyer. When Raju is sentenced to two years' imprisonment, she closes down the establishment at Malgudi and moves over to Madras, where Marco lives. But she will have nothing to do with him also. Her career is on the up swung, as Raju learns from newspaper reports that he reads in jail. He wonders how she can manage without him. But Rosie is managing her career on her own admirably because she has found her *métier* at last.

Rosie's behaviour is always dignified and noble despite her nightlong bickering behind the closed bedroom doors with Marco or altercations with Raju later when she cautions him not to discuss anything in the presence of servants. She doesn't react when Raju's boorish uncle shouts at her, calls her names and orders her to get out of the house where she has come, and is staying, uninvited. There is enough atonement for her adulterous liaison with Raju which is there primarily because he helps her realize her ambition of displaying her art in public. Rosie's delineation is in keeping with Narayan's delineation of female characters in general. Rosie may have succumbed to circumstances but she remains free from inward taint. That is why she makes such a complete and miraculous recovery, though the novelist, quite wisely, does not restore her to her earlier dubious marital status. Rosie is a strong minded woman who is unwilling to sacrifice her happiness or ambition for the sake of keeping up appearances and staying with an appalling husband.

According to Narasimaiah, 'she is the only character in the novel who changes and grows and recovers from folly as the novel progresses.' To quote his own words, 'It is strange that Rosie is completely free from Narayan's ironic handling. Considering she was a highly educated woman—a Master of Arts and a married Hindu woman at that

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time, it is surprising that Rosie's departure from that code invites no adverse comment from the novelist. In fact she has always been dignified, noble and a true picture of ideal womanhood. Despite losing her chastity, she confesses to her husband and tries to seek pardon. This is highlighted as the biggest virtue. And significantly, this has been achieved by as serious a treatment of the character as any novelist in the tragic mode may have done. He takes special care to protect the character of Rosie from being tainted internally. Narayan seems to be affirming what has been hailed in the tradition as the Feminine Principle in life.'

Marco

Marco is one of those densely enigmatic characters, who frequently appear in Narayan's novels and are assigned minor roles. They are odd, eccentric characters, like knots in wood, who keep away from the mainstream of human life. Marco comes to Malgudi with his wife Rosie, and with 'water diviner's' instinct, Raju at once realizes that he is his permanent customer: He is dressed like a spaceman. We don't know his real name. Raju calls him Marco, for he looks like an 'eternal tourist'. Marco and Rosie are not able to pull on together, for in his zeal for, and devotion to, his archaeological studies, he takes no interest in his young fascinating wife. Raju thinks of Marco in relation to Rosie as 'a monkey's picking up a rose garland'. He is unable to understand Marco's obsessive interest in ancient relics, and says, 'Dead and decaying things seemed to unloosen his tongue and fire his imagination, rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs.'

He is bored with Marco's ruin collecting activities. Rosie, too doesn't like to see the 'cold, old stone walls'. She finds that her wealthy husband is more interested in books, papers, painting than in being a 'real, live husband'. When Marco decides to stay on to explore the cave painting more fully, Raju takes charge of Rosie and soon becomes her ardent lover. Analysing the causes of Marco's failure with Rosie, Raju says: 'Marco was just impractical, an absolutely helpless man. All that he could do was to copy ancient things and write about them Perhaps he married out of a desire to have someone to care for his practical life, but unfortunately his choice was wrong—this girl herself was a dreamer if ever there was one.'

Marco has nothing in common with an average tourist as he doesn't wish to visit the traditional tourist spots in and around Malgudi. He has come there with a purpose to study and decipher carvings in temples and to visit the ancient caves near Mempi Hills. And he is single minded in the pursuit of his goal. In the same manner as his wife, Rosie is devoted to dance. They are a mismatch as they fiercely hate each other's hobby and this leads to frequent arguments and quarrels between the two. There are a few ugly scenes in the hotel at Malgudi and the guesthouse on Mempi Hills.

Marco's satirical name and the descriptions of his appearance are also symbolic in *The Guide*. 'Marco' is a name that Raju invents because the man's weird attire somehow reminds him of Marco Polo. Certainly, the name resembles the potential strangeness in him, and his appearance reinforces this: 'He dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition, with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet, over which was perpetually stretched a green, shinny, water proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller.' This idiosyncratic outfit, so inappropriate for the hot climate of Malgudi, symbolizes his lack of connection with the reality and the emotions of this world, which ultimately explains his failure to understand Rosie. The presentation of Marco's desire to control every aspect of his environment seems to stem from his

distaste for the unpredictable vitality and wilfulness of living things: 'dead and decaying things seemed to...fire his imagination, rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs.' This obviously creates a symbolical contrast between him and Rosie—while Rosie is projected as a symbol of life, Marco is anti-life.

What takes Rosie away from Marco is his aversion to dance; he hates the very word, While Raju says, 'I could almost hear the ripple of water around it' when Rosie indicates the lotus with her fingers. Marco calls dance a monkey trick or street acrobatics. What interests Rosie irritates Marco and she confesses to Raju 'I could have preferred any kind of mother in law, if it has meant one real, live husband.'

According to C.D. Narasimaiah, 'Raju-Rosie relationship becomes credible and acceptable only because of the neglect Rosie suffers at the hands of her husband.'

Marco strikes us as uncommonly eccentric. For example, 'He would not part with an anna without a voucher, whereas if you gave him a slip of paper could probably get him to write off his entire fortune'. Stern, self-centred and self-righteous, Marco thinks he has acquired his wife's body and soul, and he thinks that his rights over his 'property' are unlimited. Dancing to him, is another form of prostitution, especially when Rosie belongs to a Devadasi family of temple girls who have no respect in society and are considered public property. One of the conditions of his marriage to Rosie was she would give up dancing, and now that she mentions it, he is furious; he accuses her of breaking the covenant of marriage. Her confession of infidelity stuns him and he stops talking to her. He fails to understand that a wife can be unfaithful to her husband even once and can still be in love with him. To Rosie's passionate appeal, 'I want to be with you. I want you to forget everything, I want you to forgive me.' He replies, 'Yes, I'm trying to forget even the earlier fact that I ever took a wife. I want to go out from here too—but I want to complete my work; and I am here for that. You are free to go and do what you please.' When he leaves for Madras he buys only one railway ticket, leaving Rosie behind in Malgudi to fend for herself.

Marco leaves for Madras, but even though he is physically not there in Malgudi, he seems to be an ominous, overhanging presence. Rosie never forgets him, 'for after all he is my husband', she tells Raju. She sees his picture in the *Illustrated Weekly* cuts it and places it on her dressing table. She wants to see his book but Raju has hidden it in his liquor cabinet. Rosie is grateful to him for letting her go, any other man in his place would have throttled her when he learnt of her adulterous liaison with Raju. This induces a feeling of insecurity in Raju. Yet Marco is full of honesty and integrity in his own way. In spite of the fact that Raju has insulted him and seduced his wife, he acknowledges Raju's help in his book; 'This author is obliged to acknowledge his debt to Sri Raju of Malgudi Railway Station for his help.'

He is scrupulous towards Rosie also as he tries to restore a box of jewellery to her. We have no reason to believe Raju (who forges Rosie's signature in the legal document and lands in jail on a forgery charge) that it is a plot to entrap Rosie and force her to return to him. Nor must we blame him for pressing his charge of forgery against Raju. It is not an instance of vindictiveness but a desire to let the man who has wronged him have his just deserts. Marco wishes to restore the box of jewellery to his wife and when he finds that her paramour is trying to grab it through fraud, he is perfectly justified in taking the measure that he takes. In this way, he has revenge on the man who has seduced his wife.

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Check Your Progress

8. Who is the central figure in the novel *The Guide*?
9. Name the minor character in *The Guide*.

2.6 NARAYAN'S TECHNIQUE OF WRITING

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The narration moves forward chronologically, each succeeding event being linked causally with the previous one. There is no looking backward or forward, no probing of the subconscious or even the unconscious as is the case with novelists like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and others. As Paul Verghese points out, 'Narayan's is the most simple form of prose fiction—the story which records a succession of events. There is no *hiatus* between character and plot; both are inseparably knit together. The qualities the novelist attributes to these characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters and thus the story is carried forward to the end. In other words, as a good story-teller, Narayan sees to it that his story has a beginning, middle and an end. The end of his novel is a solution of the problem which sets the events moving; the end achieves that completeness towards which the action has been moving and beyond which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either, in a balance of forces and counter-forces or in death or both.' However, *The Guide* is an exception in this respect. The narrative technique Narayan has followed in this novel is different from that of the other novels.

In the story *The Guide*, we see the narration moving back and forth, from the present to the past and again to the present. The story is told by two people; the narrator tells the story in its present context, and in the third person. Raju, the main character, tells his story in the first person. His narration takes the reader to the past. Cinematic elements like flashbacks and jump cuts have been extensively used.

Narayan deviates from the traditional mode of narration; part of the story is told by the author and part in the first person by the hero himself. This is certainly an improvement in Narayan's narrative technique; here however it is necessitated by the nature of the story. The novel begins with the release of Raju from prison. Whatever happens to Raju after his release is told by the narrator—the novelist; whereas whatever had happened to Raju before he was imprisoned is told in a series of flashbacks in Raju's own words, in the form of a confession to Velan who has come to think of him as a saint. Then Raju takes over the narrative chores and relates his progress from sweetmeat seller to jailbird to Velan. In between, the omniscient narrator punctuates Raju's narrative by showing him dealing with the villagers as a holy man.

The Guide divided into two parts, narrates Raju's childhood, love affair, imprisonment (first part) and growth into a swami (second part). Though the streams move simultaneously, the first part is set in Malgudi, Raju's past and the second part is set in Mangla, Raju's present. While Raju's past in Malgudi is narrated by Raju himself, his present in Mangla is narrated by the author. R.K. Narayan is a novelist of common people and common situations. His plot of *The Guide* is built of material and incidents that are neither extraordinary nor heroic. *The Guide* is a story of Raju's romance, his greed for money, his sin and repentance. It is also the story of everyman's growth from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the railway guide to the spiritual guide.

A Comprehensive Note on Flashback in the Novel

Raju frequently remembers his childhood when he has just been released from prison and stops to rest near an abandoned shrine. He remembers that his father ran a shop in a village where he also used to help him every day. A crowd of peasants and drivers of bullock wagons always gather in front of his shop. Every afternoon his father asks him to take charge of the shop and gives him all necessary instructions. Sitting at the shop

and selling peppermints is no trouble for Raju, but he does not like his father's habit of waking him up with the crowing of the cock and then teaching him alphabets and arithmetic. Sometimes, his father takes him to the town when he goes there to make his purchase. Raju is fascinated by the changing scene, men, women, children and carts moving around him, till he feels drowsy and goes to sleep. Through the first flashback we come to know about Raju's early life.

Raju also remembers the time when there is news of railway tracks and a railway train. There is great excitement and the main question being asked is the time it would take for the railway to arrive at Malgudi. Red earth is brought in a number of trucks, and soon a small mountain is raised in front of Raju's house. Raju spends most of his time playing, listening to the gossip of the labourers working on the track, laughing at their jokes, and picking up their coarse vulgar abuses which they freely hurl at each other. One day, as he plays on the mound of earth, a boy, who is rearing his cows nearby, also comes there to play. Raju asks him to go away and shouts vulgar abuses. The boy complains to his father and repeats the exact words Raju has used. Raju's father becomes angry, and decides that he must go to school from the very next day.

Raju recalls his school days. He is sent not to the Albert Mission School, for his father believes that boys are converted to Christianity there, but to another school called Pyol School. All the classes have been held there at the same time and Raju belongs to the youngest and most elementary set. He has learnt the alphabets and numbers. But the teacher, an old man is a very abusive man. The boys make a lot of noise. Once they even enter the master's kitchen and make fun of him. They are forbidden to enter his house again. The old teacher is been paid one rupee per month for each boy. However, the boys frequently have been bringing some eatables for him, and in this way he has been able to make his both ends meet. Raju has proved himself to be an intelligent student after a year at this school; he makes sufficient progress to be admitted to the local Board High School. The old teacher himself leaves him there and blesses him. This act of his teacher surprises Raju.

Through flashback, Raju continues with the story of his past. The laying of the railway track is finally complete and a railway station is established at Malgudi. The coming of the railway train to Malgudi is a turning point in Raju's career. Raju's father is given a shop on the platform and Raju is asked to run this shop. After his father's sudden death, the burden of managing both the shops falls on Raju's shoulders. Raju comes into contact with the passengers, sits with them and learns things from them, gives them information and helps them. Gradually he becomes a famous tourist guide. The shop is then entrusted to a boy as Raju cannot spare enough time for the shop. Raju becomes very popular as a guide and soon comes to be known as 'Railway Raju'. Travellers visiting Malgudi would straightway ask for him as he is shrewd enough to give the right type of help to each tourist.

Now Raju remembers his first meeting with Rosie. She was not very glamorous, but she had a beautiful figure, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky. Raju nicknamed her husband Marco because the man dresses in thick jacket and helmet as if undertaking an expedition like Marco Polo. Marco is a man of academic interest and he is deeply interested in research relating to the history of art and culture. Marco is more interested in his research than his wife or her needs, desires and wishes. Raju gets the opportunity of spending considerable time in the company of Rosie and excites her liking. Later, he pleases her by appreciating her beauty and her skill as a dancer. Raju comes into close contact with Rosie.

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Now Raju reminisces how he changes from a skilful tourist guide to an adept lover. Both fall in love with each other. Raju and Rosie fully enjoy the beauty and surroundings of Malgudi. They amuse each other; entertain each other and their days pass very smoothly. They pass one night together in the hotel and Rosie becomes Raju's mistress.

Raju once again starts thinking about his past life. Raju's encouragement motivates Rosie to discuss her dance performance with Marco. Rosie goes to Marco to seek permission for dancing and unconsciously confesses to Marco her relationship with Raju. Marco abandons Rosie and leaves for Madras.

Raju recollects the evening when Rosie comes back to him. He becomes very happy getting Rosie back. Raju's obsession with Rosie grows to such an extent that he loses his job, shop, gets into heavy debt, and falls in his mother's eyes too. She leaves him and the house as she cannot tolerate his living with a married woman who has been left by her husband.

Raju once again starts thinking about his past life. Rosie is a trained classical dancer and it is her ambition to carve a niche for herself in this field. She is encouraged by Raju to fulfil her dreams. She starts dancing again opposing Marco's wishes that she should not do so. Raju becomes her manager and she soon has a successful career as a professional dancer. She gets invited from all over the country to give dance performances. Rosie soon gains a name for herself and is extremely popular. She earns a lot of money which Raju squanders recklessly.

In order to keep control over Rosie, and out of greed, he even forges her signature. Marco has sent some documents for Rosie's signature. After signing the document, Rosie would be able to get a jewellery box which Marco has deposited in a bank. Raju forges the document and posts it back but does not tell Rosie about the document because he is afraid that she may be disturbed by Marco's thoughtfulness and would form a high opinion about her husband's honesty. But, unfortunately, for him Marco discovers the fraud, reports the matter to the police and Raju is arrested. He is sent to jail for two years for this crime.

The technique of telling the story through Raju's reminiscing makes interesting reading.

Readers are always waiting to know what may have happened. Their curiosity is aroused as they eagerly await the events that unfold. This also brings out Narayan's skill as a story teller.

Raju was a conman and could manoeuvre people to suit his needs. In the novel, he goes beyond limits and does something casually without thinking of the repercussions. Raju's working life starts when he looks after his father's shop at the railway station in Malgudi, a town that has become a popular tourist attraction. His ability to convey information in an interesting and convincing way make him take up the profession of a tourist guide. Rosie and her husband Marco, come to Malgudi and Raju meets them at the station. He is immediately attracted to Rosie who is a charming young woman, a sharp contrast to her surly husband. Rosie is obsessed with dancing and wants to take it up seriously but Marco does not endorse her interests. Rosie is prodded by Raju to go ahead and fulfil her desire so she does this at the cost of angering and losing her husband.

She, however, gains success as a dancer and has a huge fan following. All this she is able to achieve through Raju who becomes her stage manager. Raju assumes too

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much significance and tries to control Rosie. Rosie resents this and their relationship becomes tense. Marco surfaces in their life and this leads Raju to commit a crime, that of forgery. He is sentenced to two years in prison while Rosie returns to Madras and continues with her dancing career. After his release from prison, Raju passes through a village and takes rest in the old temple on the outskirts. He is mistaken by the villagers to be a sadhu. As Raju is not keen to return to Malgudi, he settles in Mangala where he plays the role of spiritual guide to the people. They come to him with all sorts of problems which he attempts to solve. They start to trust and listen to him and soon he earns their respect and turns into a guru or god-like person for them. They bring him food and he is quite comfortable there.

All goes well till a drought affects the village. Raju's comments made in the midst of trying to resolve a fight, is taken to be a vow to keep a fast for 12 days in order to please the rain gods. Raju is caught in a trap and has to do what the villagers expect of him.

He starts believing in his role and feels that for the first time in his life he is doing something for the people, selflessly, out of humanity and not lust for money or any other material goods. As news of his fast spreads, people gather from all over the countryside to see the swami who is sacrificing his life for the sake of the villagers. His physical state deteriorates and finally, on the eleventh day, he collapses dreaming or visualizing the rain drops somewhere in the hills. The novel ends with a question still unanswered whether he dies and whether it actually rains.

The effect of this technique is to make the figure of the hero sharper and real than the other characters. Also, Raju in making the confession, characterizes himself by what he reports and how he reports it. The impression that the reader gets is that Raju's character develops because of certain events and the events in turn change his character till he finds himself a saint, fasting to induce rain for the drought-affected village in response to the expectations of a crowd of admirers and worshippers. In other words, character and action develop simultaneously and both influence each other. It is in this way that the complex personality of Raju is built up and made convincing and credible.

The interesting technique of narration Narayan has used in this novel keeps the curiosity of the readers alive, regarding both Raju's past and present. It makes the narrative, fresh, vigorous and interesting. As the past and present are cunningly jumbled, there is a constant impression of suspense and anticipation. The zig-zag narration gives piquancy to the novel without in any way confusing the reader. In this way, the past and the present are juxtaposed, and each illuminates the other. In short, the technique of narration the novelist has followed in *The Guide* is complex and original and unique in many ways.

R.K. Narayan, like another Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh, masterfully handled the complex flow of time through the flashbacks/ memory. The novel unfolds through flashbacks, then progresses occasionally in the present. His use of the flashbacks, which present the past events during the present events, bridge the gap between the past and present. In this way the flashbacks provide the background for the current narration. Moreover, from this back and forth movement of the plot the readers get an insight into the protagonist's motivation and personality. This makes the narration of the novel captivating to the reader. In this regard his *The Guide* can only be compared with Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, which was also narrated through a series of flashbacks/ from memory.

Comic Vision

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In Narayan's plot, there is a mixture of the comic and serious, the real and the fantastic. So is the case with *The Guide*. Narayan's vision is essentially comic. His comedies are comedies of sadness; he is the practitioner of the serious comedy, a very difficult art-form. He has achieved in his comedies what is generally achieved in the tragedies. The theme of his comedies is essentially tragic. A tragedy is concerned with inner illumination, with spiritual cleansing and regeneration. It results in a better apprehension of the mystery of life. All this Narayan does through his comedies, only the big comedies, are pitched in a lower key.

The hero is no exceptional individual, no man of high rank and social status, but like Raju, 'just ordinary, not so great,' and the comedies display his rather bumbling attempts at realizing his potential for greatness, and the spectacle of his struggle towards maturity is spiritually illuminating and morally uplifting. Thus emotionally, Narayan's serious comedies are as rewarding as a tragedy. In *The Guide*, we see Raju maturing before us by stages, over a length of time. His self-awareness is hard-earned but not in the way in which a tragic character earns it, self-wrung, self-strung. The cleansing takes place no doubt but not in the heroic strain. For the central character is a kind of anti-hero, Narayan's common man with potential for the uncommon.

Narayan has developed Raju's personality in an elaborative way in the long line of fake swamis and the third person narrative strand deflates Raju's phony sagacity with gentle mockery. The third person narrative also juxtaposes incongruities in order to ridicule Raju's pretensions. Raju appears as a comic opera figure in the narrator's account of the swami's musings. Raju recounts his rise and fall in the first person narrative which is marked by humour. He has a quick sense of absurd and laugh at himself. However, what endears him to readers who regard him as a lovable rogue when they are not sympathising with his vicissitudes, is Raju's own self-deprecating sense of humour.

Imagery and Symbolism

Another technique Narayan uses is imagery and symbolism which is rooted in Indian culture, but has universal appeal. The animal imagery has been well used by Narayan when we see Rosie's role as 'Mohini' in Raju's life is confirmed by her obsession with snakes. The role of snake-women as enchantresses is common in the Indian mind-frame. Moreover, the conversation between Rosie and Raju's mother (a traditional Indian woman steeped in religious and folk beliefs) reinforces this notion:

'Everything was so good and quiet - until you came in like a viper. . . . On the very day I heard him mention the 'serpent girl' my heart sank.'

Moreover, the almost animal-like passion lurking within Rosie and Raju is symbolically projected when they are waiting in Peak House on the veranda to watch the animals come out. Narayan is very subtle in his use of language, giving freedom to the reader to read beyond the text:

'On the way she said to me (Raju), "Have you documents to see too?"'

"No, no," I said, hesitating midway between my room and hers.

"Come along then. Surely you aren't going to leave me to the mercy of prowling beasts?"'

Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Raju's counting of the stars or measuring the immeasurable is a symbolic portrayal of Raju trying to understand the enormity of life.

‘The sky was clear. Having nothing else to do, he started counting the stars. He said to himself, ‘I shall be rewarded for this profound service to humanity. People will say, ‘there is the man who knows the exact number of stars in the sky. If you have any trouble on that account, consult him. He will be your night guide for the skies.’

At the end of the story, where Raju is drowning, his eyes are fixed on the mountains as a brilliant sun rises and villagers look on. By juxtaposing the simple background of the Indian village at sunrise with the suicide scene, Narayan effectively communicates Raju’s death as an image of hope, consistent with the Indian belief in death and rebirth. Narayan’s has a gift of sketching pen pictures that bring scenes and characters vividly to life without taking recourse to ornate or excessive description. Narayan’s simplicity of language conceals a sophisticated level of art. Narayan handles language like an immensely flexible tool that effortlessly conveys both the specific as well as symbolic and the universal. The tone of *The Guide* is quiet and subdued.

Thus the use of flashback, common lifestyle, comedy, language and the double perspective—Raju’s and the novelist’s—make the novel fresh stimulating, provocative and interesting.

2.7 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE NOVEL

R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* is often considered a realistic depiction of the Indian society at the time of independence. The novel incorporates symbolism as one of its major stylistic features: Raju, Rosie, Marco and various other characters are symbolically presented to give a vivid and realistic description of Indian society and its classes. R.K. Narayan upholds the old traditional values of life prescribed by the ancient Indian culture and embodied in the Indian epics, the shastras, puranas, myths and mythologies. He presents his concepts of traditionalism through the middle class life of Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India, which forms the background to all his novels. Narayan’s novels show that success and happiness in life lie in the acceptance of the shastras and Vedic values. The main purpose of human life is suggested as a journey in search of self-identity or emancipation from the miseries of life. The main purpose of life is to know the purpose of life.

Raju, Rosie and Marco become symbols of India’s culture. While Marco’s aspirations seek their fulfilment in unearthing the buried treasures of the rich cultural past of India, Rosie seeks satisfaction in the creative channels of classical dancing in the midst of an ever-present live audience. Raju constantly dreams of an elusive future, until a time comes when he is committed to a definite future by undertaking a fast in the hope of bringing rain.

Narayan’s Malgudi

Like Thomas Hardy’s Wessex, Narayan has created his own imaginary town of Malgudi, a city in South India. His short story collection, *Malgudi Days*, is set in this imaginary town full of lively, colourful people. His true to life characters are similar to Dickens’ characters. About how he thought of Malgudi, Narayan says that

‘Malgudi was an earth-shaking discovery for me, because I had no mind for facts and things like that, which would be necessary in writing about Malgudi or any real place. I first pictured not my town but just the railway station, which was a small platform with a banyan tree, a stationmaster, and two trains a day, one coming and one going. On

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Check Your Progress

10. What is the tone of *The Guide*?
11. Mention any two narrative techniques that are used in *The Guide*?

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Vijayadasami I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town: The train had just arrived in Malgudi Station.'

Narayan is a great regional novelist, but he is never parochial. It is against the backdrop of Malgudi scenes and sights that Narayan studies life's little ironies, which have always been the same in all corners of the world, in every age. His novels are tragic comedies of mischance and misdirection, studies in the human predicament which, essentially, has always been the same. From the particular, Narayan rises to the general, and intensity and universality are achieved by concentration. He has a way of making the reader believe whatever happens in Malgudi happens everywhere. Against the background of a single place, and amid the utter variety of human kind, the single individual engages with the one, universal problem: the effort not just to be, but to become, human.'

Many critics have speculated about the location of this imaginary town. According to Iyengar, it might be Lalgudi on the river Cauvery or Yadavgi in Mysore. Many take it to be Coimbatore which has many of the landmarks mentioned in Malgudi, like a river on one side and forests on the other. It also has the Mission School and College. But no one has been able to provide a definite answer because Narayan has not given any hint of its geographical location.

Narayan discusses some reasons why Malgudi can be a south Indian city in an interview:

'I must be absolutely certain about the psychology of the character I am writing about, and I must be equally sure of the background. I know the Tamil and Kannada speaking people most. I know their background. I know how their minds work and almost as if it is happening to me, I know exactly what will happen to them in certain circumstances. And I know how they will react.'

Structure/Plot

The framework of a Narayan novel, as also of *the Guide*, is not mechanical or external. There are no thrills and sensations, no long lost heirs, no accidental discoveries. The action flows out of character, and also influences and moulds character. The hero is just ordinary, the common, the average, the great, but not so great, and the action illustrates his ordinariness as well as brings out his potentialities for greatness. Thus, Raju is just ordinary; the action flows out of his character, and shows his attainment of maturity. All the events are organized round this central theme and this imparts unity and coherence to the plot. There is nothing superfluous or external, every event that takes place has a bearing on the hero's character takes him a step forward towards maturity. There are also comic elements which provide dramatic relief, sustain interest, give additional emphasis on action, and also serve as a sort of subplot without, in reality, being one. As the events follow each other logically, and are causally linked together, the end is implicit in the beginning. In the beginning there is disorder, usually a conflict between traditional morality and individual aspiration and by the end, the conflict is resolved, either by death or by the acceptance of the existing order. All these remarks are applicable to *The Guide* and can easily be illustrated from the novel.

The action of the novel flows out in two streams or currents, and two threads have been knit into a single whole by the presence of Raju in both of them, and by an intricate pattern of parallelism and contrast. One stream flows in the legendary Malgudi with its rich tradition of classical dances offered by Rosie-Nalini and the breath-taking cave—paintings that Marco uses in his book, *The Cultural History of South India*. Another stream flows in the neighbouring town of Mangal, when the spiritual aspect of

Indian culture is presented through Raju's growth into a Swami. Raju's presence in both the strains indicates the close affinity between art and spirituality in India.

Growth and maturity of Raju is paralleled in the growth of Malgudi from a small town to a big city. There are no railways and no railway station in the beginning, but as Raju grows, Malgudi also grows. Raju plays on sand and gravel heaped for the construction of the station, and learns vulgar abuses from the labourers. The rails are laid and the station is built, and Malgudi is connected with the outside world. Raju also grows from a school boy into a railway stall keeper, and acquires bits of knowledge by reading magazines, newspapers and books which he stocks. As Malgudi grows, Raju also grows into 'Railway Raju', the popular tourist guide.

Further, as Raju is the creator of Nalini, the dancer, Velan is the creator of Raju, the swami and martyr. Further, just as Raju narrates to Velan the story of his past, Rosie narrates to Raju the story of her own experiences with Marco from the time Raju left her with Marco in the cave to the time she came to stay with Raju. While narrating this part of the story Raju allows Rosie to speak for herself in the same way as Narayan has allowed Raju to narrate the first part of his life that ended with his lock-up. This story within the story reminds one of the inset story of 'The Man on the Hill' in Fielding's *Tom Jones*. In this way, both Raju and Rosie present themselves as they wanted to be seen by their admirers, in the first case Raju and in the second case, Velan. Thus, we find a number of parallels used in the construction of plot.

The plot of the novel is made up of commonplace ordinary events. There is nothing extraordinary, thrilling or sensational either in character or event. But the interest of the readers is sustained by Narayan's humour, irony and wit which envelop the entire action from the beginning to the end. Irony and wit are woven into the very texture of Narayan's admirable prose. Narayan looks, with a merry twinkle in his eyes at the spectacle of Railway Raju as he moves through life, making ridiculous, absurd and bumbling attempts at maturity and self-fulfilment. This hilarious comedy, enacted against the backdrop of Malgudi and its environs, forms a kind of comic sub-plot to the serious main plot of the novel. It contributes to the entertainment value of the novel, and makes even the ordinary and commonplace interesting and amusing. The end of the novel is characterized by ambiguity, and has naturally attracted much critical attention.

The novel is a realistic art form; it is its realism which distinguishes it from romance. But in Narayan's plots there is usually a mixture of real and fantasy. The action begins realistically with commonplace events and characters but soon there is an intrusion of much that is improbable, unreal and fantastic. These two elements—the realistic and the fantastic—are fused into a single whole. There is no 'organic compound' but mere 'mechanical mixture'. This intrusion of the improbable and the fantastic is regarded as a serious fault of Narayan's plots, but the plot of *The Guide* is to a great extent free from this fault.

Narayan's is an art which conceals art. His plots are a delightful mixture of realism, fantasy, poetry and perception and gaiety. In this respect, he stands alone among Indians writing in English, none else has the like distinction.

Significance of the Title

The Guide is one of R.K. Narayan's most interesting books. It focusses on the life of a happy, carefree person who is all out to use people to suit his needs. The story is set in Malgudi whose inhabitants consist of a mix of people of different cultures and traditions. These people, with their beliefs and values, represent Indian society overall.

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The title of the story, *The Guide*, is quite apt and suggestive, for it deals with the life and career of Raju, popularly known as 'Railway Raju', who becomes 'a full-blown' tourist guide in his hometown Malgudi and still later the spiritual guide and mentor of the people of the drought-infested village, Mangala. In the interim, he is the guide of Rosie, the classical dancer with aspirations; Raju helps her realize her aspirations when he promotes her as her business manager. This proves to be his nemesis and he lands in jail on a forgery charge.

Narayan's novel is a non-political story that has been acclaimed by many as his finest work though it stands apart in stark relief from his other novels. *The Guide* develops a theme touched on in *The Bachelor of Arts*; that of a bogus sanyasi.

Raju begins his career as a stall-keeper. He looks after the shop his father has been given at the railway station. He loves to read and picks up bits of information by going through old journals and magazines, etc. He is intelligent, observant, and a shrewd judge of human character. He has the gift of the gab and soon gets popular with tourists coming to Malgudi. He acquires detailed knowledge about Malgudi and its whereabouts by talking with the tourists, and uses the knowledge to great advantage. He has a rare knack of sizing up his customers, their means and their tastes. His understanding of human psychology is profound, he never says no, and makes vague, ambiguous statements so that he is never 'caught' even when talking about things he does not know. Soon he engages a boy to look after his stall, and himself sets up as a full-fledged tourist-guide. Raju is a model guide, and those who intend to take up the vocation of a tourist guide can learn much from his example. Raju, the guide is fated to be a guide by chance and temperament. He becomes a tourist guide by chance when he is given charge of the railway shop, he buys papers and old books to wrap articles, he reads book and papers to while away his time, gathers information about Malgudi, never says 'no', gives false information, cheats the tourists successfully and becomes famous as a tourist guide. In fact he tells Velan 'It was not because I wanted to utter a falsehood, but only because I wanted to be pleasant.'

Soon, there is a slight change in Raju's role. From the tourist guide he becomes the guide to one single family. This change takes place as soon as Marco and Rosie come to Malgudi. Marco is immensely pleased with him and engages him as a whole time guide. Raju takes Rosie by storm, as it were, and is able to win her heart and seduce her within no time. He shows himself to be an adept lady-killer, one who can play havoc with the female heart with his bold compliments, smooth talk and flattery. In this respect also, he is a model guide and valuable lessons in the art of lovemaking may be learned from his example.

The next role which Raju plays is that of a theatre-manager or impresario or the guide and manager of a dancer. He launches Rosie as a dancer and manages her affairs so ably that soon her fame spreads and contracts pour in. They earn a lot of money and begin to live lavishly. With his shrewd business sense, he tactfully handles Rosie's career. They can learn much from Raju. They can also learn from him that whether out of jealousy or a feeling of insecurity, a man should not commit forgery, for it is sure to land him in jail. One should beware of mysterious enigmatic people like Marco, for all the time they may be plotting and laying traps.

Raju is an exemplary prisoner in jail. He is well-mannered, hard-working and helpful. It is for this reason that he is quite comfortable in jail and wonders why people dread the life they have to spend there. He does not look forward to going out and facing the world.

Raju can be looked upon as a role model for all prisoners. In this respect, he is a 'guide' too.

On leaving prison, Raju goes off into isolation, a totally broken and embittered man when he is unwillingly mistaken for a sanyasi or a holy man. He cynically decides to go along with credulous villagers who feed him and offer him gifts. He finds his common place observations taken for words of wisdom and soon learns the trick of imposing his spurious holiness upon them. But the joke gets out of his hand. To keep up his imposture, Raju agrees to fast to death, if necessary, to end a drought. In despair and near death, at the end of his ordeal, he confesses to a village leader who, however, instead of repudiating Raju with scorn, sees his past life as a fated preparation for this ultimate moment of truth, when he will become a holy man indeed. Raju, seeing the logic as well as irony of the gesture, insists on going on with the fast against medical warnings and dies as the rains begin.

His example shows that the same qualities make a man successful both as a tourist guide and a spiritual guide. There is an unbroken connection between Raju, the guide who lives for others whose character and activity were a reflection of otherness, and Raju, the prophet surrounded by devout villagers waiting for a message or a miracle. In each case, he is a projection of what people need. His audience in its relation with him never runs into any hard, final refusal. He is there to be used, a tractable form prompt to assume any shape that maybe required. So extreme a degree of accommodation means that Raju's sincerity consists in being false, and his positive existence in being a vacancy filled by others. The events leading from the beginning to the conclusion of Raju's career, the links between the guide in the railway station and the swami in the temple, make up a natural, realistic sequence. As biographical events in a particular life, they display that convincing combination of logic and absurdity we are familiar with in our own lives, when from a certain point in time we look back on the whole and see the logic of the complete pattern together with the queerness of the connections that bind one part to another. But the events in the novel also have a thematic significance in that the apparently hopeless struggle of Raju's submerged individuality to achieve an independent identity. This is why, we are aware so often of a rather frantic quality in Raju's actions and meditations, for all that he keeps up throughout his off-hand, youthfully cheerful manner. Everything that happens to him, even when it is one of the several comic calamities that fall on him, is suffused by Raju's vague anxiety, his not quite conscious uncertainty about his own nature.

The Guide is a tragic treatment of the theme of innocence betrayed, leading to corruption and redemption but in this book Raju can never return to his job as Railway Raju, the tourist guide. Instead, he becomes a 'spiritual' guide and, ambiguously, a fraud-turned-holy, whose impersonation turns into a genuine act of self-sacrificial virtue.

In short, the title is apt and suggestive, for its central figure plays the role of a 'guide' during the successive stages of his career. The novel is a guide to life also, for it tells us both how to achieve success in life and how to avoid the various pitfalls which were Raju's undoing. It is also a guide to conduct, for it teaches us what to do and what not to do.

Narayan's Use of Humour, Irony and Wit

Narayan is the greatest humourist among the Indo-Anglican writers of fiction. His humour is immensely varied and all pervasive. We get in him humour of character, humour of situation or farcical humour, irony, wit and satire. His humour mingles with pathos and

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tragedy; there is a Shakespearean interpenetration of the comic and the tragic. Every shade and variety of humour is to be met with in *The Guide* also.

In *The Guide*, there is a judicious blend of seriousness and comedy, which is well-balanced. T.D. Brunton calls it 'sympathetic comedy'. It is a sort of 'amused detachment' which sharply distinguishes Narayan from Jane Austen, with whom he has often been compared. Narayan's humour is immensely varied and all-pervasive. Here we have the humour of character, humour of situation or farcical humour, irony, wit and satire.

To begin with, there is the farcical humour of the *pyol* school that Raju is first admitted to. Raju's father sends him to school because he does not want him to pick up abusive words from the construction workers at the site of the railway station, but the school master himself is more abusive than the labourers could be. He is also henpecked. Besides teaching his young wards by making them shout at the top of their voices, he cooks for his domineering wife. The boys peep into the house when the master is called inside; they find him cooking in the kitchen. His wife stands close by and giggles when she sees the amazed boys. Then, Raju's discomfiture when he is thrown out of his shop at the railway station and looks at the whole scene from his doorway is more comic than tragic. Again, when towards the end of the novel, a 'fasting' Raju is starving and he goes into the sanctum to have some food, finds the vessel empty and throws it away in anger. Coming out, he explains the noise to his followers and devotees, saying: 'Empty vessels make much noise.'

Even the most trivial details and situations are used by the novelist as sources of hilarious comedy. For example, there is the teacher of the *pyol* school who, 'gathered a score of young boys of my age every morning on *pyol*, reclined on a cushion in a corner, and shouted at the little fellows flourishing a rattan cane all the time, and habitually addressed his pupils 'donkeys' and traced their genealogy on either side with thoroughness.'

There are many other instances of humour in the novel. For example, the efforts of Raju's uncle to bully and browbeat him and Rosie by getting on their nerves as well as Raju's description of Marco and his eccentric attitude to making payments, for he is so obsessed with receipts and vouchers that Raju has the notion that one could make Marco part with all his possessions if one gave a proper receipt for everything.

There is also an attempt to create humour at the expense of lawyers, one of whom is an 'adjournment expert' and the other is a 'star lawyer' who makes it his business to impede the work of the court as much as he can. The lawyer Rosie engaged to defend Raju had 'his own star-value' and he was expensive 'His name spelt magic in all the court halls of this part of the country'; he had saved many hardened criminals and lawless hooligans by setting at nought the laboriously prepared case by the prosecution. He took up Raju's case 'as a concession from one star to another—for Nalini's case'. But he had to be paid in cash for every court appearance and put up in the best hotel in Malgudi when he came there to defend Raju. In his own way, he was an 'adjournment lawyer'. He could split a case into minutes and demanded as many days for microscopic examination. He would keep the court fidgeting without being able to rise for lunch, because he could talk without completing a sentence; he had a knack of telescoping sentence into sentence without pausing for breath. He arrived by the morning train and left by the evening one, and until that time he neither moved off the court floor nor let the case progress even an inch for the day—so that a judge had to wonder how the day had spent itself.

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From this, one gathers the impression that neither the business of running the shop at the railway station nor that of working as a tourist guide is congenial to Raju's nature. He accepts them because he is in search of new roles. It is a challenge that he gladly accepts. It is this attempt to play all roles successfully, whether they are in keeping with his nature or not, which is the major source of comedy in the life and career of Raju, the Guide.

There is humour of character, too, in ample measure. Marco is a queer man, 'He would not yield an anna without a voucher whereas you give him a slip of paper, you could probably get him to write off his entire fortune.'

He 'dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition with his thick colour glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet over which was perpetually stretched a green, shiny, water-proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller.' He is an odd, out of the way character, like a knot in wood. The central figure in a Narayan's novel is an ordinary man with a potential for the extraordinary, and in one novel after another he shows him going about in a bumbling, ridiculous way to realize that potential. He is thus presented in a comic light. Raju in *the Guide* is also such a character, and many are the comic discomfitures he has to undergo in his progression from a stall-keeper to a Mahatma. To give a few examples chosen at random: Rosie returns to him when he was getting used to life without her and sees him in all his nakedness and poverty; the tall, giant-like uncle arrives and he has to eat the humble pie in the presence of Rosie; the idiot brother of Velan involves him in difficulties by misreporting him to the villagers. On all these occasions we are much amused at his discomfiture. The entire interior monologue of Raju shows him in a comic light, as when he realizes that he was expected to fast to bring down the rains.

He muses,

'Did they expect him to starve for twelve days and stand in knee deep water eight hours? He sat up. He regretted having given them the idea. It had sounded picturesque. But he had known that it would be applied to him, he might probably have given a different formula: that all villagers should combine to help him eat 'bonda' for fifteen days without a break. Upto them to see that the supply was kept up. And then the saintly man would stand in the river for two minutes a day; and it should bring down the rain, sooner or later.'

Irony and wit are woven into the very texture of Narayan's prose. At every step we get fine, sparkling things which startle and delight. Narayan has full command over verbal irony. To quote a few examples: (1) 'His interest in us was one-rupee a month and anything else in kind we cared to carry.' (2) 'The essence of sainthood seemed to lie in one's ability to utter mystifying statements.' (3) When Velan prostrates himself before Raju he says, 'God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us, if we attempt to usurp his rights.' (4) Velan says to Raju, 'your penance is similar to that of Mahatma Gandhi, He has left a disciple in you to save us.'

Narayan is the master of irony, and his irony is the instrument of his satire. And Narayan's satire is mild and gentle. In *The Guide*, he has satirized lawyers, government officials, fake holy men and their credulous disciples. He has cast his net wide and roped in all aspects of Indian life. For instance, we are told about the adjournment lawyer that 'a case in his hand was like dough, he could knead and draw it up and down'. Regarding obtaining a drinking permit on health grounds in a state where prohibition is in vogue, Raju says: 'More powerful than the once almighty dollar is the almighty permit.'

Narayan's irony is like shot silk showing different colours as it catches the light at different angles. Narayan is above all a master of irony. Irony is the instrument of his

satire. Narayan's satire is mild and gentle; he exposes and ridicules, but his primary aim is entertainment, and not social reform. Raju's career provides the novelist an excellent opportunity to satirize the government officers of post-independence India.

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New wealth leads Raju to vicious company, drinking and gambling:

'Although I myself cared very little for drink, I hugged a glass of whisky for hours, 'Permit holder' became a social title in our land and attracted men of importance around me I could get a train reservation at a moment's notice, relieve a man summoned to jury work, reinstate a dismissed official, get a vote for a co-operative election, nominate a committee man, get a man employed get a boy admitted to a school and get an unpopular official shifted elsewhere, all of which seemed to me important social services, an influence worth buying at the current market price.'

But these friends of Raju desert him as soon as he is arrested for forgery. However, the fake sadhus attract Narayan's most biting satire. Raju is a criminal, an inhuman monster who could think: 'Personally, he felt that the best thing for them would be to blow each other's brains out. That'd keep them from bothering too much about the drought.' He is merely one of the countless frauds posing as sadhus and living on the credulous people as parasites. Sainthood is reduced to a matter merely of external appearance when Raju thinks of growing a beard to enhance his spiritual status, 'Raju soon realized that his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall on his nape. A clean-shaven, close-haired saint was an anomaly. He bore the various stages of his make up with fortitude, not minding the prickly phase he had to pass through before a well authenticated beard could cover his face and come down his chest.'

However, playing the role of a swami and basking in the adoration of the villagers makes Raju's personality undergo a sea change: 'His eyes shone with softness and compassion, the light of wisdom emanated from them, and he felt like shaking the dust off his own feet and placing it on his head and forehead, as was done by the simple folk of Mangala.'

Narayan's irony is at its sharpest when Raju relates 'some principle of living with a particularly variety of delicious food,' and he mentions it to his followers 'with an air of seriousness so that his listeners took it as a spiritual need, something of the man's inner discipline to keep his soul in shape and his understanding with the Heavens in order'.

Humour inter-penetrates tragedy towards the end of the novel. As the fasting Raju is on the verge of collapse, a whole crowd of men, women and children gathers on the riverbank; they indulge in eating, drinking and merrymaking. The whole scene wears the appearance of a village fair with the fasting Raju as the centre of attraction. Then comes the American reporter and he interviews the fasting fake swami. The entire interview is a brilliant piece of sustained irony:

'Tell me how do you like it here?'

'I am only doing what I have to do, that's all. My likes and dislikes do not count.'

'How long have you been without food now?'

'Ten days.'

'Do you feel weak?'

'When will you break your fast?'

'Twelfth day.'

'Do you expect to have the rains by then?'

'Why not?'

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It is not a yogi but a bhogi that is being interviewed; a fraud and a 'cheat' is being asked to express his views on a number of questions. It is a devastating exposure of 'swamihood' and the credulity of Indian masses. In short, Narayan is a great humourist. His characteristic humour does not result from distortion, exaggeration or caricature. It results from an observation of the common human weaknesses, follies and foibles, and irony is the weapon he uses to expose and ridicule such weaknesses and absurdities.

His eyes take on a merry twinkle as he surveys the panorama of common humanity on the march.

Raju and Velan

As the novel opens, we find Raju sitting lonely and bored in crossed-legged position on a granite slab, waiting for someone's company. A gullible villager, Velan, comes and sits two steps below Raju's granite slab. When asked, the stranger tells Raju that he is from Mangala, 'not very far from here'. He is returning from a visit to his daughter who lives nearby. Raju likes his 'rambling talk' and remembers how he met the loquacious barber just outside the prison gate soon after his release. Raju was not ready to talk about his conviction and sentence but barber guessed that Raju had not committed any serious crime. After he had finished, he told Raju that he looked 'like a maharaja'.

Velan mistakes him for a holy man and entreats him to solve his domestic problem. His half-sister has run away from the house on the day fixed for her marriage and was traced in a fair in a distant village three days later. The girl locked herself in a room the whole day and Velan wondered whether she was possessed by an evil spirit. As is his wont, Raju makes light of the whole thing saying that such things are a common part of life. Then he remembers his troubles started when Rosie came into his life.

Velan is a native of the Mangala village and he is Raju's first disciple. A simple man, he mistakes Raju for a holy man as Raju takes shelter in the old, dilapidated temple situated on the other side of the river Sarayu. He is credulous as he is easily impressed by the platitudes that Raju utters. As it happens, Velan arrives as a godsend to the ex-convict and tourist guide Raju as it relieves the tedium of his loneliness. Raju on seeing him, asks him to sit down if he likes. But Velan is too polite to open a conversation till Raju asks him where he is from. And then Velan opens up and gives the history of his whole family—his father's three marriages, his idiotic brother and the rebellious and sullen half-sister who is his present concern. All the while, Raju keeps adding a little comment in the form of general observation here and there.

Velan mistakes Raju for a holy man and wants him to solve the problem of his errant half-sister. Raju is amused and he readily takes up the role that he is expected to play. Raju has a long habit of solving other people's problems. Velan's step-sister won't accept the family's plans for her marriage. When the wedding day was fixed, she ran away from home and was found in a fair in a distant village three days later. Now the girl sulks in her room all day, and Velan wonders whether she is possessed by an evil spirit. As is his wont, Raju makes light of the whole thing saying that such things are common part of life. He then suggests to the worried Velan that he might bring his sister to him. Before departure, Velan tries to touch Raju's feet but the latter recoils from the attempt:

'I will not permit anyone to do this. God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp His rights.'

Raju feels that he is 'attaining the stature of a saint'. Next morning, Velan brings his sister there. He also brings some food and other offerings for Raju. The girl has

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braided her hair and decorated herself with jewellery. Raju sits up rubbing his eyes: 'He was as yet unprepared to take charge of the world's affairs. His immediate need was privacy for his morning ablutions.' He asks them to go a certain distance away and wait for him. Raju starts telling them the story of Devaka which he cannot complete. Velan and his sister keep following him as he strides across the temple majestically; they also keep listening to him mutely. Velan is of the stuff disciples are made of: an unfinished story or an incomplete moral never bothers him; it is all 'in the scheme of life'.

At first, Raju is not decided to solve Velan's problems as he says to the latter: 'I am not going to think of your problems, not now.' He would do it 'when the time is ripe for it'. Velan meekly accepts. He starts telling Velan a story but forgets it midway as he had heard it from his mother long ago. When he lapses into silence, Velan patiently waits for the continuation. They gaze on the river as if the clue to their problems lies there, and leave. The role of the holy man has now been forced upon him and Raju tries to live up to it.

Another day, Velan is happy because he is 'bursting with news of a miracle'. He stands before Raju and tells him with folded hands that 'things have turned out well'. His sister has admitted her folly before a family gathering and accepted her marriage as arranged already by the elders. They have also lined a day for her marriage because they do not want to delay it any further. And he has come to invite Raju to the wedding.

'For fear that she may change her mind once again?' Raju interjects. He knows why Velan is rushing it through at this pace. It is easy to guess but Velan takes it to be an evidence of Raju's divine powers to anticipate what his disciples have in mind. Raju misses the marriage as he does not want to be seen in a crowd, and 'he did not want to gather a crowd around him as a man who had worked a change in an obstinate girl.' Still at the earliest possible opportunity, Velan comes to see him and seek his blessings along with his sister, the groom and other relatives as well as villagers. They all bring gifts and food for him. The girl herself seems to have spoken of Raju as her saviour and has told everyone: 'He doesn't speak to anyone, but if he looks at you are changed.'

Thus, initially we can visualize that Velan is behind Raju's transformation. By playing the role of a swami, he starts thinking like a swami. But this is not the end of Raju and Velan relationship. It is strengthened when the village is struck by drought.

Velan comes and sits with him at the end of his work in the field every day. Raju speaks and he listens. He is distinctly uncomfortable in his new role and he decides to leave the place but where can he possibly go? He can't go back to Malgudi for fear that people would make fun of him and avoid him. He can't go back to the village where his mother lives with her brother. Nor can he go back to Rosie who has broken all bonds with him since the day he was imprisoned by the court. He hasn't done a day's hard work in life and here he is getting food, clothes and veneration without asking for it and in return he has to involve in a glib talk. People have started attributing divine powers and miracles to him. Their domestic and work-related problems have been solved to their entire satisfaction since the swami's arrival in the temple on the banks of the Sarayu. Raju therefore, decides to stay there and bask in his new found glory.

Velan plays a crucial role in the swami's fast to propitiate the rain gods when there is drought in the region. There is starvation and the prices of essential commodities rise, leading to a clash between Velan and the villagers and a local shopkeeper and his men. Many, including Velan, are hurt. When Raju comes to know of this, he tells Velan's half-wit brother that he won't have any food till the fighting stops. The situation is bad already with no rains and Velan's brother mixes up the two things and informs the

villagers that the swami won't eat till the rains come. Velan and the villagers are overwhelmed. They hail Raju as another Mahatma.

During fast of twelve days, Velan did not part from Raju. He is a true disciple of Raju to whom Raju reveals his secrets of imprisonment and the entire life story of Rosie and his relationship. The narration of the story of his past took Raju all the night. He had mentioned every detail of his career, without a single omission, till the moment of his coming out of the gates of the jail. Velan listened to him with rapt attention. Raju had thought that, 'Velan would rise with disgust and swear,' And we took you for such a noble soul all along; if one like you does penance, it'll drive the little rain that we may hope for. Begone before we feel tempted to throw you out, you have fooled us. But the irony was that Velan still addressed him as 'Swami', still considered him a great man, and promising to keep it all a secret went away for the time being. Rather Velan feels grateful to Raju for choosing someone like him to share his past with. He says: 'I don't know why you tell me all this, Swami. It's very kind of you to address at such length your humble servant.'

The 'picaro turned Swami' had become a world figure. It is all a fine piece of satire on the credulity of the Indians, and on the techniques of sainthood. As the fast progressed, Raju grew weaker and weaker. On the tenth day of the fast, a couple of doctors, deputed by the government to watch and report, went to the Swami, felt his pulse and heart. They helped him to stretch himself on the mat. A big hush fell upon the crowd. Velan plied his fan more vigorously than ever. He looked distraught and unhappy. Raju is desperate. His daily ritual consists of going to the riverbed, standing there deep in water for a couple of hours while chanting mantras, returning to the temple and lying down to be gawked at by people. He feels weak. He wants to make a desperate appeal to Velan to bring him some food. He is one man responsible for Raju's plight. But Velan wouldn't leave Raju's side even for a moment.

Raju's life had become important for the nation and it was to be saved at all costs. It was with difficulty that Raju was carried to the place in the river where he was to stand in the river in knee-deep water. He entered the water, shut his eyes, and muttered his prayers. He opened his eyes and looked towards the distant mountains, and said, 'Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs—'. He sagged down. The end is shrouded in malignity. Was it really raining, or was it merely the hallucination of a starving man? Did Raju die, or did he merely fall down unconscious? Who can say?

Raju is all along doubtful about the efficacy of his fast to bring rains in the parched land. He longs for food and even thinks of running away from the place. But the people's faith holds him back, He resigns himself to his fate and resolves to fast unto death. The news of Raju's fast brings crowds from far and near, and the place hums with activity; it has never seen such crowds before. His fast is an unqualified success, but the ending of the novel is quite ambiguous.

Thus Raju and Velan's relationship is very strong. Even in bad days of drought, it does not weaken, rather it strengthens into a fruitful bond.

Raju and Rosie

In *The Guide*, Raju, Rosie and Marco—all the three are remarkable characters. A host of other minor characters contribute to the tapestry of middle class life in Malgudi—Velan, Raju's parents, Gaffur; Joseph and others. In the very beginning of the novel when Velan tells Raju about his troubles in life due to his half-sister, Raju also remembers

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that troubles in his life also started with Rosie. Raju remembers his first meeting with Rosie. She was not very glamorous, but she had a beautiful figure, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky. Raju is fascinated by 'the divine creature' that he perceives Rosie to be and wins her heart by his sympathy and consideration, as well as showing keen interest in her art. Both of them are born romancers and it is the coming together of two similar temperaments. As William Walsh says: 'She and Raju are two of a kind and they fall in love at once. Rosie is the essence of Indian womanhood. Her husband's indifference and callousness to her aspirations make her go astray while Marco is a totally self-absorbed art historian with strong likes and dislikes.

He is a lady killer. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily. When Marco permits him to go and persuade Rosie to come with them to Mempo Hills, 'he has the audacity to tell her to come out as she was, without changing her dress and added, 'who would decorate a rainbow?' Later, he makes further advances to her, continues to play bold and flattering compliments, and so is able to seduce her.

Both fall in love with each other. Raju and Rosie fully enjoy the beauty and surroundings of Malgudi. They amuse each other; entertain each other and their days pass very smoothly. They pass together one night in the hotel and Rosie becomes Raju's mistress.

Rosie, in the novel, overshadows Raju whereas Raju remains the pivot for the whole part of the novel. Hers is a very complex character. As they say women are the most difficult creatures to understand on this earth, it is very difficult to understand her. She is moody, impulsive and ambitious. These frail aspects of her character have been glossed over in the novel. It was because the character of Rosie was ahead of its times. To imagine a woman leave her uncaring and impotent husband and live with her lover in his house was impossible in the era of sixties. Though she has been represented as a rebellious woman her rebellion has been justified in such a way that it does not find consonance with the novel. To humanize her and get the sympathy of the viewers with her, Marco has been demonized. This is the reason why it is difficult to understand her in the novel but still easy to comprehend.

Rosie is the heroine of the novel. She has a charming and fascinating personality. Raju falls in love with her at first sight and says, 'she was not very glamorous, if that is what you expect, but she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned, eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice?' Her arrival at Malgudi, with her husband Marco, plays havoc with the life and career of Raju, the popular Railway guide. As soon as Rosie arrived at the Malgudi railway station along with her husband Marco, she asked Raju: 'Can you show me a cobra—a king cobra it must be, which can dance to the music of a flute'. Her husband, Marco, told her that they had other things to think of and Rosie was apologetic: 'I'm not asking this gentleman to produce at once. I am not demanding it. I'm just mentioning it that's all.' The husband, however, lost his temper and told her to go and find the king cobra in Raju's company without bothering him: 'Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake—your interests are morbid.'

The marriage of Rosie and Marco is flawed by incompatibility. Though both are artists in their own spheres, due to lack of understanding, this catastrophe takes place. Marco marries Rosie only for his personal comfort and remains busy day in and day out with his pursuits. In this way he has insulted womanhood.

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Even after being in relationship with Raju, Rosie wants to fulfil her wifely duties to her husband. There was a gradual change in Rosie's attitude, noticed Raju: 'In other ways too I found it difficult to understand the girl. I found as I went on that she was gradually losing the free and easier manners of her earlier days. She allowed me to make love to her, of course but she was beginning to show excessive consideration for her husband on the hill.

When that husband throws her out and she has no other place to go to, she comes to Raju. More than the attraction of sex is the desire to perfect her and realize herself fully in her God-given gift. She does not take long to achieve eminence. When Raju wants her to give performances she is not unwilling. But with fame come unceasing demands on her time and energy. She has to fall in to a routine and go round and round like a bull yoked to an oil-crusher. Her weariness of it all is like that of any film star: She is being exploited but sticks it out.

Raju recollects the evening when Rosie comes back to him. He becomes very happy getting Rosie back. Raju is obsessed with Rosie to the extent that, in giving her attention, he neglects everything else. He loses his job and shop, gets into heavy debt, and falls in his mother's eyes too. She cannot bear his living with a married woman, abandoned by her husband.

Raju fans Rosie's passion for classical dance and encourages her to start dancing again. This thrills Rosie for her husband, Marco, had forbidden her to dance. Under Raju's guidance and management, Rosie is on the path to a successful dance career. She gains name and fame and soon they become rich. But Raju starts spending the earned money recklessly. In order to keep control over Rosie, and out of greed, he even forges her signature. Marco has sent some documents for Rosie's signature. After signing the document, Rosie would be able to get a jewellery box which Marco has deposited in a bank.

When Rosie comes to live with him in his house, he takes her in without caring for the sentiments of his mother. Rosie practices in their home, the environment echoes with the sound of her dancing. But if we consider from other side, we find that Raju exploits Rosie for his own advantage and narrow, selfish ends. He says: 'I had monopoly of her and nobody had anything to do with her She was my property.' And a little later,... 'I did not like to see her enjoy other people's company. I liked to keep her in a citadel.' Raju takes all the credit for her success, and is of the view that she would not be able to do without him. But he is soon disillusioned. She rises to new heights of popularity and stardom without him. He is amazed at her extraordinary vitality. He realizes that neither he nor her husband matters at all to her.

With Raju's co-operation and her own untiring efforts Rosie manages to build up a dancing career for herself. Soon she rose phenomenally, reaching new heights and became a public heart throb. What Raju newly discovers about Rosie is also a tribute to the emancipated 'new woman'. He realizes 'Neither Marco nor I had any place in her life, which had its own sustaining vitality and which she herself had underestimated all along.'

Rosie is hurt when Raju gets arrested for forging her signature. She promises to pawn the last of her possessions to defend Raju in court, but tells him categorically that she won't have to do anything with him after that. Rosie proves to be true to her word. She engages the best lawyer from Madras to defend Raju and has to undertake numerous dance engagements to pay the star lawyer. When Raju is sentenced to two years' imprisonment, she closes down the establishment at Malgudi and moves over to Madras,

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where Marco lives. But she will have nothing to do with him also. Her career is on the upswing, as Raju learns from newspaper reports that he reads in jail. He wonders how she can manage without him. But Rosie is managing her career on her own admirably because she has found her *métier* at last.

Rosie's behaviour is always dignified and noble despite her nightlong bickering behind the closed bedroom doors with Marco or altercations with Raju later when she cautions him not to discuss anything in the presence of servants. She doesn't react when Raju's boorish uncle shouts at her, calls her names and orders her to get out of the house where she has come, and is staying, uninvited.

There is enough atonement for her adulterous liaison with Raju which is there primarily because he helps her realize her ambition of displaying her art in public. Rosie's delineation is in keeping with Narayan's delineation of female characters in general. Rosie may have succumbed to circumstances but she remains free from inward taint. That is why she makes such a complete and miraculous recovery, though the novelist, quite wisely, does not restore her to her earlier dubious marital status. Rosie is a strong minded woman who is unwilling to sacrifice her happiness or ambition for the sake of keeping up appearances and staying with an appalling husband.

Thus, both Rosie and Raju are romancers. Rosie believes in 'karma', whereas Raju is a lethargic personality who doesn't want to work at all. Raju's irresponsibility, recklessness and evil deeds become the cause of their separation otherwise, they flourished and managed their profession well. Moreover, Rosie's spoiled relations with Marco brought them close together. According to C.D. Narasimaiah, 'Raju-Rosie relationship becomes credible and acceptable only because of the neglect Rosie suffers at the hands of her husband.' But still Raju and Rosie cannot be called soul mates. Rosie's soul mate is her art, which is dance. She will remain happy until she stops dancing because she gets real satisfaction from it. Thus it is only dance which sustains her even after betrayal by two males.

Theme of Morality *versus* Spiritual Motivation and Aspiration

Narayan is no didactic novelist; he is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships, relationships within the family circle, and relationships centering on sex and money are his ever recurring themes. Whatever disturbs the norms is an aberration, a disorder and sanity lies in return to, and acceptance of the normal. Life must be practical and lived despite its many shortcomings, follies and foibles.

In *The Guide*, acclaimed by many to be Narayan's finest novel, he develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins. The corruption-by-outsiders theme is this time initiated by the tourists. Marco and his glamorous wife, the dancer Rosie. Raju's love for Rosie is delineated as a consuming obsessive passion, fundamentally destructive and terrible. We find that Raju comes into conflict with traditional morality as he seeks to realize his aspirations. The result is the accepted order is disturbed, and there is chaos and disorder. He seduces Rosie and thus is guilty of immorality and corruption. When she comes to live with him, conventional morality is violated, and there is displeasure all around. The neighbours are annoyed, and his widowed mother is obliged to leave the home of her husband and go away with her brother. Raju does not attend to work, has to give up the railway stall and soon is in financial trouble. He is unable to pay his debts and has to face prosecution in the law courts. He is an

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egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and self-centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. We must not act as Raju acts, we must not be over-possessive, so self-centred, and so extravagant and jealous. Thus the violation of conventional norms creates chaos and disorder in his own life and in the life of his social environment.

In the novels of R. K. Narayan, there is a rebellion in the characters who violate the social norms but this rebellion is followed by a return, a renewal and a conformity to the social set-up. Violation of traditional norms leads to disruption, misery and unhappiness. In *The Guide*, Marco snaps his conjugal tie with Rosie when he comes to know of her intimacy with Raju. It is nothing short of infidelity. He says to her:

'But you are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics.'

The traditional world of Malgudi has its own custom of arranged marriage which is settled by parents after negotiations and matching of horoscopes. In Indian society marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and a spiritual union. It has been sanctified by society and sanctioned by tradition. Men and women living together as husband and wife outside wedlock are regarded as sinners and hence do not enjoy or receive any social acceptance or recognition. It is therefore sacrilegious to violate the sanctity of sex. Illicit relationship is considered to be a stigma on those who are engaged in this kind of relationship. In *The Guide*, Rosie, after separation from her husband, lives with Raju as his wife under the assumed name Nalini, without marrying him. Raju's mother who is an orthodox woman is dead against her son's way of life with Rosie. She says to Raju:

'Why can't she go to her husband and fall at his feet? You know, living with a husband is no joke, as these modern girls imagine.'

She doesn't want the tainted woman to stay in her house. It is a moral as well as social sin. But Raju has no regards for his mother's sentiments. So she leaves the house forever. In course of time Raju's love for Rosie is replaced by love for money which leads him to forge her signature resulting in his arrest. Their relationship is finally severed. Thus, their romantic love not only causes miseries and sufferings to them but also to their families.

Raju's self-confidence and nonchalance enable him to make him quite comfortable in jail. But nemesis overtakes him soon after. He plays the role of a Swami, exploits the credulity of the simple people of Mangala who bring to him rich offerings of food. He lives on them as a parasite, and expects food from them even when they themselves are victims of famine and drought. This is certainly inhuman and monstrous. He is a fraud who deceives himself as well as the people of Mangal. But he is soon caught in his own trap. He is compelled to undertake a fast to bring down the rains. It is during the course of his fast that Raju achieves a measure of self-awareness and identifies himself with the community at large: 'For the first time in his life, he was making an effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing which he was not personally interested. He felt a new strength to go through the ordeal.'

The Bhagvad Gita and its *Karma* philosophy regard self-realization or enlightenment as the ultimate goal in a man's life, although the methods for the attainment of this goal may vary from man to man. Soul i.e. *Atman* acquires unanimity with the

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Supreme Soul or Almighty who is *Paramatma* or God. *Moksha* is a state of moral and intellectual perfection transcending the distinction between good and evil, between doubt and faith, between being and non-being. This goal is attainable in present life as per the teachings, sayings of the Upanishads and *Jivan Mukti* or liberation. In the end, when the individual who has reached this stage, dissociates himself from physical accomplishments, he becomes *Brahman* itself; that is final release or *Videha – Mukti*.

Narayan has very artistically interwoven various thoughts of the Bhagwad Gita in his novels. He has presented the theory of renunciation, and liberation or *Moksha* in *The Guide*. Raju, the tourist guide is initially entrapped in the illusory world when the materialistic *Charvaka* philosophy guides and governs his life. He commits the crime of forging Rosie's signature and is accordingly punished and sent to the prison. His foul deeds pay him. He receives his ill fate as per his evil *Karma*. But during his term in prison, he finds time for his moral and social transgression. The prison accrues to him an ideal opportunity to journey into the innermost regions of his soul and shake off his material and social illusions. Thereafter, evolution in the character of Raju is a ceaseless and ongoing process.

It is now that spiritual regeneration takes place. Raju rises above his self. He recognizes the claims of humanity and learns to live and die for others. He may die, but his very death is his spiritual re-birth. Raju has matured, has achieved self-realization and self-fulfilment and has died into a new birth. His example shows that salvation and regeneration, the realization of one's highest aspirations, comes not through self-seeking but through self-negation and self-effacement. One must learn to live and die for others, before really noble and worthwhile achievement becomes possible.

The novel traces the growth and change of Raju from an egotistic tourist guide to a spiritual guide who wants to uphold the faith that the villagers have in him. From an unruly, undisciplined, and selfish man, he turns into a thoughtful, selfless, and disciplined person. The author brings out the transmigration of the human soul from the clutches of 'maya' or ordinary desires to attain 'nirvana' or self-realization.

Sex and Money as the Basis of Raju-Rosie Relationship

In *The Guide*, Raju, Rosie and Marco—all the three are remarkable characters. A host of other minor characters contribute to the tapestry of middle class life in Malgudi—Velan, Raju's parents, Gaffur, Joseph and others. In the very beginning of the novel when Velan tells Raju about his troubles in life due to his half-sister, Raju also remembers that troubles in his life also started with Rosie. Raju remembers his first meeting with Rosie. She was not very glamorous, but she had a beautiful figure, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky. Raju is fascinated by 'the divine creature' that he perceives Rosie to be and wins her heart by his sympathy and consideration, as well as showing keen interest in her art. Both of them are born romancers and it is the coming together of two similar temperaments. As William Walsh says: 'She and Raju are two of a kind and they fall in love at once. Rosie is the essence of Indian womanhood. Her husband's indifference and callousness to her aspirations make her go astray while Marco is a totally self-absorbed art historian with strong likes and dislikes.

He is a lady killer. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily. When Marco permits him to go and persuade Rosie to come with them to Mempi Hills, he has the audacity to tell her to come out as she was, without changing her dress and added, 'who would decorate a rainbow?' Later, he makes further advances to her, continues to play bold and flattering compliments, and so is able to seduce her.

Both fall in love with each other. Raju and Rosie fully enjoy the beauty and surroundings of Malgudi. They amuse each other; entertain each other and their days pass very smoothly. They spend one night together in the hotel and Rosie becomes Raju's mistress.

The marriage of Rosie and Marco is flawed by incompatibility. Though both are artists in their own spheres, due to lack of understanding, this catastrophe takes place. Marco marries Rosie only for his personal comfort and remains busy day in and day out with his pursuits. This is insulting for Rosie.

Even after being in a relationship with Raju, Rosie wants to fulfil her wifely duties to her husband. There was a gradual change in Rosie's attitude, noticed Raju: 'In other ways too I found it difficult to understand the girl. I found as I went on that she was gradually losing the free and easier manners of her earlier days. She allowed me to make love to her, of course, but she was beginning to show excessive consideration for her husband on the hill.

Raju has apparently nothing heroic about him, He is rather an anti-hero, a typical Narayan figure, a common man with a touch of the uncommon, He is just ordinary and not so great or versatile or clever as he considers himself to be. He is one of those transformed, shapeless characters who easily pick up the suggestions of others; his personality is in fact a product of other people's convictions. He is extremely susceptible to the suggestions of others, and this plasticity of response determines his career and ultimate destiny. Raju is an amalgam of several traits; some of them are contradictory.

Raju is so despicable that he appears almost to be the antagonist of the novel until its concluding pages. Raju is arbitrarily cruel, hypocritical, and manipulative from his earliest recounted youth. He manipulates his father into taking him into town; he abuses a local cattle-boy for entering his private play-area; he lies to and takes advantage of tourists; he steals Rosie from Marco; he makes Rosie miserable, chasing away her friends, and becoming pretentious (even forging her signature on a legal document, rather than let her have any contact with Marco); finally, he takes advantage of the villagers in order to get food. These are hardly traits one would ascribe to a 'hero'. He displays greed and materialism matched only by narcissism and hypocrisy, so that he loses even his closest friends; only sudden money saves him, and he soon loses that as well.

Raju is thoroughly unprincipled and immoral. He is a self-seeker who seeks to achieve his goal by hook or by crook. When Rosie comes to live with him in his house he takes her in without caring for the sentiments of his mother. Rosie practices in their home, the environment echoes with the sound of her dancing. The neighbours and the poor old widowed mother are annoyed, but lost in the pleasures of sex, Raju has no thought or care for anyone else. He wastes his time and money on Rosie. By his insolent arrogance, he even drives his mother out of the home. She leaves him and goes away with his maternal uncle.

In the third stage of his career, he becomes a convict, and even this role he performs with enthusiasm, becoming an ideal prisoner. 'Raju did not drill into jail of course; he was taken there for a deliberate act of forgery. This was the one act that Raju did voluntarily and deliberately, it did not happen to him. But Raju was bewildered that such a trivial action should bring down such frightful consequences on his head. 'Once out of jail Raju finds himself drifting into the role of a sadhu. When out of jail, we find him playing the role of a Swami or Mahatma. He plays this role to perfection, for basically there is not much difference between the role of a railway guide and that of a

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spiritual guide. The same eloquence, the same ability to make grand, mystifying statements, the air of knowingness, enable him to play his new role with such success. He is a fraud and a rogue in reality, but he appears every inch a Mahatma. He sits on slab of stone as if it were a throne, and when Velan comes to him and consults him about his sister, the old habit of adorning guidance asserts itself, and when Velan prostrates before him he can speak pontifically 'I do not permit any one to do this, God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp his rights.' Raju felt he was attaining the stature of a saint and later he felt he was growing wings.

Not once does he deliberately try to pass himself off for a holy man, but when he finds that people want to believe in his spiritual power, he cannot disappoint them.' He wants to tell the villagers of his shady past, of his stay in the jail, but he cannot: It looked as though he would be hurting the others' deepest sentiments. It is the public reposition of faith that compels him to act and die a holy man even though he had no inclination towards either option. Raju is both an Indian enigma and a key to the mystery and myth.

Thus, Narayan has always been a student of human-relationships. In his early novels, he dealt with such simple relationships as the relations between students and teachers, between friends and classmates, or relationships within the family between father and son, husband and wife, etc. His powers gradually matured and in his later novels, beginning with *Mr. Sampath*, he studies characters and relationships of a more complex kind. These relationships usually revolve round sex and money. This is also the case with *The Guide*- Rosie-Raju relationship is the most important relationship studied in the novel, and it revolves upon sex and money.

The Guide is a Study of Life's Little Ironies

Like Hardy's Wessex novels, Narayan's Malgudi novels are also studies in life's little ironies. The irony of life may be defined as happening of the undesired and the unexpected; in life we expect something and get the exact opposite, and what we get is not only unexpected, it is all the undesired. Life's little ironies make Narayan's novels, tragicomedies and *The Guide* is no exception to this genre. It is also a study of life's little ironies enacted against the backdrop of Malgudi.

The operation of life's little ironies is best seen in the life and career of Raju. In his life, the unexpected and the undesired always happens, and his discomfiture is sometimes comic, and sometimes more serious. As a tourist guide, he is very popular, and Marco treats him almost as a family member but he seduces his wife Rosie and has a good time with her. He takes pains to dress himself properly so that he may be able to impress her as a well to-do young man of taste and culture. But what happens, she decides to live with her husband who leaves her alone on the station and returns to Madras. When they were enjoying togetherness, she suddenly remembers her wifely duties and responsibilities. Later on, on seeing a picture in a magazine of her husband who has left her alone at the railway station, she says to Raju: 'After all he is my husband...'

At every turn, we find that Raju is a victim of the irony of life or circumstance. He forges Rosie's signature to get the box of jewellery lying with Marco, and everyday waits for the arrival of the box and makes eager inquiries. But the unexpected and the undesired happens. Instead of the box of jewellery, the warrant for his arrest arrives, and he is arrested in the midst of a show before a packed house. He had tried to conceal the facts from Rosie, but now she, as well as others, know about the generosity of Marco, as well as about his own villainy and depravity. He had always believed that

Marco was interested only in dead and decaying objects, but now, contrary to his expectation, he finds that he is quite capable of laying a trap and outwitting him. He had always been of the view that Rosie would never be able to pull on without him, but, quite to the contrary, she does well without him and so convincingly establishes that Raju is a mere parasite who had all along been living a life of luxury on her earnings.

Raju continues to be a victim of the irony of life up to the very end. On his release from jail he takes shelter in a ruined temple, hoping that there none would notice him, but soon he becomes the object of worship of the people of Mangala. The unexpected happens, and the fraud is now called upon to play the role of a swami or Mahatma. He lives comfortably in the temple, grows a beard, light of wisdom shines from his eyes, and wisdom flows out of his lips. He talks big and looks big, the people are impressed, and he is supposed to have magical powers and the ability to cure and heal.

He tells the simple credulous villagers that rains can be brought down if someone fasts for twelve days, and stands in water for a few hours every day. He had never expected that soon he himself would have to undergo this ordeal. But soon there is drought and famine, and he is called upon to undertake the fast. Ironically enough, this suffering and ultimate death is brought about by an idiot. He had told this idiot brother of Velan to tell his brother that the swami will not eat, unless they end their quarrel. But he told them that the Swami will not eat till the rains come. While he had been expecting foodstuff for preparing *bonda*, his favourite dish, the unexpected and the undesired happens. The people come to him with no food at all, for they believe that the swami is on fast, and so does not need any food. He is thus compelled to undertake the fast. In a desperate bid to save himself he narrates the story of his past to Velan. In this way, he expected to make him realize that he is no swami, no Mahatma, but a fraud, and no useful purpose can be served by his fasting. He expected that the people will call him a villain, stone him, and turn him out. Thus, his life would be saved. But the contrary happens. The narration of his past, further confirms Velan's faith in his goodness and nobility; he promises not to disclose his history to anybody, and contrary to his expectations, poor Raju has to go on with the fast.

Thus, we can say that whole text is full of ironies.

2.7.1 Brief Overview of Other Works by R.K. Narayan

R.K. Narayan was one among the three authors who shaped Indian writing in English, especially in fiction. The other two writers were Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. The trio defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established the suppositions, the manner, the idiom, the concept of character, and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel its distinctiveness. R.K. Narayan introduced realism and psychology into Indian writing. He was a close associate of Graham Greene and a person who believed in promoting regional novels like Thomas Hardy. He created an imaginary town of Malgudi and set his works using it as a background. While Hardy is known for his tragic novels, Narayan's Malgudi novels are humorous. Let us now get an idea of what his other popular works were about.

Swami and Friends

Swami and Friends was Narayan's first novel published in 1935. It describes the life of boys in a south Indian school. Narayan's personal experience works in the making of the novel. The plot revolves around the hero, Swami, and his friends. The novel is remarkable for Narayan's understanding of child psychology.

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The Bachelor of Arts

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His next novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* deals with a later stage in a young man's career, when he is about to leave college and enter life. Within the next few months of his becoming a graduate, Chandran is faced with the problem of finding a job for himself. Unable to find a job, he passes the time by sleeping for long hours or walking on the banks of the river. During one of his walks, he sees Malathi, a beautiful girl of about fifteen years, who he wants to marry but due to horoscopes not matching, the proposal is ultimately dropped.

On recovering from this severe blow, part III describes his aimless wandering; in Madras and other parts of south India. He then visits several South Indian villages and after eight months of these purposeless wanderings, he gets tired of this role and returns to his parents. Part IV deals with Chandran's marriage and his settling down in life. Thus, the novel ends on an optimistic note and gives us the message of the continuity of life.

The Dark Room

The Dark Room, Narayan's third novel, was published in 1938. It is a tale of a tormented wife of a secretary, Ramani who due to his irritable behaviour is cynical and makes the atmosphere of the house always gloomy and bleak. His wife, Savitri, is a true symbol of traditional Indian womanhood. She is very beautiful and deeply devoted to her husband. Ramani, however, does not respond to her sentiments even with ordinary warmth. Though they have been married for fifteen years, his wife has received nothing from her husband except rebukes and abuses. Even his children get more of his rebukes than of his fatherly love. All goes well, until there arrives on the scene a beautiful lady, Shanta Bai who has deserted her husband and joined Engladia Insurance Company. Ramani succumbs to her beauty and coquettish ways. This upsets the peace of his domestic life still more. Seeing no way of correcting her arrogant and erring husband, Savitri revolts against him and in despair leaves the house to commit suicide.

She goes to the river and throws herself into it. The timely arrival of Mari, the blacksmith and burglar, who, while crossing the river on his way to his village sees her body floating on the river and at once rescues her, saves her life. Persuaded by Mari's wife Ponni, she goes to their village and embarks upon an independent living of her own by working in a temple. The feelings of homesickness and a tormenting anxiety for her children, however, soon make her restless. She realizes the futility of her attempt to escape from her bonds with the temporal world and returns home.

Such is this simple novel dealing with the sorry fate of Indian womanhood. It suggests no solutions to the problem, still it clearly brings out Narayan's concern for the Savitris of our country. Its plot is more coherent and well-knit than that of the earlier novels, the characterization is excellent, and there is a skilful blending of humour and pathos. Narayan has not preached any sermons, but has vividly and realistically presented a slice of life as he saw it. Despite the view of critics, one feels on reading it that it is quite a successful novel, and deserves much greater attention than has been usually awarded to it.

The English Teacher

The English Teacher, his next novel, was published in 1945, seven years after the *Dark Room*. Probably it was the shattering blow that he (Narayan) received in the death of his wife, which made him incapable of sustained artistic effort, and during this interval,

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he could compose only short stories or sketches. Much of Narayan's personal suffering has gone into the making of this novel. It tells a love story, but a love-story entirely different from the conventional love-stories. It narrates the story of the domestic life of Krishna, a lecturer in English, in the Albert Mission College, Malgudi. Though he is only thirty years old, he feels bored with life in the absence of his wife and baby daughter. They arrive after a few months, along with his mother. Krishna and Sushila, his wife, lead a happy contended life for several months. But then their house is not up to the mark, and so on an ill-fated day they go out house hunting, and as ill-luck would have it, Sushila is stung by a flea, develops typhoid and dies after a few days.

It is a great shock to Krishna. He is much upset, and loses all interest in life and in his work. The only comfort to him is his little daughter, Leela, who now takes up much of his time and attention. He frequently wanders about a lotus-pond, where he meets a sanyasi who can communicate with the spirits of the dead. Through him, Krishna is able to communicate with the spirit of his dead wife, is thrilled, and regains his interest in life. This is the weakest part of the novel, it contains long, philosophical discussions on Para—psychology and the mysteries of the spirit-world. Krishna now meets the head-master of a new children's school. He is very much impressed by his educational theories and gives up his job in the college to serve the new institution. That very night he can commune with the wife directly, for the first time, and an ineffable bliss descends upon his soul.

Mr. Sampath

Mr. Sampath was first published in 1949 in London, and in 1956 in India. It has been filmed both in Tamil and Hindi, and despite some weaknesses, ranks very high in the world of Indo-Anglican fiction. The novel is called *Mr. Sampath* but in the first 64 pages out of a total of 219, his name is not mentioned, though the man exists and is going in and out of the pages. A rather clumsy flashback lets us know the dramatic manner in which Srinivas, who seems till now to be the hero of the story, got acquainted with his future printer. Coming from Talapur to Malgudi, he had wasted nearly a week looking for someone who would print his journal, the *Banner*. He had dropped into the Bombay Anand Bhavan for a cup of coffee and was struck by the personality of a man with a scarf and a cap genially ordering everybody around and getting from the proprietor V.I.P. treatment. 'Who is that man?' asks Srinivas, and is told, 'He is our proprietor's friend. He prints all our bill-books and invoices'.

It is in this way that Srinivasa, the hero of the novel, meets Mr. Sampath, who starts printing his weekly, the *Banner*. The editing and publishing of the *Banner* absorbs all his attention, and he has no time left to think of his wife and his little son. When they suddenly arrive at Malgudi from the village, his surprise knows no bounds. Srinivasa neglected his domestic duties with the result that frequent are the domestic quarrels, which, however, are soon patched up, and they continue to live together, their routine humdrum life. The publication has soon to be suspended because of a strike in the press, largely the result of Srinivas' own mismanagement. The resourceful Mr. Sampath now decides to turn film producer, sets up the Sunrise Picture Studio with Srinivasa as the script-writer, his friend Somer as the financier, and a young man, Ravi, as the accountant of the company. *The Burning of Kama* is the first film to be produced with Mr. Sampath acting the role of Shiva, and a beautiful actress, Shanthi, that of Parvathi. Ravi idolizes her and when he discovers that she is acting the role of Parvathi, he runs on the stage, embraces her and takes her off'. 'I here is an uproar in the studio, much equipment is damaged, and so the film producing venture also comes to an end.

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Ravi turns mad and has to be sent to the police lock-up. Srinivasa is disgusted, severs all connections with the film-world, and revives the publication of the *Banner*. Mr. Sampath carries on for some time with Shanthi who then leaves him for good. Mr. Sampath himself has to leave Malgudi to escape the notice of his creditors, Somu and others. The novel ends as Mr. Sampath bids farewell to Srinivasa. In short, the novel is the story of Mr. Sampath, a clever and enterprising rogue, who can face even the most difficult situations with composure. He is one of the most memorable characters in the annals of Indo-Anglican fiction.

The Financial Expert

Narayan's sixth novel, *The Financial Expert*, (1952), is his masterpiece. *The Financial Expert* tells the story of the rise and fall of Margayya, the financial expert. Margayya begins his career as a petty moneylender doing his business under a banyan tree, in front of the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi. He helps the shareholders of the bank to borrow money at a small interest and lends it to the needy at a higher interest. In the process he makes some money for himself. The secretary of the bank and Arul Doss, the peon, seize from his box the loan application forms he has managed to get from the bank through its share-holders; treat him with contempt; and threaten to take action against him. This sets him on the path of improving his position.

When Balu, his spoilt child, throws his account book, containing all the entries of his transactions with his clients, into the gutter, it becomes impossible for Margayya to resume his old practice. He shows his horoscope to an astrologer and is assured that a good time is coming for him, if only he did puja to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. The puja is done for forty days, with ash from a red lotus and ghee made out of milk from a grey cow. Margayya goes through the puja and at the end of it is full of hopes of a prosperous career. Old Dr. Pal, who sells him the MS of a book on Bed Lye, for whatever ready cash Margayya's purse contains, assures him that the book renamed Domestic Harmony, will sell in tens of thousands if only he can find a publisher. Madan Lal, 'a man from the North', reads the MS and agrees to print and publish it on a 50-50 partnership basis. The book is at once popular and Margayya's fortune is made. Margayya is again ruined through his son, Balu. He had put him to school in great style, getting the blessings of his brother and sister-in-law next door. His wealth had enabled him to become the Secretary of the School Managing Committee, with all that this meant in terms of power vis-a-vis the Headmaster and the school staff. He had engaged a private tutor for his son and instructed him to thrash the boy whenever necessary. But Balu is not good in his studies. He cannot pass his S.S.L.C. He attempts to persuade him to take the examination a second time. The result is that Balu seizes the school leaving certificate book, tears it into four quarters and throw them into the gutter, now the same gutter which closed its dark waters over Margayya's red account book and carries away the School Certificate book. Then he runs away from home. A few days later, there is a letter from Madras telling Margayya that his son is dead. The brother's family immediately comes to his help, though Margayya feels he can do without their help and wonders whether this will change the existing relationship between them. Thus, the theme of the novel is lust for money, but Margayya is no monster of greed and wickedness.

Waiting for Mahatma

Waiting for Mahatma published in London in 1955 is not a political novel, though Mahatma figures in it frequently. It narrates the love story of Sriram and Bharti against

the political background of India during the years which immediately preceded the independence of country in 1947.

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

Sriram, a young man of twenty, lost his parents at an early age. He is looked after by his grandmother who deposited over thirty-eight thousand rupees for her pampered and worthless grandson out of the pension his father. Bharati is the daughter of a patriot who died at the hands of a policeman. She was adopted by the local Sevak Sangh and was brought and educated on Gandhian principles. She is a true follower and devotee of Gandhi. Sriram meets Bharati when one day she approaches him for contribution to the fund which is being collected for the reception of Mahatma Gandhi in Malgudi. Driven by his love for her, he joins Gandhiji's group of followers of which she is a member. He accompanies Mahatmaji in his tour of poverty-stricken villages and acquires first-hand knowledge of the miserable condition of the poor peasants who are suffering from the scarcity and hardships caused by the Second World War and are also the victims of the ruthlessness of the profiteers and hoarders. When the historic movement of 1942 breaks out and Mahatmaji is arrested, he retires to a deserted temple on the slope of Mempi Hill to escape the police. From here, he carries on the propaganda of the 'Quit India' movement. He meets Jagdish, a terrorist and zealous national worker. He joins his new friend in his terrorist activities and helps him first in noting down the messages and speeches of Subhas Chander Bose from Tokyo and Berlin and circulating cyclostyled copies of them among the Indian soldiers and afterwards in overturning and derauling trains, cutting telegraph wires, setting fire to the records in law courts, exploding crude bombs, and indulging in such other acts of violence. The result is he is arrested and sent to jail.

On being released from jail after independence, he goes to meet Bharati in Delhi where she is staying with Mahatma Gandhi in Birla Bhavan. He begs her to marry him and when she gives her consent, goes to Mahatmaji for his approval. Mahatmaji approves of their marriage and gives his blessings to them. In the beginning he promises to be present on the occasion of their marriage, but on a mysterious premonition expresses his unwillingness to do so. After a brief talk with Mahatmaji, Sriram and Bharati accompany him to the prayer ground in Birla Bhavan and witness the ghastly scene of his murder by a misguided youth. The novel is remarkable for its characterization and its study of life's little ironies.

The Man Eater of Malgudi

The Man Eater of Malgudi came out in 1961, and is considered by competent critics to be his finest work. It is an allegory or fable showing that evil is self-destructive. The title is ironic for the man-eater in the novel is no tiger, but a mighty man, Vasu, who not only kills a large number of wild animals in Mempi forests, but can also kill a man with a single blow of his hammer fist. The story is narrated in the first person by its tragic-comic hero, Nataraj, a printer of Malgudi. In his printing work he is assisted by Mr. Sastri who is a compositor, proof-reader and a machine-man all combined in one. Among his constant companions are a poet who is engaged in writing the life of god Krishna, and Mr. Sen, the journalist, who is always criticizing Nehru. The smooth and congenial life of this small group is disturbed when, H. Vasu, M.A., taxidermist, comes to stay with them as a tenant in a room in the upper storey of the printing press. This tall man of about six feet bull neck, hammer fist and rough and aggressive behaviour arouses fear in the hearts of Nataraj and his friends. Nataraj, tolerates him in his room upstairs till he makes himself unbearable by robbing Mempi forest of its wild life and collecting

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dead animals in his room for stuffing them. When even Nataraj's neighbours complain to him about the insanitary conditions he requests Vasu to find a new house for himself. The taxidermist treats this as an insult and sues him for harassing him and trying to evict him by unlawful means. The timely help from one of his clients, an old lawyer, his ability to prolong a case beyond the wildest dream of a litigant, saves Nataraj from the clutches of the law.

Soon after Vasu starts bringing Rangi, a notorious dancing woman and some other women like her, to his room, to the great annoyance of others in the house. But Vasu does not care for their feelings. The crisis, however, comes to a head when the pitiless taxidermist, threatens to kill Kumar, a temple elephant who, is to be taken in a festival procession organized to celebrate the poet's completion of a portion of his religious epic. Nataraj is very fond of the animal. He naturally gets very upset the moment he learns from Rangi, that Vasu intends to shoot it on the night of the proposed celebrations. Nataraj immediately acquaints his friend, the poet, the lawyer, and other important people of the town with taxidermist's wicked intentions. The matter is reported to the police authorities but they express their inability to take any action against him until the crime has been actually committed.

The very thought of Kumar's murder, however, drives Nataraj crazy. Even while compelled to stay in his house owing to the agitated condition of his mind, he continues thinking of Kumar. As the procession passes in front of his printing press, his heart begins to beat with fear. He waits every moment to hear the noise of gun shots and cries of panic-stricken people. He is surprised when the procession passes away without any untoward incident. Relieved of a great worry, Nataraj goes to his office as usual in the morning and to his great shock and dismay, he learns that Vasu is dead. The police authorities of the town soon start investigations. Murder is suspected and the police interrogate Nataraj, his friends, and Rangi, the temple dancer. From the medical report, it is gathered that Vasu has died of a concussion received on his right temple from a blunt instrument. When the police fail to find any clue of the culprit, the matter is dropped. Rangi, later, tells them that while striking a mosquito settled on his forehead, Vasu slapped his temple and died instantaneously. He thus died of a blow from his own hammer-fist. The novel has a well-knit coherent plot, and a fine gallery of vivid, life-like characters. The character of Vasu, the central figure, is a masterpiece. The narration is enlivened by Narayan's comic vision which frequently fuses and mingles with pathos.

The Sweet-Vendor

The Sweet-Vendor, the latest of Narayan's novels came out in 1967. It is the story of Jagan, a sweet vendor. He is religious-minded and has been considerably influenced by the Gita. He is also a staunch follower of Gandhi and tries to live up to the Gandhian way of life. He wears khadi and spins a charkha. However, he is very careful about money and keeps two account books to avoid paying income tax. He is devoted to money, and he is also devoted to his twenty year old son, Mali. Indeed, it is Mali who is the cause of his undoing. He is a spoiled young man, who does not care much for his doting father. One fine morning he quietly announces his decision to give up his studies so that he may write a novel for a novel-competition and win a prize of twenty five thousand rupees. However, the father soon discovers that no novel is being written, his darling son is merely wasting his time. Further, he comes to know from a cousin that he intends to go to America to learn short-story writing there, and that he has already got a passport and booked his seat. To his great shock, he discovers that this has been done by stealing ten thousand rupees which he had so painstakingly saved.

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Jagan makes the best of a bad bargain, and proudly tells the people that his son is in America. He fondly shows them his letters. But he receives another shock of his life, when in one of his letters his son tells him that he has started taking beef, and that they, in India, should follow his example. He receives a further shock when Mali returns home, not alone, but with his American wife, Grace. Later, Jagan learns to his great grief that they are not actually married, but have been leading an immoral, sinful life. Mali now wants to set up a factory for manufacturing story-writing machines. This is to be done with American collaboration, and as his share he needs two and a half lakh rupees. He presses his father to give him the money, for he is sure he has earned that much money by selling sweets at exorbitant rates, and avoiding the payment of income-tax. The idea that stories can be manufactured by electronic devices is a fine piece of satire on the modern craze for machines.

Jagan is now a frustrated man. First, he brings down the price of sweets and thus offends other sweet-vendors of Malgudi. Then he decides to hand over his business to his son, and himself to lead a retired life in an ashram across the river.

In addition to being a front ranked Indian English Novelist, Narayan was a prolific short-story writer. At some stage in his life after the death of his wife Rajam, he wrote nothing but short stories. He has half-a-dozen collections of short stories to his credit—*Malgudi Days*, *Dadu and Other Stories*, *An Astrologer's Day*, *Lawely Road*, *A Horse and Two Goats* and *Gods, Demons and Others*.

Malgudi Days is a collection of short stories involving incidents and experiences in the life of the people of this fictional city named Malgudi that remains central to all of Narayan's works. These stories, very delightfully convey experiences that form an intrinsic part of Indian life.

My Days: A memoir, is an autobiography of R.K. Narayan. Unlike his other texts which normally utilize a fictional setting with fictional characters, the book involves true characters that Narayan met in his lifetime, his perspective on these people and how it influenced his writing styles. It is Narayan's life story depicting people he met and experiences of his childhood. Many experiences we have may seem unimportant as we go along life but in retrospect, when we view these at a later stage in life, we can appreciate how these actually influenced us and made us the person we are today.

Another important work of R.K. Narayan was the translation into English of the Indian epic Ramayana, in 1972. The minute details and subtleties of this epic are narrated in Narayan's simple style. He has also given contemporariness to his translation in order to draw on its similarities and dissimilarities with modern Indian society.

2.8 SUMMARY

- Among the Indian writers in English, R.K. Narayan has a special place in Indian history.
- Narayan studied at his father's school and disappointed his family's emerging middle-class aspirations as he failed his first attempt to qualify for the graduate course in Arts.
- Narayan is unusual among Indian authors writing in English in that he has stayed contentedly in his home country venturing abroad only rarely.
- Narayan is the great artist who has achieved greatness by recognizing the limitations of his range, and keeping within them.

Check Your Progress

12. What is the major stylistic feature of *The Guide*?
13. When was *The Dark Room* published?

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- Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct.
- Borderline figures like Raju in *The Guide*, for example, make the reader aware of this down-to-earth aspect of life that pervades his work.
- The novel is an essentially Western art form, but Narayan has successfully used it to express Indian sensibilities.
- Love, sex and marriage play a significant role in the life of any individual and so they are present in *The Guide* also.
- Narayan has depicted the problem of corruption which is so much a part of India. Even a school teacher is shown to be corrupt.
- Narayan's novels are studies in human relationships, particularly family relationships. Of relationships within the family, the father-son relationship is most frequently studied.
- In *The Guide*, Narayan develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins.
- Rosie is a complex character and Narayan uses her to talk about women liberation.
- In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles, till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity.
- In *The Guide*, Raju, Rosie and Marco—all the three are remarkable characters. A host of other minor characters contribute to the tapestry of middle class life in Malgudi—Velan, Raju's parents, Gaffur, Joseph and others.

2.9 KEY TERMS

- **Mythology:** Mythology refers variously to the collected myths of a group of people or to the study of such myths. Myth is a feature of every culture.
- **Metaphor:** Metaphor is a word or phrase used to describe somebody/something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful.
- **Moksha:** Moksha is a term in Hinduism and Hindu philosophy which refers to various forms of emancipation, liberation, and release.
- **Symbolism:** Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense.

2.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. R.K. Narayan's first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*.
2. *Malgudi Days*, his first collection of short stories, was published in November 1942.
3. Some of the prominent novels of R.K. Narayan are *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher*

(1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952) and *The Printer of Malgudi* (1957).

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

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4. The most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world is that it comprises small-time cheats, street vendors, small businessmen and drifters, who together form a gallery of Indian characters. These are characters who are far from the stereotypes of extreme poverty or spiritual exoticism attached to the subcontinent.
5. Some of the social aspects of Indian society that can be seen in *The Guide* are as follows:
 - Indianness
 - Indian Economy
 - Superstition
 - Simplicity of Rural Population
 - Illiteracy
 - Love, Sex and Marriage
 - Corruption
6. The significant themes of *The Guide* are as follows:
 - The place of woman in a traditional society
 - The moral limitations of a materialistic way of life
 - The consequences of flouting accepted codes
 - The psychological and ethical implications of some Hindu concepts as ascetic purification, *Yoga*, renunciation, non-attachment, *Maya* and the cyclic progressions of life and death
 - The great Indian theory of *Karma* and the various paths of achieving *Moksha* or self-realization
7. Narayan has achieved the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide* mainly through the symbolism of Rosie's name. The non-traditional name is the marker of Rosie's social hybridity, through which the novelist gives a realistic and truthful representation of the social norms and prejudices in India.
8. In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles, till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity. Raju's career from a railway guide to a Mahatma brings out the truth of the statement that, 'Raju never did anything; things always happened to him. His entire career illustrates the drill of a passive character from one role to another'.
9. Marco is the minor character in *The Guide*.
10. The tone of *The Guide* is quiet and subdued.
11. The two narrative techniques that are used in *The Guide* are comic vision and imagery and symbolism.
12. The novel incorporates symbolism as one of its major stylistic features: Raju, Rosie, Marco and various other characters are symbolically presented to give a vivid and realistic description of Indian society and its classes.
13. *The Dark Room*, Narayan's third novel, was published in 1938.

2.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short-Answer Questions

1. How did R.K. Narayan start his writing career?
2. What are the different economic groups mentioned in the story and who are they represented by?
3. Trace the events in Raju's life which take him from a path of selfishness to one of selflessness.
4. How does Narayan use Rosie to raise the subject of women's emancipation?
5. Who according to you, is the central figure in the novel? Give reasons in support of your answer.
6. Do you think Rosie is justified in her relationship with Raju?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss R.K. Narayan's childhood and education.
2. Elaborate on R.K. Narayan's vision of life.
3. Explain how the Guide is a typical picture of Indian Society?
4. Violation of set norms and traditional values leads to destruction. Discuss it with reference to The Guide.
5. Discuss Narayan's concept of Moksha and theory of Karma.
6. Is Marco an ideal husband? Comment.

2.12 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 NOVEL - II: AUSTEN AND DESAI

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Jane Austen: About the Author
 - 3.2.1 *Pride and Prejudice*: An Overview
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- 3.3 Anita Desai: About the Author
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- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Key Terms
- 3.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.7 Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit studies the work of two prominent authors—Jane Austen and Anita Desai; particularly their novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Fire on the Mountain*, respectively.

Jane Austen was one of the greatest woman novelists of the nineteenth century. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living at Stevenson, a little village among the Chalk hills of South England. Her full length novels are *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*. This unit deals with Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in particular.

Pride and Prejudice is a novel of manners by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The story follows the main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of the British Regency. Elizabeth is the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living near the fictional town of Meryton in Hertfordshire, near London.

Anita Desai is an Indian novelist born on 24 June 1937. She has received Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*.

Fire on the Mountain is a superbly constructed novel, known for its rich symbolic imagery and psychological insights. A winner of two prestigious awards, it tells the story of two older women and a young girl.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse Jane Austen as a novelist
- Discuss her art of characterization

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- Analyse the features of domestic novels
- Describe the major themes and events of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Fire on the Mountain*
- Critically appreciate *Fire on the Mountain*

3.2 JANE AUSTEN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.' Her experience was meagre and insignificant, but from it sprang an art finished in every detail, filled with life, and meaning. She possessed the magic touch and a talent for miniature painting. No doubt her range was limited, but her touch was firm and true. She used a 'little bit two inches wide of ivory' and she worked on it 'with no fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour.'

Jane Austen was a very careful artist. She wrote her novels with care, constantly revising them. There was nothing in her novels that did not have a clearly defined reason, and did not contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings of the moral structure. She knew precisely what she wanted to do, and she did it in the way that suited best.

Her Limited Range

The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience. She never went outside her experience, with the result that all her scenes belonged to South England where she had spent a considerable period of her life. Austen exploited with unrivalled expertness the potentialities of a seemingly narrow mode of existence. From the outset she limited her view of the world that she knew and the influences that she saw at work.

Jane Austen defined her own boundaries and never stepped beyond them. These limitations were self-imposed and she always remained within the range of her imaginative inspiration and personal experience. The characters of the novel are neither of very high nor of very low estate, and they have no great adventures. A picnic, a dance, amateur theatricals, or at the most an elopement are some outstanding events. The stories and events are told from a woman's point of view and deals only with such persons and events that naturally come within the range of her novels. Lord David Cecil, a British biographer and historian remarks, 'Jane Austen obeys the rule of all imagination composition; that she stays within the range of her imaginative inspiration. A work of art is born of the union of the artist's experience and imagination. It is his first obligation, therefore, to choose themes within the range of this experience. Now Jane Austen's imaginative range was in some respect a very limited one. It was, in the first place, condoned to human beings in their personal relations. Man in relation to god, to politics, to abstract ideas, passed her by. It was only when she saw him with his family and his neighbours that her creative impulse began to stir to activity.'

Jane Austen was finely alive to her limitations 'and out of these unpromising materials, Jane Austen composed novels that came near to artistic perfection. No other writer of fiction has ever achieved such great results by such insignificant means; none other has, upon material so severely limited, expanded such beauty, imaginary and precision of workmanship.'

Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life. But with her very mental makeup she was incapable of writing a tragedy or romance. Jane Austen was absolutely incapable of writing adventurous tales dealing with romantic reveries and death scenes.

Austen chose a limited background for her novels. Her novels are recognized as 'domestic' or 'the tea-table' novels and the reader seeking anything like high romance in her works would be disappointed. There is hardly any feeling for external nature in her stories and there is little passion in her pictures of life. Whatever language of emotion is used, is forced and conventional. The kind of life that she has depicted is the one which she had put in the mouth of Mr Bennet in '*Pride and Prejudice*'. 'For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbours and to laugh at them in our turn?'

Her Realism

Jane Austen was a supreme realist. Her stories are all drawn from the life that she knew. Emma tells us of a delightful girl who is as she was in the years when Napoleon was emperor. The ordinary commonplace incidents and the day-to-day experience formed the warp and woof of her novels. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his diary that the talent of Jane Austen as a realist was the 'most wonderful' he had ever met with. 'That young lady had a talent for describing involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with.'

Jane Austen described the English country scene with skill and fidelity. She gives a vivid and glowing picture of the social manners and customs of the eighteenth century. She created numerous realistic characters. Jane Austen is nearer to life than any of the earlier novelists. Speaking of Jane Austen's age, the critic G.E. Milton wrote: 'Jane Austen was the first to draw exactly what she saw around her in a humdrum country life, and to discard all incidents, all adventures, all grotesque types, for perfect simplicity.'

Plot Construction

Austen's great skill lies in plot-construction. Her skilfully constructed plots are really the highest objects of artistic perfection. Her novels have an exactness of structure and symmetry of form. All the incidents that are introduced have their particular meanings.

Jane Austen's plots are not simple but compound. They do not compromise barely the story of the hero and the heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, there are several pairs of lovers and their stories form the component parts of the plot. In the novels of Jane Austen the parts are so skilfully fused together as to form one compact whole.

In the plots of Jane Austen action is more or less eliminated. Action in her novels consists in little visits, morning calls, weddings, shopping expeditions, or the quizzing of new arrivals. These small actions and incidents go to make up the plots of Jane Austen's novels. Her novels are not novels of action, but of conversation. The place of action is taken up by conversation and scene after scene is built up by the power of conversations. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, dialogues form the bulk of the novel.

Referring to the great skill of Jane Austen's plot-construction, W.L. Cross remarks in *The Development of the English Novel*: 'No novelist since Fielding has been master

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of structure. Fielding constructed the novel after the analogy of the ancient drama. *Pride and Prejudice* has not only the humour of Shakespearean comedy, but also its technique.'

Characterization

Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals. She portrays human characters with great precision and exactness. Her male characters are almost perfect. She creates living characters both male and female, and draws them in their private aspects.

Jane Austen has an unerring eye for the surface of personality and records accurately the manners, charms and tricks of speech of her characters. Nothing escapes her notice. In this respect she can be compared with her great successor Dickens, who is unique in drawing surface peculiarities. Dickens does not go below the surface while Jane Austen does. She penetrates to the psychological organism underlying speech and manner, and presents the external relation to the internal. In *Pride and Prejudice* the scene wherein Darcy proposes to Elizabeth at Hunsford Parsonage is a fine psychological study. Darcy, if outwardly composed and taciturn, is driven within by a conflict between his love for Elizabeth and hatred for her stupid relations which prevent him from marrying her.

Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of Jane Austen, 'She has a great sympathy for all her characters and their follies and foibles do not annoy her. Jane Austen is never angry with her characters. In *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Collins and Lady de Bourgh are figures of fun, monstrous puppets of silliness and snobbery, to be elaborated and laughed at.'

As a Satirist and Moralist

Jane Austen is a satirist as well as moralist. Satire is an element in which Jane Austen lives but there is no trace of the savage indignation in her writings. Her attitude as a satirist is best expressed in the words of Elizabeth when she says: 'I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can.' It is evident that her satire was sympathetic. Walter Allen, literary critic and novelist rightly points out, 'Jane Austen was a moralist – an eighteenth-century moralist. In some respects, she was the last and finest flower of that century at its quintessential.'

Dramatic Nature of Her Art

Jane Austen developed the dramatic method both in the presentation of her plots and characters. Instead of describing and analyzing the characters, she makes them reveal themselves in their action and dialogues. The plot is also carried forward through a succession of short scenes in dialogues. Though keeping the right to comment, she relies more on dialogue and that is her main forte. The plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is dramatic. Baker points out that both the theme and the plot-structure of *Pride and Prejudice* are remarkably dramatic. He divides the novel into five acts of high comedy.

Her Humour

Jane Austen's attitude towards life, presented in her novels, is that of a humourist, 'I dearly love a laugh', says Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, and this statement equally applies to the novelist. She laughs at follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies.

Folly is the chief source of laughter in the novels of Jane Austen and she creates comic characters who provoke nothing but laughter. Her comic characters are Mrs Bennet, Sir Walter Eliot, Mrs Norris, Mr Collins and Mr Woodhouse. She laughs at each one of them because of their foolishness and foolish actions. Irony is a conspicuous aspect of Jane Austen's humour. There is enough of verbal irony in her novels.

Style

Jane Austen rendered a great service to the English novel by developing a flexible, smooth-flowing prose style. She is sometimes a shade artificial. But at her best her prose moves nimbly and easily and enables her narrative to proceed onward without any obstruction. 'It does not rise to very great heights, being almost monotonous in its pedestrian sameness except when relieved by an occasional epigram or well-turned aphorism. It achieves its greatest triumphs in dialogue. It is not a prose of enthusiasm or exaltation. But it is wonderfully suited to dry satiric unfolding of the hopes and disappointments of the human heart.'

W.L. Cross aptly remarks, 'The style of Jane Austen cannot be separated from herself or her method. It is the natural easy flowing garment of her mind, delighting inconsistencies and infinite detail. It is so peculiarly her own that one cannot trace in it with any degree of certainty of the course of her reading.'

Jane Austen is undoubtedly the greatest woman novelist as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist. Faithful observation, personal detachment, and fine sense of ironic comedy are among Jane Austen's chief characteristics as a writer. Austen's novels mark a big step forward in the development of English novel. Her range is limited but her touch is firm and true. Her stories may not be exciting and thrilling, but the picture of life that she presents has all the charm of vivid narration. Dialogues form a prominent feature of the narrative of Jane Austen. Her stories are dramatic in nature. Her characters are taken mostly from the aristocracy and upper middle class of the English village and its vicinity. She created numerous realistic characters. She presents remarkable psychological studies of men and women, avoiding passion and prejudice. Her novels have a distinct moral purpose. She is the greatest English novelist because of her craftsmanship, purity and simplicity of her style and themes.

3.2.1 *Pride and Prejudice*: An Overview

Mr and Mrs Bennet live in the village of Longbourn which is situated in the County of Hertfordshire. They have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia. The youngest is fifteen years old. Mrs Bennet's chief desire in life is to see all her daughters suitably married and happily settled. In fact, the marriages of her daughters have become an obsession with her.

Mrs Bennet's Expectation

A rich young man by the name of Mr Charles Bingley takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent. This country house is situated at a distance of about three miles from the village of Longbourn. Mr Bingley begins to live in this house with his sister, Caroline Bingley, as his housekeeper. He has a friend by the name of Mr Darcy who joins him at Netherfield Park for a short stay, but continues to stay there for a couple of months. Mrs Hurst, a married sister of Mr Bingley, also comes with her husband to stay at Netherfield Park. Mrs Bennet feels very glad to know that the new occupant of Netherfield Park is a rich bachelor. She tells her husband that there is every

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possibility that Mr Bingley would choose one of their daughters as his would-be wife. Mr Bennet does not share his wife's enthusiasm though he too would like Mr Bingley to choose one of his daughters as his future wife. As Mrs Bennet is a woman of a mean intelligence, and as her talk is very often foolish, Mr Bennet had got into the habit of making sarcastic remarks to her and about her. In other words, he often pokes fun at her.

Mr Darcy, a Very Proud Man; Elizabeth's Prejudice against Him

An assembly is held periodically in the town of Meryton which is situated at a distance of about one mile from Longbourn. This assembly is a kind of social gathering which is attended by all the respectable families of the town and the neighbouring villages. At the first assembly, which is attended by Mr Bingley and the other inmates of Netherfield Park, Mr Bingley feels greatly attracted to Jane Bennet who is the prettiest of the Bennet sisters. He asks Jane for a dance, and she gladly accepts his request. In fact, he dances with her a second time also. Mr Bingley suggests to his friend Mr Darcy that the latter should not stand idle but should dance. He suggests that Mr Darcy should dance with Elizabeth Bennet who is sitting nearby. Mr Darcy, however, replies that this girl is not attractive enough to tempt him to dance with her. Elizabeth overhears this remark and conceives a dislike for the man who has made such a disparaging remark about her in her hearing. In fact, from this time onwards, she becomes prejudiced against him. Darcy, on his part, is a very proud man. Like Mr Bingley, Darcy is also a very rich and a handsome bachelor. Any girl in this neighbourhood would be glad to marry him, but this pride is a most disagreeable trait of his character. Mrs Bennet describes him to her husband as a haughty and horrid man. In fact, everybody at the assembly finds him to be too proud.

Mr Bingley, Expected to Propose Marriage to Jane

Mr Bingley's preference for Jane Bennet is noticed by everybody at the assembly. In fact, both Mr Bingley and Jane have felt mutually attracted to each other. Mr Bingley's two sisters, Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst, also develop a liking for Jane. In fact Miss Bingley invites Jane to dinner at Netherfield Park; and the Bennet family considers this invitation to be a great honour and also a golden opportunity for Jane. Jane goes to Netherfield Park but catches cold on the way because it has been raining. The consequence of her indisposition is that she has to stay on at Netherfield Park for about a week during which Elizabeth also joins her in order to attend upon her. The intimacy between Jane and Mr Bingley's sisters now increases; and both Jane and Elizabeth begin to think that Mr Bingley would surely propose marriage to Jane soon. However, Miss Bingley does not feel any liking for Elizabeth. In fact, Miss Bingley begins to feel jealous of Elizabeth.

A Change in Mr Darcy's Attitude to Elizabeth

In the meantime, Mr Darcy's attitude towards Elizabeth changes. On a closer acquaintance with her, he finds that there is, after all, a good deal of charm about this girl. She has a very intelligent face; and she has dark eyes which add the charm of her countenance. She also has a pleasing figure and a lively temperament. Mr Darcy begins actually to like this girl of whom he had originally disapproved even for the purpose of dancing. Miss Bingley begins to dislike Elizabeth all the more because she finds Mr Darcy feeling inclined towards her (Elizabeth). Miss Bingley wants Mr Darcy for herself. In other words, she hopes that Mr Darcy might marry her; and therefore Miss Bingley

would not like any other girl to catch Mr Darcy's fancy and thus to come in her way. It is during Elizabeth's enforced stay with her sister Jane at Netherfield Park that Mr Darcy gets the opportunity to interact with Elizabeth with Mr Bingley and Miss Bingley participating in those conversations.

Miss Charlotte Lucas, the Daughter of Sir William Lucas

Within a walking distance of Longburn, there lives a family which is on visiting terms with the Bonnet family. The head of that family is Sir William Lucas, and he lives in a house, which he has named 'Lucas Lodge' with his wife and several children, the eldest of whom is Charlotte Lucas, aged twenty-seven years. Charlotte is a great friend of Elizabeth; and they always like to talk to each other frankly.

Charlotte expresses to Elizabeth her view that Mr Bingley has felt greatly attracted by Jane and might marry her if Jane encourages him and reciprocates his interest in her. Elizabeth agrees with this view.

Elizabeth's Continuing Prejudice and Darcy's Continuing Pride

Elizabeth finds herself no closer to Mr Darcy. If anything, the rift between them has become wider. Mr Darcy would certainly like to marry Elizabeth but he finds that she belongs to much lower status than he does, and he, therefore, finds it most improper on his part to marry a girl of that status. Elizabeth continuing to harbour her original prejudice against Mr Darcy does not show any special attention to him. In fact, in the course of a conversation, Elizabeth says to him that he has a strong tendency to hate everybody, while he says in reply that she has a strong tendency deliberately to misunderstand everybody.

Mr Collins's Proposal of Marriage, Rejected by Elizabeth

Mr Collins now appears on the scene at Longburn. He is a cousin of Mr Bennet; and he is the man to whom Mr Bennet's whole property is entailed. On Mr Bennet's death, Mr Collins would inherit Mr Bennet's property because Mr Bennet has no male issue. On Mr Bennet's death, therefore, Mrs Bennet and her daughters would find themselves impoverished. Mr Collins comes on a visit to the Bennet family, his intention being to choose one of the Bennet sisters and propose marriage to her. As Jane is expected by everybody to marry Mr Bingley, Mr Collins makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, however, has found Mr Collins to be an oddity, that is, a queer kind of man. Mr Collins speaks a good deal about his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh who has been kind enough to him to confer living upon him and appoint him the rector at Hunsford. The manner in which he talks about Lady Catherine shows him to be an accomplished flatterer. At the same time, he has too high an opinion of himself. Elizabeth, therefore, rejects Mr Collins.

Elizabeth's Prejudice Deepened by Mr Wickham's Account

Another character now enters the story. He is Mr George Wickham, an officer in the militia regiment which is stationed near the town of Merytown. Mr Wickham and Mr Darcy had known each other since their boyhood because Mr Wickham's father was the steward to Mr Darcy's father. Mr Wickham has certain grievances against Mr Darcy, though these grievances are baseless and show only Mr Wickham's ill-will towards Mr Darcy. In the course of a social gathering, Mr Wickham gets acquainted with Elizabeth and tells her his grievances against Mr Darcy, emphasizing the fact that Mr Darcy is a

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very handsome man and whose talk is very interesting. In fact, she fancies herself as being in love with Mr Wickham. If Mr Wickham were to propose marriage to her, she would probably have accepted the proposal. In any case, she now feels further prejudiced against Mr Darcy because of Mr Wickham's tale of injustices and wrongs which, according to his account, he has suffered at Mr Darcy's hands. At the ball which Mr Bingley has arranged at Netherfield Park, Elizabeth is told both by Mr Bingley and Miss Bingley that Mr Wickham is an undesirable man, and that he seems to have told many lies to her about Mr Darcy; but Elizabeth is not convinced by what she is told by them. She cannot believe that Mr Wickham could have told any lies. In this, of course, she is badly deceived because later she discovers the reality of this man.

Mr Collins, Married to Miss Charlotte Lucas

Mr Collins visits Longbourn again. Having come into contact with Miss Charlotte Lucas, he decides to propose marriage to her. He is very anxious to get married because Lady Catherine has been pressing him to get married, and because he thinks that a clergyman should set an example of his marriage to his parishioners. So he proposes marriage to Miss Charlotte Lucas who is only too pleased by this proposal because, having already attained the age of twenty-seven, she is very keen to get married at the earliest opportunity. And thus, Mr Collins and Miss Charlotte Lucas get married. Mr Collins takes his newly wedded wife to the personage at Hunsford where Lady Catherine is quite pleased to meet the reactor's wife.

A Setback to Jane's Hope of Marrying Mr Bingley

Instead of receiving a proposal of marriage from Mr Bingley, Jane now receives a letter from Miss Bingley informing her that all the inmates of Netherfield Park are leaving for London. This piece of information comes as a great blow to Jane's hopes. Then Miss Bingley writes another letter to Jane, this time from London. Miss Bingley, through this letter, informs Jane that Bingley and the others might not return to Netherfield Park. Mr Bingley is thinking of marrying Mr Darcy's sister, Georgiana, who is a very beautiful and highly accomplished girl. Thus Jane finds that her hopes of marrying Mr Bingley have been dashed to letter, feels as disappointed and distressed as Jane herself. Elizabeth is deeply attached to Jane; and therefore, she fully shares all anxieties and Joys of Jane.

Elizabeth's Visit to Hunsford

Elizabeth now pays a visit to Charlotte at Hunsford. She goes there in the company of Charlotte's father. Sir William Lucas, and Charlotte's younger sister, Maria. Charlotte introduces her friend and her relatives to Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Lady Catherine is a very proud woman and takes every opportunity to impress upon others the fact that she is socially superior to them. Lady Catherine invites them all to a dinner at her house ('Rosings Park') which is a splendid mansion and splendidly furnished. Sir William and Maria are deeply impressed and awed by the splendour around them; but Elizabeth remains calm and composed.

Elizabeth's Rejection of Mr Darcy's Proposal of Marriage

A new development now takes place. Mr Darcy, accompanied by a cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, comes on a brief visit to Lady Catherine who is Mr Darcy's and Colonel Fitzwilliam's aunt. And now the stage is set for another meeting between Mr Darcy and Elizabeth. At a party which is held by Lady Catherine at her house, Elizabeth plays piano and also has much conversation with Colonel Fitzwilliam who impresses her as a very

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kind man. Mr Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam now begin to call at the personage daily to meet the inmates. However, Mr Darcy's chief interest in paying these visit is to meet Elizabeth. Actually, Mr Darcy is now more in love with Elizabeth than he had been before. And so one day he makes a personal of marriage to her. However, in the course of making this proposal, he emphasizes on her social inferiority to him, and he makes her conscious of the fact that he is doing her a favour by proposing marriage to her. As a self-respecting girl, Elizabeth does not like the condescending and patronizing tone in which Mr Darcy proposes marriage to her. She, therefore, declines his proposal. She gives two other reasons for her refusal. One is that Mr Darcy had been unjust and cruel to Mr Wickham; and the other is that Mr Darcy had advised Mr Bingley not to marry Jane. The information about Mr Darcy's having obstructed Mr Bingley's proposal of marriage to Jane was given to Elizabeth by Colonel Fitzwilliam who, however, is not himself aware of the exact particulars regarding Mr Darcy's intervention in Mr Bingley's plans of marriage. Elizabeth has been able to infer the correct situation from Colonel Fitzwilliam's talk.

Mr Darcy's Defence against Elizabeth's Charges

On the following day Mr Darcy hands over a letter to Elizabeth. Ongoing through the letter, Elizabeth is filled with astonishment. This letter contains Mr Darcy's defence of himself against the charges which Elizabeth had levelled against him on the previous day. In this letter Mr Darcy states the true facts about Mr Wickham, exposing that man as a most unreliable fellow and a rogue. In this letter he also admits that he had prevented Mr Bingley from proposing marriage to Jane but he defends himself by saying that he had done so under a genuine belief that Jane was not really in love with Mr Bingley. This letter produces a deep effect on Elizabeth. In fact, her reading through this letter marks a turning-point in her attitude towards Mr Darcy. She begins to think that she had been totally wrong in her judgment of Mr Darcy's character and also that she had grossly mistaken in having relied upon Mr Wickham's account of his relations with Mr Darcy. At the same time, Elizabeth finds that Mr Darcy's letter, though containing a defence of himself, is written in a tone, which is insolent and haughty. Thus, Mr Darcy's pride still remains intact, though Elizabeth's prejudice has begun to crumble.

No Development in the Jane-Bingley Affair

Mr Darcy leaves Rosings Park for London before Elizabeth can take any action on the letter which he had handed over to her. On her way home, she stops in London for a day with her uncle and aunt Mr and Mrs Gardiner with whom Jane has already been staying for the past three months. Although Jane had been staying in London for such a long period, she had not been able to meet Mr Bingley who also lives there. Jane had during this period called on Miss Bingley but even she had shown some indifference to Jane. This creates an impression in Jane's mind that perhaps she is now permanently alienated from Mr Bingley whom, at one time, she had hoped to marry. Both sisters now return home. Elizabeth informs Jane of what had passed between Mr Darcy and herself. She also tells Jane of Mr Wickham's real character as revealed in Mr Darcy's letter to her. Jane feels shocked to know that such a handsome and smart man as Mr Wickham possesses a wicked heart.

Lydia, Invited by Mrs Forster to Brighton

The militia regiment stationed near the town of Meryton has now shifted near the city of Brighton. Lydia feels very depressed because she would no longer be able to lead a gay

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life. However, Mrs Forster, the wife of the colonel of that regiment invites Lydia to accompany her to Brighton. Lydia feels delighted by Mrs Forster's invitation because, by going to Brighton, she can continue her contacts with the officers. Elizabeth privately urges her father not to give so much freedom to Lydia. Her father, however, does not wish to stop Lydia from going there.

An Unexpected Meeting between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy

Mr and Mrs Gardiner come to Longbourn on their way to Derbyshire where they intend to go on a pleasure trip. They would leave their two children with the Bennet family, and themselves proceed to Derbyshire. They had previously arranged with Elizabeth that she would also accompany them on their trip. Originally, they had wanted to go to the Lake District, but subsequently they had changed their minds. In any case, Elizabeth now goes with them. On the way they pay a visit to Pemberley House which is tourist attraction. Pemberley House is a splendid mansion and belongs to Mr Darcy. When going round this great country house, they happen to meet Mr Darcy himself. Mr Darcy was not expected at the house till the following day when he was to arrive here from London; but he has come a day earlier because of a change in his schedule. Mr Darcy greets Elizabeth most cordially and shows a lot of courtesy to her uncle and aunt. There is not the least touch of arrogance in Mr Darcy's attitude at this time. Both Mr and Mrs Gardiner's get the feeling that Mr Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. On the next day, Mr Darcy calls on Mr and Mrs Gardiner and Elizabeth at the inn where they are staying in the nearby town of Lambton. He brings his sister Georgiana with him. This visit further strengthens Mr and Mrs Gardiner's belief that Mr Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. Elizabeth too gets the same impression.

The News of Lydia's Elopement with Mr Wickham

Now Elizabeth has also begun to feel attracted towards Mr Darcy. This attraction had begun at Hunsford after Elizabeth had gone through Mr Darcy's letter. It is now likely that Mr Darcy would renew his proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. But an unexpected event occurs to disturb the peace of the Bennet family. Colonel Forster informs Mr Bennet by an express letter that Lydia, who was staying with Mrs Forster in Bridgton, had eloped with Mr Wickham whom she had been meeting frequently. When Elizabeth learns this sad news from a letter written to her by Jane, she tells her uncle and aunt that she must get back home to provide whatever comfort she can to her parents in this crisis. She also tells Mr Darcy of what has happened.

Elizabeth, Back at Longbourn

Mr and Mrs Gardiner now cut short their holiday and return with Elizabeth to Longbourn. Mrs Bennet is almost crazy with grief at Lydia's misconduct and at the disgrace which Lydia has brought to the family. Mr Gardiner now also proceeds to London in order to help Mr Bennet in his efforts to trace Lydia. After a few days Mr Bennet returns to Longbourn, having failed in his efforts to trace Lydia or Mr Wickham. Mrs Gardiner now leaves Longbourn with her children, and joins her husband in London where they have their home. Mr Bennet feels most repentant of having always indulged Lydia's desires and whims.

After a few days, Mr Bennet receives a letter from Mr Gardiner. According to the information contained in this letter, Mr Wickham and Lydia have been traced and are staying in London without having got married. Mr Wickham has said that he would marry Lydia only on certain conditions. These conditions include the payment of a certain

amount of money to him. At the same time, Mr Gardiner has informed Mr Bennet that everything is being settled with Mr Wickham and that Mr Bennet should not worry about the welfare of Lydia. A marriage duly takes place after Mr Wickham's demand for money has been met. The Bennet family gets the impression that the money has been paid by Mr Gardiner. But Elizabeth soon learns from her aunt, Mrs Gardiner, that the whole settlement had been arrived at by the intervention of Mr Darcy, and that the entire money had been paid by Mr Darcy himself. This information produces a profound effect upon Elizabeth regarding the character of Mr Darcy who has done a great service and a great favour to the Bennet family by saving the good name of the family. But for Mr Darcy's intervention, Mr Wickham would never have married Lydia but would have forsaken her. Lydia would in that case have been a deserted girl with a shameful past.

Mr Bingley's Proposal of Marriage to Jane

A change now takes place in Mr Bingley. This change is as sudden as the change which had been responsible for his having given up his intention to marry Jane. Accompanied by Mr Darcy, he now goes to Netherfield Park and gets in touch with the Bennet family. He makes a proposal of marriage to Jane which she most gladly accepts.

Elizabeth's Acceptance of Darcy's New Proposal of Marriage

Lady Catherine de Bough now pays a visit to Longbourn and has a private interview with Elizabeth. She warns Elizabeth not to agree to marry Mr Darcy in case he makes a proposal of marriage to her. Lady Catherine says that Mr Darcy has to marry her own daughter, Miss Ann de Bourgh, and that Elizabeth should, therefore, not come in the way. Elizabeth, however, refuses to give Lady Catherine any promise in this connection. After a few days, Mr Darcy comes to Longbourn and proposes marriage to Elizabeth. By this time Elizabeth's attitude towards Mr Darcy has undergone a complete change. All her prejudices against him have disappeared. She now feels that he would be the right kind of husband for her. She, therefore, accepts his proposal without the least demur or hesitation. Thus, Mr Darcy whose pride has by now completely melted away, and Elizabeth whose prejudices have completely disappeared, are united in wedlock. In fact, the marriage of Mr Darcy and Elizabeth takes place on the same day as the marriage of Mr Bingley and Jane.

3.2.2 Important Characters

Character sketch of some of the important characters of the *Pride and Prejudice* has been discussed in this section.

1. Elizabeth Bennet

Her physical charm: Of all her heroines, Jane Austen likes Elizabeth Bennet most. During the last one century and a half, countless readers and critics have fallen in love with her. Elizabeth is certainly not as beautiful as Jane, still she is graceful and charming. There is something indefinable about her charm which cannot be easily analysed. Her beauty does not strike at first sight but takes time to make impression. Darcy does not find her beautiful when he first meets her. She is tolerable. Darcy does not find her beautiful enough to tempt him. But later Darcy says that she is 'one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance.' Elizabeth is a complex character.

Understanding of human nature: Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of

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friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit. She had known Mr Collins to be an affected fool from the first letter he writes to them. She alerts her father to the impending dangers of Lydia's flirtations. She is aware of the vulgarity of her mother, the simplicity of Jane, the pedantry of Mary and the frivolity of Kitty and Lydia. It does not take her long to feel the cynical irresponsibility of her father. Elizabeth, however, fails to understand some intricate people like Charlotte Lucas, George Wickham and Darcy. Charlotte is an intimate friend. Her feeling of affection blinds Elizabeth to her demerits. In case of Darcy, his slighting remark, in the beginning of the novel, about her being just 'tolerable' hurts her pride. This makes her prejudiced against him. As a result of this prejudice, she misunderstands every word and every action of his. Wickham appears, she misunderstands every word and every action of his. Wickham appears graceful and charming. Being singled out by such a charming officer gratifies her and she succumbs to his charms.

Willingness to learn: Elizabeth is willing to learn. The process of her self-awakening begins after she reads Darcy's letter. She begins to read it with a strong prejudice against him. But gradually she realizes the truth of his statements. She now feels mortified at her spiritual blindness. She grows absolutely ashamed of herself. She realizes that she had been blind and prejudiced. This dramatic moment of self-revelation gradually brings about a total awareness of reality. She comes to know that Wickham is a charming unprincipled flirt. She begins to understand that Darcy is exactly the man who, in nature and talent, would most suit her. Her prejudice was wrong, but there was an element of honesty about it. And we love her for her honesty of mind.

Her moral courage: Elizabeth has great moral courage. She declines two marriage proposals: both undesirable but both attractive in their own way. Her father's estate is entailed on Mr Collins. Her connections are very low and vulgar. Her mother warns her that she will not be able to maintain her after her father's death. Mr Collins's proposal at least promises the comforts and security of a home, if no love. Mr Darcy's proposal is still more attractive, because she realizes that it would be a great honour to be the mistress of Pemberley. In these circumstances, it needed great moral and spiritual courage to reject these proposals. But Elizabeth did not want to marry where there was no love. She is indeed gifted with rare strength of character.

Elizabeth shows her strength of character in other matters also. Whenever she faces an act of absurdity, she asserts her independence of mind. She faces Lady Catherine with calm composure and unruffled dignity. When this lady tries to pressurize her to promise that she will not marry Darcy, Elizabeth refuses to be browbeaten by her. She never loses an argument. She is really a spirited and independent girl. She asserts her individually whenever required.

Her sense or wit and humour: Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Mr Bennet is also very witty but he is often cynical. Elizabeth's wit pleases but it never hurts. In her brilliance of wit she reminds us of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. There runs a strain of innocent raillery in all her conversation. Incurrigibly humorous, she does not spare anyone. She is capable of laughing as much at herself as at others. She loves Jane dearly but does not spare her from her raillery. She cannot help laughing even in most serious situations in life. When Elizabeth gives Jane the news of her engagement to Darcy, Jane asks, 'But are you certain – forgive the questions – are you quite certain that you can be happy with him?' Elizabeth, with cool and delightful irony, replies, 'There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already that we are to be the happiest couple in the world.' But she never oversteps the limits of propriety.

There is no doubt that Elizabeth's wit, besides being refined and subtle, never outruns discretion.

Her warm-heartedness: Another quality of Elizabeth is her selflessness and warm-heartedness. The concern she shows for Jane during her stay at Netherfield, the way she walks all the way to Netherfield speaks well for her. She feels concerned at Bingley's removal from the neighbourhood and is genuinely happy when Jane is engaged to him.

Elizabeth is indeed a lovable heroine. Of all Jane Austen's heroines, she impresses and delights us most. We can conclude with Shakespeare's words: 'Time cannot wither her nor custom stale her charm.'

2. MrDarcy

Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance. He is one of the complex characters in the novel. While comparing Bingley and Darcy, Jane Austen tell us that in judgement and understanding, Darcy is definitely the better of the two.

His pride: The first characteristics that we note about Darcy is his pride. It is evident right from the moment he makes his appearance. He refuses to be introduced to any other lady except the two in his own party. He is declared to be 'the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world.' Several instances of his pride can be cited. He refuses to dance with Elizabeth: 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' In Chapter 11, he tells her, 'I cannot forget the follies and vices of others so soon as I ought, nor their offences against myself..... My temper would perhaps be called resentful.' When he makes his first proposal to Elizabeth, his tone is very proud and haughty.

However, there are attempts to justify his pride. Charlotte Lucas does not feel offended by it: 'One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family fortune, everything in his favour should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a right to be proud.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that 'almost all his actions may be traced to pride, and pride has often been his best friend.' Some characters in the novel think that his pride is the result of his shyness. But after Darcy has been engaged to Elizabeth, he himself confesses his having been proud:

'I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately, an only son (for many years, an only child), I was spoiled by my parents, who, though good themselves, allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing – to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own.'

He is shy, but his pride is not just his shyness. And he is not just proud, he is even prejudiced against other people. Hence when he first insults Elizabeth, he is motivated by his prejudice against the rural people who are much beneath him in social status.

Humbled by love: Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. Darcy feels that she is rendered intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He is also attracted by her pleasing figure and the easy playfulness of her manners. He gets an opportunity to observe her more closely at Netherfield where she has gone to nurse the ailing Jane. He notices her exuberance of spirits, and her warm-heartedness. He is impressed by her intellectual sharpness and her sparkling wit. Darcy next meets her when she is on a visit to Hunsford. He repeatedly calls at the parsonage. He is again

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struck by her refinement and his sense of appreciation is shown in his compliment. 'You could not have always been at Longbourn.'

It is Elizabeth's angry refusal of his proposal that marks the beginning of the great change in him. Elizabeth charges him with having broken Jane's heart and having ruined Wickham's life. She also accuses him of not behaving in a 'gentleman-like manner'. This accusation humbles him. The next time, they come together at Pemberley, he takes pains to behave like a gentleman. He wishes to be introduced to the Gardiners. He requests Elizabeth to allow him to introduce her to his sister Georgiana. After Lydia's elopement with Wickham, he saves the family from disgrace. He makes provisions for the man he hates, pays off his debts, purchases him a new commission in the army and persuades him to marry Lydia. All this, he does out of his love for Elizabeth. He himself admits the miracles Elizabeth's love has brought about in him:

'What do I not owe you? You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled.'

His integrity of character: Darcy appears to be a man of principle. There lies beneath all his actions a conformity with high standards of conduct. There is absolutely no duplicity about him. In his proposal of Elizabeth, he does not hide the struggle he has undergone before he finally professes his love. When he is rejected by Elizabeth, he is not ashamed of his feelings. He makes it clear: 'But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence.'

His love and kindness: Darcy's relationship with Bingley, Georgiana and his tenants gives other side of his character. It is his pride and haughty manners that are shown aside when he is in Elizabeth's company. But it is quite another Darcy that others speak of and admire. To Bingley he is an esteemed friend. He has the highest regard for his opinion and judgement. To Georgiana, Darcy is a very loving brother, very eager to fulfil every desire of hers. To his tenants 'he is the best landlord and the best master that ever lived; not like the wild young men now-a-days, who think of nothing but themselves.'

Some critics feel that Darcy's transformation in the second half of the novel is incredible. They regard him as one of Jane Austen's serious failures. They attribute this failure to either her immaturity or to her general weakness in portraying male characters. The fact is that the action is unfolded from Elizabeth's point of view. We see Darcy through Elizabeth's eyes, and her eyes are prejudiced. We have to put together all the qualities of his character to get a correct picture of his personality. The writer has emphasized his negative qualities in the first half of the novel, but his inherent goodness cannot be hidden for long. His pride is slowly humbled through the love of Elizabeth. Darcy's portrayal in no way can be seen unconvincing.

3.2.3 First Impressions to *Pride and Prejudice*

Pride and Prejudice was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification. We can only discuss its significance. Jane Austen is not a psychological novelist. She is a painter of social manners. In the present novel, however, she analyses the interaction of the human emotions like pride and prejudice.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy symbolizes pride. On his very first appearance in the novel, he is declared to be 'the proudest and most disagreeable man in the world.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that almost all of Darcy's action may be traced to pride, but he calls it 'filial pride, his pride in his father now dead', and 'brotherly pride, his pride in his sister Georgiana'. Darcy's pride hurts Elizabeth when he declines Bingley's suggestion

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to dance with Elizabeth. He remarks, 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' Elizabeth at once gets prejudiced against him and she resolves to hate him. Darcy's assertion that he cannot forget the vices and follies of others intensifies her prejudice. She begins to misinterpret all his utterances and actions. If Darcy's pride affects his judgement, Elizabeth's prejudice affects hers. Darcy fails to detect the impropriety of Wickham's derogatory statements about Darcy. She allows herself to be imposed upon. So complete is her trust in Wickham that she readily declares Darcy to be hateful.

Their process of self-discovery starts at Rosings. Embarrassed by the vulgarity of his aunt Lady Catherine, Darcy gets a new vision of life. He realizes that the refinement of manners is not the monopoly of a particular class. His rejection at the hands of Elizabeth proves to him the futility of those things in which he took pride. There must be something wrong with his values as he could not please a woman he loved. His rejection completely humbles him. Elizabeth's moment of self-awakening comes when she receives Darcy's letter. She realises the validity of his objections to the Jane-Bingley marriage. She is now ashamed to think that she has been 'blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd'. She was proud of her discernment and understanding, but she has all along been blind. She is now ready to change her notion. Darcy's role in bringing about Lydia's marriage with Wickham overwhelms her. Elizabeth realizes that Darcy is exactly the man who is nature and talent will most suit her. Both of them give up their pride and prejudice and are united in marriage.

3.2.4 *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel

Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.

Pride and Prejudice deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys and the Darcys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class people. The Bennets and the Lucases belong to the lower middle class, while the Bingleys and Darcys are comparatively affluent. Since they are all land-owners, they have nothing to do to earn their living. The usual tensions of working life are absent from their life. *Pride and Prejudice* consists of a ball at Meryton, another at Netherfield, Jane's visit to Netherfield and Elizabeth's visits to the Hunsford Parsonage and the Rosings. Apparently, nothing sensational happens during these visits, except that Jane catches a cold on her way to Netherfield, Elizabeth unexpectedly runs into Darcy during her visit to Pemberley, or Lydia and Wickham elope towards the end of the novel. But even this elopement does not lead to any untoward results. Darcy, who was expected to withdraw after this slur on the Bennets, does nothing of the kind and in fact plays a key role in setting the matters right.

Pride and Prejudice is concerned with husband-hunting. The chief aim for Mrs Bennet, mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them. The Lucas family is confronted with the same problem. Miss Bingley is eager to secure Darcy's hand for herself. Lady Catherine is equally interested in her daughter's marriage with Darcy.

Jane Austen is also interested in discussing the importance of marriage taking place due to intellectual understanding and emotional compatibility, and not just for beauty or for the allurements of money. Mr Bennet married for beauty and for good looks and soon got disillusioned. His wife had a weak understanding and an illiberal mind.

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Mr Bennet sought comfort in his library or in his walks. Charlotte Lucas knows that Mr Collins is a pompous ass. But she agrees to marry him because he is in a position to offer her financial security. She too never finds real happiness in her life. Lydia is captivated by Wickham's handsomeness. That he is utterly unprincipled is obvious to everybody, for he shifts from Elizabeth to Miss King to Lydia with great felicity. But Lydia prefers to ignore this fact. And she too ruins her life.

The novel also shows the adverse effect of ill-matched marriages on the emotional development of the children. Thus if Mary, Kitty and Lydia are unequal to the demands of life, the responsibility lies primarily with their parents, one of whom is indifferent and irresponsible, the other indulgent and concerned but stupid, Jane too lacks emotional maturity. Even Elizabeth, the best of the lot, barely escapes the ill-effects.

3.3 ANITA DESAI: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anita Desai is one of the most renowned Indian writers in English. Born in 1937 to a Bengali father and German mother, she has been writing since the age of seven. She boasts of eight novels and numerous short stories, articles and literary pieces for journals and periodicals. She has won a number of awards, both in India and abroad. She was honoured with the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*. The very next year *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* won her the Federation of Indian Publishers and the Authors Guild of India's award for Excellence in Writing.

Popular Works

- *The Artist Of Disappearance* (2011)
- *The Zigzag Way* (2004)
- *Diamond Dust and Other Stories* (2000)
- *Fasting, Feasting* (1999)
- *Journey to Ithaca* (1995)
- *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988)
- *In Custody* (1984)
- *The Village By The Sea* (1982)
- *Clear Light of Day* (1980)
- *Games at Twilight* (1978)
- *Fire on the Mountain* (1977)
- *Cat on a Houseboat* (1976)
- *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975)
- *The Peacock Garden* (1974)
- *Bye-bye Blackbird* (1971)
- *Voices in the City* (1965)
- *Cry, The Peacock* (1963)
- *India - A Travellers Literary Companion*

Check Your Progress

1. Who is George Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. Which character takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent?
3. Name the five daughters of Mr and Mrs Bennet.
4. Which of Shakespeare's heroine does Elizabeth resemble?
5. What is the chief aim of Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*?
6. What was the original title of *Pride and Prejudice*?

Desai's writing goes beyond observing the mundane, superfluous realities. To quote her,

'One's preoccupation can only be a perpetual search—for meanings, for values, for dare I say it, truth. I think of the world as an iceberg—the one-tenth visible above the surface of the water is what we call reality, but the nine-tenths that are submerged make up the truth, and that is what one is trying to explore.

Writing is an effort to discover, to underline and convey the true significance of things. Next to this exploration of the underlying truth and the discovery of a private mythology and philosophy, it is style that interests me most—and by this I mean the conscious labour of writing language and symbol, word and rhythms—to obtain a certain integrity and to impose order on Chaos.'

Anita Desai is concerned about 'the enduring human condition'. Her themes are existentialist and include: maladjustment alienation, absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning in life, decision, detachment and isolation. Desai explains how women in the contemporary urban milieu fight against discrimination of various types, but some do surrender before the relentless forces of absurd life. A perusal of Desai's novels reveals her deep involvement in the inner emotional world of her characters. To aid her literary interests she, therefore, resorts to the use of symbols and images. She tries to drum the clouds of the varied complexities of man-woman relationship and also the varying states of human psyche. Desai is a great artist and has employed techniques of stream of consciousness, flashback, montage and reveries which suit her existential themes and her externalization of internal emotional turmoil and tumults. Consequently, her novels do not have a well-constructed plot and a tightly-knit structure. There are episodes, happenings, incidents, encounters and reminiscences. Her characters are both typical as well as individualistic. They are typical as they suffer from a universal predicament of isolation and uncertainty. They are individualistic as they appear to be more sensitive and reflective in nature rather than the mass of common humanity around them. Her canvas is also reasonably large and it encompasses a large variety of characters representing various hues and colours of humanity. In fact, Anita Desai turns novel into a serious, intellectual endeavour rather than an object of mere entertainment. In her hands, novel is a mature and evolved genre fit for expressing sombre and reflective thoughts. Desai is thus a highly evocative, intense and engrossing novelist who makes the modern reader aware of a new perspective to perceive life. Her protagonists lead a tortuous and exacting existence which is made comprehensible through Desai's own keen and profound sensitivity towards life.

London's famous Arts Guardian succinctly sums up the author:

'...One of the best known and highly regarded novelists working in English in the sub-continent. The style she has evolved is lucid, tight, undramatic... her imagistic phase acquires an ambiguous and terrible power—the words hold down the events forcibly.'

Awards won

- 1978 - Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize- *Fire on the Mountain*
- 1978 - Sahitya Akademi Award (National Academy of Letters Award)- *Fire on the Mountain*
- 1980 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction - *Clear Light of Day*
- 1983 - Guardian Children's Fiction Prize - *The Village By The Sea*
- 1984 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction - *In Custody*

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- 1993 - Neil Gunn Prize
- 1999 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction: *Fasting, Feasting*
- 2000 - Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature (Italy)
- 2003 - Benson Medal of Royal Society of Literature

3.3.1 *Fire on the Mountain*: Critical Appreciation

The plot of *Fire on the Mountain* is rather ephemeral and straightforward. The story deals with the momentous actions happening inside the inner-self of Nanda and her granddaughter Raka. After Ila Das is raped and murdered, that ferocious act occurs 'offstage' towards the last part of the book. This coincides with Raka's pronouncement where she informs that she has ignited fire in the forest. Although, there are other significant incidents in the remaining story, the author uses her imagery and her symbolism to prepare the readers for the horrifyingly violent finale. Actually the 'fire' symbolically rages inside the characters created by the author and by the end of the novel the fire completely explodes.

The first part of the novel, *Fire on the Mountain* offers the physical and emotional situation before Raka arrives at her great-grandmother's place. Nanda lives a very quiet and isolated retired life since her husband died. She interacts with very few people, like the occasional visit from the postman which she finds as a disturbance. Nanda's cook, Ram Lal is the only person with whom she interacts on a daily basis. She feels that visitors disturb her privacy which she has in her home while she is all alone. The author has created a setting of Nanda's home in such a way that the reader is left in no doubt about the kind of solitary life lived by her. Carignano, is located besides a cliff and far from civilization. The author has literally and metaphorically created a picture of a 'retreat' in isolation so that she can get the readers to visualise the kind of life Nanda lives. There is nobody to interrupt her peace and for this reason she does not appreciate the visit by the postman as he has brought her the letter which informs her about Raka's visit. Along with the news of her great granddaughter's visit, Nanda receives a call from her childhood friend, Ila Das who wishes to visit her. Both these instances makes Nanda feel insecure about her solitary life-style. In the next part, the story revolves around the relationship between Raka and Nanda. It concerns with the lack of interaction amongst the two. The author tries to establish that in spite of a generation gap, the two have a lot of similarities in their behaviour. Initially, Raka's unwanted visit is treated like an intrusion by Nanda as she feels that her presence is a threat for her solitary existence. Nanda is happy in her lonely life and does not want to take up any responsibility. She is not happy about sharing her home with anyone as she enjoys the calmness and quietness around her. But the letter from Asha which informs about the arrival of her great granddaughter makes her feel anxious about the peaceful existence she has established for herself. Nanda is not keen to give up her freedom and take the responsibility of anyone. She is upset that the presence of Raka will compel her to make conversation where as she is very contented by not talking to anyone all day long, 'Now, to bow again, to let that noose sleep once more round her neck that she had thought was freed fully, finally, now to converse again when it was silence she wished.'

Nanda Kaul's strong-minded disinterestedness and non-involvement is dealt by the author in the novel. This detachment is a result of unfortunate matrimonial relations. The author has protected such ties in her previous novels, titled *Cry*, *the Peacock*, *Voices in the City*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, etc. The

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novels by Desai in a way project her personal yearning to lead a solitary life. She has a busy life, yet she is lonely because of her unhappy marriage to an ex Vice Chancellor of Punjab University. She lived a life as desired by her husband, but she was not satisfied with her meaningless existence. She missed loving care and warmth in her own life and once she got out of the unhappy relationship, she began to live on her own and was not happy if disturbed. She herself began to live a life of a recluse. The character of Nanda is a result of her own unsuccessful marriage. After discharging all her duties, Nanda no longer wishes to be disturbed by anyone. Emotional withdrawal is the actual cause for Nanda Kaul's cynicism towards human relationships. She did not feel wanted or loved by her husband, for him she was just a show-piece and someone to perform the daily household chores. Even though she was a wife of a dignitary and as a result had social standing, but all that was irrelevant as from inside she felt lonely and unwanted. Nanda was very upset because of her husband's extra marital affair with Miss David. As a result of her unsuccessful marriage, she started to believe that being attached to someone will always lead to infidelity and interacting with people socially was a gimmick. Her relation with her husband was very superficial as it did not completely involve her inner being and was completely shallow. Nanda has very painful memories of the time when her husband left her alone so that he could meet Miss David. Nanda likes her solitary existence as she does not want to be vulnerable to being attached with anyone and be betrayed again. Her distrust towards human relations becomes stronger when she hears about the rape and murder of her childhood friend, Ila Das. The distressing matrimonial life of Nanda Kaul is visible in the following lines, 'Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen-he had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a life-long affair with Miss David. And her children were all alien to her nature.' In the novel *Fire on the mountain*, marital ties are shaken because of an extra-marital affair and become the cause of distrust for the characters. In her previous novels, the author has presented unhappy marriage due to discordancy of natures or mental complexes. These aspects have left a deep impact on her and completely changed her outlook towards relationships. They have made her lose faith in all emotional ties and affections required in a relationship.

The conflict between the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and sanity and the need to be involved in the painful process of life is shown vividly in the novel. This wavering between attachment and detachment reflects the need for a meaningful life. Nanda Kaul meets with a measure of success until she is drawn out of herself by Raka's effortless withdrawal that seem to be totally absorbed in a world of her own and ignores Nanda Kaul completely when compared with the latter's flawed experiment. Raka only wants to be left alone to pursue her own secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli. Nanda Kaul wants to penetrate Raka's secret world as if Raka's total withdrawal is a challenge to her because withdrawal does not come naturally to her. In her desire to win Raka's affection and attention she builds an imaginary world around her father but this is of no avail. This action of Nanda Kaul also shows the unsatisfying condition of her own childhood and family life.

Emotional experiment by the author in the story is visible by the way the character of Raka has been portrayed. Remarking about the novel's characters lonely and absorbed childhood, the author states that 'I agree that the experiences of childhood are the most vivid and lasting ones.' The novel makes an attempt to exhibit the essentials of a parent-child relationship and the impact it has on the personality and emotional state of the characters.

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One more facet of the novel outlines how tense and stifled domestic atmosphere affects Raka's tender psyche. The character of Raka is the only child in the story and as a result of an abnormal childhood, she rejects all efforts of tenderness shown to her. She is not like most children of her age who are fascinated by simple things like fairy stories, escapade stories and usual bright things which catch the interest of young children. Raka has a strange mind and is attracted to peculiar places and stuffs. As a character is realized by the readers, it is easy for them to comprehend the views of the burnt house care-taker who believes that she is crazy. He thinks of her as 'the crazy one from Carignano'. Raka wants to remain on her own and unlike most children of her age she is not happy to be in the company of others even Nanda. She wants to explore the surroundings on her own and is very reluctant and uneasy to go with Nanda. She explores her surroundings without telling her great grandmother, she even visits the ravines and the secluded burnt house on the hill on her own. She has no feelings for Nanda; this is clear by the following lines in the novel, 'She ignored her so calmly, so totally that it made Nanda Kaul breathless.'

The author has portrayed the character of Raka as an abnormal child because she does not behave as most children of her age. She does not need anything and never makes any demands. Like her great grandmother, she just wants to be left alone and carry on with her explorations, she just wanted 'to be left alone and pursue her own secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli.' Loneliness by no means bothers her and she is as a result very content throughout her visit in Carignano. Once when she was returning from her routine explorations, she gets late as she goes to the club building to see the events which take place there, she had enquired about these events from Nanda's cook, Ram Lal who called them as fancy dress balls. Nevertheless, Raka is astonished to see the pervert manner in which people are dressed and gets very disappointed. Looking at the conduct of these people she is reminded of her father and his weird behaviour.

'Somewhere behind them was her father, home from a party, stumbling and crashing through the curtains of night beating her mother that made Raka cover under her bed clothes and wet the mattress in fright.'

Raka was deeply affected by the behaviour of her father towards her mother and as a result she has turned into such an emotionally imbalanced child. As a child, she witnessed how her father used to beat her mother when he was drunk. Her mother was always sad and helpless and in her misery did not realize the emotional needs of her daughter. As a result, Raka's distressing childhood years dispossessed her from trusting and enjoying other people's company and their attempts to interact with her. She ignores all attempts made by her great grandmother to attract her attention and she is not interested in listening about any stories from her childhood. Raka was never made to feel pampered as other children of her age; she was deprived of love and care by both her parents, as a result now she is not keen to listen to stories about relations and family. She is, as a result, contented in the charred house on the edge in Kasauli as the surroundings match the sadness and sorrow within her. She likes the solitary existence as by now she is completely averse to attachments. From the story, one can easily understand that childhood years are instrumental in shaping the mental state of the child, the standards of communications of Raka with her parents, clubbed with her home environment have resulted in leaving a lasting impact on the psyche of the young child. The author has called her an accepted loner and equates her with her great grandmother who had also become a loner as result of her married life which was only about fulfilling duties and obligations.

Though, both characters are not loners by birth and have turned into one due to their circumstances. Raka was a victim of a broken house and the reason for her turning into a loner was because of the anomalous conditions prevailing in her house. She has experienced plenty of uncertainty and sourness in her young life. Raka is distrustful and suspicious of all emotional ties due to the violence and abuse witnessed by her. According to the author, she has reached a state of emotional withdrawal.

The author strongly believes that a person's personality and attitude are shaped during younger years, but she does not deny that traumatic experiences can bring changes in the personality of an individual during adult years as well. The author feels that Nanda Kaul became a recluse due to her unhappy marriage and prior to that she was perfectly normal and happy. She was not always averse to human contact. Essentially her craving for solitude was a result of her unfortunate bonding with her husband and her kids. She originally, begrudged the arrival of Raka as it reminded her of her earlier life. Her own children were very selfish and she had very sour memories about them, having Raka in her home reminded of her misery. The arrival of her great granddaughter made her feel that again she would be obligated to take care of someone and will have to perform duties. Moreover, her solitude would be threatened by the child; she did not want anyone to disrupt the peaceful existence which she had established for herself at Carignano. Nanda begins to feel that presence of Raka is beginning to disintegrate her solitude and she is again looking forward to take care of someone. In actuality, Nanda is bursting with affection for Raka. In spite of all the rejection, she has received at the hands of her husband and children Nanda is drawn towards Raka. She wishes to care for her and show her affection.

Fire on the Mountain mainly revolves around the issue of relationships. Relationships of its characters have resulted in adding a lot of emotional aspects to the story. Nanda Kaul and her great granddaughter suffer due to their loved ones. They both began to prefer solitude instead of interacting with people. They liked to live alone and not have interaction with anyone. The author feels that Nanda has chosen for solitude as she is afraid to be emotionally attached with anyone again and she prefers to be alone so that she has no temptations. Anita Desai has managed to add a fresh element to Indian fiction in form of her English novel, *Fire on the Mountain*. With her writing she has tried to probe deeper into the human inner self. The appeal of her writing revolves around how she shapes her characters, who on their own try to battle with their frustrations and anger. Due to her style of writing, the author has managed to establish a significant place in the Indo-English fiction as she is able to continue her texts by shifting the chorus of her works of fiction from outside reality to internal reality and by continuing the course of the emotional experience of her characters, she is able to add a fresh element to the work. She has managed to establish herself as a prominent post-independent English author. As an author, she makes up for the lack of variety in her subject matter by delivering the matter with a lot of strength and power. Her subjects are heart touching and most readers can relate to her writings. Desai's irrefutable topics concerning life and emotional disquiets have made her work stand out from other writers of her period. Desai is able to disentangle the subliminal of all her extremely complex central characters.

Themes

Withdrawal is one of the most noticeable themes of *Fire on the Mountain*. The other themes which are outlined as the story progresses are solitude and need for isolation.

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The themes in their own way are personified in the characters of Nanda and Raka. In case of Nanda, the withdrawal is a result of an unsuccessful and persistent married life, whereas Raka is withdrawn because she has been a witness and victim of domestic violence; alienation in both the characters has been caused by one of the men in their life. Other theme which is unavoidable in the story is violence and existence of voracious characters of the world; this is expressed through the fate meted out to Nanda's childhood friend Ila Das. In the story, when Nanda is waiting for Raka to arrive, she saw a white hen dragging a worm and breaking it into two, Nanda felt she was the worm, 'She felt like the worm herself, she winced at its mutilation.' At the same time, Nanda has been compared to a voracious cat in hunt of the bird, and subsequently she has been shown as a hoopoe bird who wants to hunt and feed her young ones. Even though the author tries to portray the ravine as an illustration of nature and as a sanctuary for Raka, who is unable to tolerate the people of Carignano and the clubhouse, but the ravine is shattered by the waste discarded by the people and contaminated by the smoulder from the vents of the Pasteur Institute.

The Institute functions as a suitable representation for the conflicting nature of people and development, as it works for people by producing serum, nonetheless at a price: the odour of 'dogs' brains boiled in vats, of guinea pigs' guts, of rabbits secreting fear in cages packed with coiled snakes, watched by doctors in white.' The author is not very keen to remember the past; even as colonization presented a superficial magnificence as history of colonization is also associated with vehemence. The postman in the story tries to trace the accounts about various residents in a sarcastic manner, he mentions how corrugated roof of Colonel Macdougall blew off and in the process beheaded a coolie; he also humorously comments about the attempts made by the pastor's wife to poison him and even trying to stab him; how Miss Jane Shrewsbury's cook died because she had poked a knife in his neck. According to the picture created by the author in the fictional story, it is assumed that if people try to retreat from their responsibilities towards others, they are bound to get violent reactions. Failure of Nanda to be able to connect with Ila Das and with Raka became the indirect cause for death of her friend. In the same way, Raka's inability to be close to Nanda became the cause for her to put an end to everything around her as she is not able to survive or endure any of it.

Characters

The characters of Anita Desai's novels are always stronger than her plot, in fact most of her novels are remembered because of the portrayal of the characters. This is visible in her novel *Fire on the Mountain* as well; the plot is required only because it helps in revealing the characters. Desai focuses on the physical appearance of her characters only when it provides symbolism to reflect the inner self of the character or it is integral part of the story. Nanda is the central character in the story and the author hardly mentions much about her appearance, but through her writing skills she has conveyed to the readers about her background and how it has had a deep impact on her thoughts, the author has conveyed the fears faced by Nanda and reasons for her inhibited antagonism, and unconscious want for affection and caring.

The author has tried to elaborate about Nanda's need for isolation by giving a detailed description of her house, Carignano, situated on a ridge away from the activity of the town. The author has explained the readers that Nanda has created these surroundings for herself as she wants to forget about her previous busy life as she does not wish to have duties and obligations towards anything or anyone: 'The care of others ... had been a religious calling she had believed in till she found it fake.' The ending of

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part one of the novel reads, 'Discharge me. I've discharged all my duties.' Nanda wants to live a simple life and does not want any reminders from her past, the author has compared the barrenness of Carignano with Nanda and has presented her state as the 'withering away' garden as she no longer wishes to be in a state she used in her past, 'state of elegant perfection'. The author has presented the surroundings and Nanda's state in a similar manner.

The story of *Fire on the Mountain* is actually about four women—Nanda Kaul, her great granddaughter Raka, her childhood friend Ila Das and the fourth character is of the writer herself, as she is all over the story shaping and moulding each element of the settings in the story. *Fire on the Mountain* remains within the internal layer of an extremely isolated, gendered female cosmos which is a surreptitious storeroom of confusions and contradictory feelings which arise due to extreme situations in life. The novel attempts to clarify the events of life and the reasons for their occurrence. The story attempts to find answers to the problems in the life of its characters.

Literature Appraisal

All the characters in the story are seeking loneliness. They are in a close relationship with solitude and in order to strengthen their relation with solitude they stay away from love, attraction, caring and longing, rather they are close to animosity, resentment, refutation and resignation. The story tries to explain why its characters are seeking solitude and want to be away from people. The protagonist Nanda has started to live a secluded life as she was fed up of her life as a dutiful wife and mother. She no longer wishes to be a part of the shallow life which only expected her to be performing duties and in return there was no appreciation or love. Nanda Kaul withdraws to Carignano, snuggled amid the hills of Kasauli, to be away from the insensitiveness and grossness of the world. Her retreat at kasauli provided her with the solitude she was seeking. As soon as Raka's arrival is announced in the story, Nanda Kaul flinches due to panic as she feels that her presence will end her solitude and peaceful existence that she has managed to establish for herself. Initially, her presence has been presented in following phrase by the author, 'mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry', but after interacting with her great granddaughter Nanda realises that she is very quiet and Raka is also happy to be on her own. Raka is forever exploring the grounds around the house and is most peaceful when she is not disturbed by anyone. The author soon establishes that Raka may be a visitor to Nanda's home, but she is not an intruder and her presence in the house will not become a reason for Nanda to be annoyed or disturbed. Ila Das is the third character of the story; she, also like others in the story is very lonely. With a lot of difficulty after her husband's death, she comes to accept her solitude and tries to live her life peacefully. However, she receives a very raw deal and loses her life after being brutally raped by some tribal men whom she had been trying to help so that they could lead a more civilized life.

Critical Analysis

The story of *Fire on the Mountain* is quite similar to Anita Desai's previous short story titled as *Grandmother*, in that story the grandmother's life story is similar to that of Nanda of *Fire in the Mountain*. In both the stories, the author has established that most of the time, the experiences of the past become instrumental in shaping the present attitudes and psyche of an individual. The characters of both the stories wish to lead a life of solitude. *Fire on the Mountain* is the fifth novel of the author. The story of the novel is also closely connected with the stories of her other novels such *Cry, the Peacock*

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(1963), stream-of-consciousness narrative and imagery has been used in the novel in order to project the sickly psyche of a woman who is gradually putrefying and is a victim of her past experiences. Maya from the *Cry, the Peacock* and Nanda of *Fire in the Mountain* are lonely because of their husband's insensitive and uncaring behaviour. Most of Desai's novels revolve around the themes of isolation and absence of communication in wedded life. This theme can be found in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Desai has a tendency to focus on the inner self of her characters and mostly creates a setting so that the inner self can develop and shape the story to an intense level. Background and character intermingle most obviously in her novel, *Voices in the City* which was published in 1965. Desai's themes and characters offer short, poetic novel or the novella, and for this reason she has adopted a three-part structure in the *Fire on the Mountain* and some of her previous novels. In an actual sense, the construction seems dialectic, as it consists of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis conforming. This can be seen in her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, starting from Nanda's unsubstantiated withdrawal, to Raka's intimidation of her detachment, and the final death and fire which signify some sort of decontamination, and the author's attempt at establishing awareness within its characters.

3.4 SUMMARY

- Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.'
- Jane Austen wrote her novels with care, constantly revising them. There was nothing in her novels that did not have a clearly defined reason, and did not contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings of the moral structure.
- The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience.
- Jane Austen defined her own boundaries and never stepped beyond them. These limitations were self-imposed and she always remained within the range of her imaginative inspiration and personal experience.
- Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life.
- Jane Austen described the English country scene with skill and fidelity. She gives a vivid and glowing picture of the social manners and customs of the eighteenth century.
- Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals.
- Jane Austen is a satirist as well as moralist. Satire is an element in which Jane Austen lives but there is no trace of the savage indignation in her writings.
- Of all her heroines, Jane Austen likes Elizabeth Bennet most. During the last one century and a half, countless readers and critics have fallen in love with her.
- Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit.

Check Your Progress

7. What, according to Desai, are the two preoccupations of her writing?
8. What is unique about the structure of Desai's novels?

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- Elizabeth is willing to learn. The process of her self-awakening begins after she reads Darcy's letter. She begins to read it with a strong prejudice against him.
- Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Mr. Bennet is also very witty but he is often cynical. Elizabeth's wit pleases but it never hurts.
- Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance.
- Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. Darcy feels that she is rendered intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He is also attracted by her pleasing figure and the easy playfulness of her manners.
- Some critics feel that Darcy's transformation in the second half of the novel is incredible. They regard him as one of Jane Austen's serious failures.
- *Pride and Prejudice* was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification.
- In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy symbolizes pride. On his very first appearance in the novel, he is declared to be 'the proudest and most disagreeable man in the world.'
- Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.
- *Pride and Prejudice* deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys and the Darcys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class people.
- Anita Desai is one of the most renowned Indian writers in English. Born in 1937 to a Bengali father and German mother, she has been writing since the age of seven.
- She was honoured with the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*.
- Anita Desai is concerned about 'the enduring human condition'. Her themes are existentialist and include: maladjustment alienation, absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning in life, decision, detachment and isolation.
- The plot of *Fire on the Mountain* is rather ephemeral and straightforward. The story deals with the momentous actions happening inside the inner-self of Nanda and her granddaughter Raka.
- Nanda Kaul's strong-minded disinterestedness and non-involvement is dealt by the author in the novel.
- The conflict between the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and sanity and the need to be involved in the painful process of life is shown vividly in the novel.
- The author has portrayed the character of Raka as an abnormal child because she does not behave as most children of her age.
- *Fire on the Mountain* mainly revolves around the issue of relationships. Relationships of its characters have resulted in adding a lot of emotional aspects to the story.

- Withdrawal is one of the most noticeable themes of *Fire on the Mountain*. The other themes which are outlined as the story progresses are solitude and need for isolation.

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3.5 KEY TERMS

- **Domestic novel:** Sometimes referred to as ‘sentimental fiction’ or ‘woman’s fiction,’ ‘domestic fiction’ refers to a type of novel popular with women readers during the middle of the nineteenth century.
- **Moralist:** A moralist is someone who has very strong opinions about what is right and what is wrong.
- **Milieu:** Milieu means the particular people and society that surround you and influence the way in which you behave.
- **Realist:** Realist is a person who accepts a situation as it is and is prepared to deal with it accordingly.

3.6 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. George Wickham is an officer in the militia regiment which is stationed near the town of Merytown.
2. A rich young man by the name of Charles Bingley takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent.
3. Mr and Mrs Bennet have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia.
4. In her brilliance of wit Elizabeth reminds of Rosalind in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*.
5. The chief aim for Mrs Bennet, mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them.
6. *Pride and Prejudice* was originally entitled *First Impressions*.
7. The search for truth and exploration of style (writing language and symbol, word and rhythms) are the two preoccupations of Desai’s writings.
8. Desai’s novels do not have a well-constructed plot and a tightly-knit structure. Her stories are told through episodes, happenings, incidents, encounters and reminiscences.

3.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the dramatic nature of Austen’s art.
2. Who is Mr Bingley? What relation does he share with Jane?
3. At what point in the novel does Darcy experience change of attitude towards Elizabeth?

4. Why does Lydia feel delighted by Mrs Forster's invitation to accompany her to Brighton?

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5. What is the importance of fire in the novel *Fire on the Mountain*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the achievements of Jane Austen as a novelist.
2. Analyse Austen's art of characterization with special reference to Elizabeth and Darcy.
3. How can Jane Austen be called a domestic novelist? Support your answer with examples.
4. Discuss the appropriateness of the title *Pride and Prejudice*.
5. Desai's characters exist more as abstractions outlining mental conditions rather than living, breathing beings. Discuss.

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3.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 SHORT STORIES

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Reading a Short Story: An Introduction
- 4.3 *The Cask of Amontillado*: Edgar Allan Poe
 - 4.3.1 About the Author
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 - 4.5.1 About the Author
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- 4.8 Key Terms
- 4.9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.10 Questions and Exercises
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

A short story is a prose fiction with a concise form. Contemporary short stories have evolved from tales, myths and fairy tales of the ancient era and the middle ages. Unlike a story of a novel which is a complete account of a particular occurrence, short story systematizes the act, thoughts and conversation of its characters in a plot which is based on a systemised pattern. The plot is presented as per the point of view of comedy, sadness, romance or satire and the presentation can be done employing the description style of fantasy, realism or naturalism.

The short story is considered to be the earliest form of literary forms. For example, the Hebrew bible's tales of Jonah, Ruth and Esther; Boccaccio's *Decameron*; *The Arabian Nights* and *Canterbury Tales* all have features of contemporary short story in them. The short story developed as an autonomous transcript by the latter part of the eighteenth century, its development coincided with the time of emergence of novels and newspapers. Most nineteenth century recurrently published magazines, like *Tatler* and *Spectator*, became an appropriate avenue for the publishing of short stories.

The major difference between a short story and novel is of their length. The basic elements of both a story of a novel and a short story in a magazine are similar; both have common elements such as, setting, atmosphere, characters, conflict, plot of the story and the theme.

In this unit, we will learn about short stories by studying four famous short stories: *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf, *The Fly* by K. Mansfield and *The Trail of the Green Blazer* by R.K. Narayan.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life and inspirations of the author, Edgar Allan Poe
- Explain the summary and themes of *The Cask of Amontillado*
- Describe the influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf
- Discuss the characters, themes and techniques used in *The Duchess and the Jeweller*
- Critically analyse Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly*
- Discuss the style of writing of R.K. Narayan
- Assess the themes and characters of *The Trail of the Green Blazer*

4.2 READING A SHORT STORY: AN INTRODUCTION

The father or originator of contemporary short stories, Edgar Allen Poe has defined short story as a tale which can be read in a short duration. According to him, any story which can be read in thirty minutes to two hours falls under the category of short story; the story has a single focal point and the rest of the story revolves around that 'certain unique or single effect' to which every detail is subordinate. Short stories have a limited length and for this reason the writers have the restriction of including only a few characters and they have to stress on single momentary action. As a result, the acts of a short story mostly coincide with the climax or are in the middle of the story so that it can give full importance to the events and the setting of the story. In order to make the presence of the central character effective, the central event has to be presented well by the writer. Short stories are likely to be less composite than novels. Typically, a short story concentrates on a single incident. Short stories work around a single plot, a solo setting, and limited number of characters; and the story covers a short duration of time. In the story which is focused on events or 'story of incident', the emphasis is on the sequence and the consequences of an event as in *The Golden Bug* by Edgar Allan Poe. In a story, where the focus is on the characters, the story deals with the emotional and moral potentials of the central character. Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables. This category of short stories is mostly meant to give spiritual and religious messages and hence used by various religious gurus and leaders for inspiring and enlightening their supporters.

Stories can be traced to the period of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which were orally narrated to people. Verbalized stories were mostly spoken in a rhyming and musical verse so that it could keep the listeners interested in the tale. The oldest record of these stories can be dated to the sixth century BCE; these were fables by Aesop who was a Greek slave as a result of which these fables in the recent times are known as Aesop's fables. Another form of ancient short story which was famous in the Roman Empire is known as the anecdote. Anecdotes operated as a type of parable, a short truthful description which tries to convey a message. Several remaining Roman anecdotes had been composed as the *Gesta Romanorum* during the period between the thirteenth and

fourteenth century. In this period, in England, several fictitious anecdotal letters of Sir Roger de Coverley were printed.

The tradition of verbally telling stories ended in Europe in the starting of the fourteenth century and they were replaced by written stories like *The Canterbury Tales* written by Geoffrey Chaucer and *Decameron* which was written by Giovanni Boccaccio. Both books consist of independent short tales. Some of the stories are serious and intense whereas some are full of humour; the stories are very well created work of literary fiction. Only few writers during that period adopted a frame story. Towards the last part of sixteenth century many short stories of Matteo Bandello were published in Europe, these were mostly tragic novellas.

France saw the development of sophisticated ‘nouvelle’ (short novel) by authors like Madame de Lafayette during the second half of the seventeenth century. Traditional fairy tales by Charles Perrault was published in the 1690s. The arrival of Antoine Galland’s original contemporary version of the *Thousand and One Nights* or popularly known as the *Arabian Nights* during the eighteenth century had a huge effect on short stories of Voltaire, Diderot and others.

Short stories have a vast extent as it covers a great variety of prose fiction, starting from a short story (flash fiction) with limited word limit of possibly five hundred words to a novelette or novella which is lengthier than a short story but smaller than a novel. This kind of short stories was mainly used in Germany and it was popularised in 1795 by Goethe.

Some of the initial experts of short story in America were Washington Irving, Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. In England, Sir Walter Scott and Mary Shelly were known short story writers. E.T.A Hoffmann in Germany, Balzac in France and Gogol, Pushkin and Turgenev in Russia. Writers like Charles Dickens, Anton Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy, William Trevor, Herman Hesse, Vladimir Nabakov, Virginia Woolf, Rudyard Kipling, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, P.G Wodehouse, J.D Salinger, H.P Lovecraft, D.H Lawrence, Thomas Mann, Richard Matheson, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King and Earnest Hemingway were extremely talented authors of short stories as well as novels.

Elements of Short Stories

We have learnt that a prose fiction which may be read in a single setting or a short time may be defined as a short story. They have developed from the previous tradition of verbal storytelling during the seventeenth century. In recent times, short stories have expanded to a large extent and they contain work which is very diverse and not easy to classify. The most typical elements of every short story would be to have a small number of characters; stress is given on a single self-contained event so that a ‘single effect’ or mood can be evoked among the readers. With this technique the writers of short stories are able to utilize the plot, characters, and supplementary vigorous components to maximum level than found in characteristic of an anecdote, though the level cannot be compared with a novel as it has much higher intensity. Even though there is a vast difference between a novel and a short story but the writers of both use similar techniques of literature while creating either.

The length of a short story is not fixed. When it comes to differentiating a novel or an anecdote and a short story on the basis of its word limit there is no fixed criteria. There is no formal differentiation in terms of word count. In fact, the parameters of each is provided by the oratorical and real-world context in which a certain story is

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created and deliberated, therefore the constituents of a short story might vary concerning its genera, countries, periods, and critics. The principal shape of a novel as well as a short story is redirected by the strains of the existing markets where it is going to be published. The development of the form also is dependent on the requirements of publishing industry and the guidelines provided by them as they wish to publish only that form which generates revenue.

The short stories can be compiled into one lengthy book and its size and price can match the price and length of a novel. The writers of short stories can describe their creation as part of the imaginative and individual manifestation of the form. They may not like to be categorized as writers of a particular form or genre.

A short story generally incorporates a solo central character and a few extra supporting characters. This is done so that the story can be given a structure and the monotony can be broken. The central character is recognized as primary character of the story. The writer can include comprehensive details about the setting, approaches and sensitivity. The story is centred on the primary character by the writer. Moreover, the central character frequently is the leading role or star in the story and may be referred as the protagonist while the antagonist is the character who plays a negative role in the story and is against the protagonist throughout the short story.

4.3 THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO: EDGAR ALLAN POE

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis of the short story.

4.3.1 About the Author

The Cask of Amontillado was published in 1846 by the American short-story writer, essayist, and poet Edgar Allan Poe. The short story was the last creation of the author and is considered to be one of his best short stories. It is a story of revenge, murder, suffering, and obsession. The story is set in a vast Italian underground cemetery (Italian catacomb). The story is a journey into the gloomy and cryptic recesses of the human inner self.

The author was born on 19 January 1809 and his parents were actors David and Eliza Poe. The author lost his parents when he was just two-years-old and was made to be separated from his other siblings. The author was said to be attracted to gloomy themes because of his orphaned state. Poe has a fascinating biography and has been a topic of several debates and gossips. For instance, he is supposed to have died because of a bite of a rabid dog. However, he most likely would've died due to his drug and alcohol-related problems. He was known to be heavy drinker, and along with that he was addicted to the drug laudanum as well.

Check Your Progress

1. What are fables?
2. Name some of the initial experts of short story in America.

In spite of all the rumours, there is no denying the fact that as a writer Poe was absolutely vivid, farsighted, and powerful with his writings. He essentially developed the genre of mystery or detective fiction along with science fiction, and he carried a very clear-cut idea about the nature and aim of his stories, same preciseness is reflected in his essays as well. Most readers find Edgar Allan Poe's stories to be enjoyable as they are comparable to an intricate puzzle. The readers have to exercise their brains in order

to figure out the story. *The Cask of Amontillado* is very crisp, and it helps the readers follow the details very easily.

4.3.2 *The Cask of Amontillado*: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

Summary

The Cask of Amontillado, occasionally known as *The Casque of Amontillado* was published as a short story in the November (1846) edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The book was one of the most widely read magazines in America at that time. And it was published merely one more time in Poe's life. The story is staged in an anonymous Italian city during the time of the carnival but the exact year is not mentioned. The story is about a man wanting to take revenge from his friend who he feels has insulted him terribly, as a result of which he wants to kill him. The story is about a person being buried alive in the box by detainment. The author has narrated the story from the point of view of the murderer; this perspective is also seen in other works by author such as *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

The story begins with the narrator, Montresor, speaking with an unnamed individual, who knows him well, about the day he was successful in his exercising his plan for revenge on Fortunato. Fortunato was a nobleman and the narrator's friend and colleague. The narrator tells that he killed his friend during the carnival. The reason for the murder was that he was annoyed over all the wounds and insults the friend had given him. He explains that the murder was easily carried out because Fortunato was drunk and dazed, and wearing a clown's motley.

The act of murder is unfolded in the following sequence. Montresor convinces Fortunato to come for a private wine-tasting outing by informing him about his access to about 130 gallons (a pipe full) of rare vintage Amontillado wine. He suggests gaining approval of the pipe's substances by inviting a wine enthusiast, colleague Luchesi, for the tasting session. Montresor is confident of the fact that Fortunato will look for the opportunity to boast about his own developed palate for wine. He will further try to convince Montresor that he does not need Luchesi for approving the quality of the wine as he himself is capable of doing that. Fortunato is so confident that he even jokes about the questionable authority of Luchesi given that he 'cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry'. They both go to the palazzo where the wine cellar is located. On reaching the wine cellar, Montresor serves him the wine. At first, Montresor serves wines like Medoc and then De Grave so as to get him to a drunken state. All this time, Montresor fakes a concern towards Fortunato and suggests that they should leave, he even informs Fortunato of the wet atmosphere inside and how it would aggravate his cough but Fortunato is adamant to keep going inside and says that '[he] shall not die of a cough'.

In the course of their walk, Montresor mentions his family coat of arms: 'a golden foot in a blue background crushing a snake whose fangs are embedded in the foot's heel, with the motto *Nemo me impune lacessit* ('No one attacks me with impunity')'. On hearing this, Fortunato makes an ostentatious, laughable movement with a raised bottle of wine. When Montresor gives the impression that he has not understood the gesture, Fortunato inquires, 'You are not of the masons?'. To which Montresor replies that he is, and when Fortunato says he does not believe him and demands a proof, Montresor shows him the trowel he had with him. Once they reach a slot, Montresor informs Fortunato that the wine is inside the slot. By this time, Fortunato is completely drunk and

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without any suspicions steps inside the slot and immediately upon entering he is chained to the wall by Montresor. After making Fortunato immobile, Montresor announces that as Fortunato does not want to leave, he must let him be inside and all alone. Montresor retrieves the brick and mortar that he had kept nearby, earlier and starts to fill up the slot with the help of his trowel, he entombs Fortunato alive inside the slot. Once Fortunato realizes what is actually happening, he tries to break away from the chains in order to escape and when he struggles to free himself, he begins to shout for help and in turn is mocked by Montresor who knows that nobody will be able to hear his cries. Fortunato tries to laugh it off by saying that it is a part of a joke and now they must leave as people are waiting for them, especially his wife. All this while, Montresor continues to erect the wall and once he reaches the last part, Fortunato cries and asks Montresor to leave him in the name of God. Montresor before placing the last brick puts a torch inside the opening. After finishing the wall, Montresor begins to feel a little sick but he quickly dismisses the feeling and blames it on the wetness of the underground cemetery.

Montresor ends his narration by telling his friend that after fifty also, Fortunato's body still hangs from the chains in the slot where he had put him. The murderer Montresor then says: 'May he rest in peace!' (*in pace requiescat!*).

The story has been told in first person and it is for this reason that the name of the narrator is only revealed in the end. Till then, he is referred to as 'the narrator' in the story. The readers learn about the narrator's name in the last few lines of the story where Fortunato while begging for his mercy calls him by his name 'Montresor.' It is the last cry of Fortunato which gives out the name of the narrator. The narrator tells his friend that he had killed Fortunato fifty years ago and nobody till date has found out about his murderous act.

Critical Analysis

Even though the subject matter of the story is a murder, *The Cask of Amontillado* is not an account about uncovering the murderer like in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* or *The Purloined Letter*; no investigation takes place in order to investigate the crime committed by Montresor. In fact, the story is about a narrative by the murderer about the crime that he has committed a long time ago. The enigmatic matter in *The Cask of Amontillado* is the motive behind the act of murder committed by the narrator or Montresor. In the absence of an investigator in the tale, it is now the reader's onus to find the murderer.

The motive has just been explained vaguely by the narrator who mentions the 'thousand injuries' and 'when he ventured upon insult'. The readers may assume that the reason behind the fatal revenge are these insults which had hurt the narrator to the extent that he had taken his friend's life. There is a reference in the story where Montresor gives the impression that his family had a better standing at some point of time but it is no longer the same. Fortunato is also referred to as making demeaning comments about Montresor's elimination from Freemasonry.

Several critics have concluded that Montresor lacked any concrete reason for murdering Fortunato and he could be insane to do so, although this observation does not hold much ground as the writer has not provided any such input in his detailed outline of the plot. There is also an indication that Montresor is virtually as oblivious about his motives for revenge as Fortunato himself. While remembering the act of murder, Montresor observes, 'A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who

has done the wrong'. Once Fortunato is restrained to the wall with the chains and just about to be buried alive, Montresor simply ridicules and copies his cries for mercy instead of telling him the reason for this treatment. From this situation, the critics have assumed that even Montresor was not sure about the precise contents and the extent of the offenses committed by Fortunato and whether they were so grave that the poor soul had to be murdered for them. Superfluous analysis into the ambiguous hurts and abuses might be just in the mind of the narrator and may not actually be serious.

Montresor came from a well-off family and maybe due to the fall in the status he suffers from inferiority complex and unnecessarily reads too much into harmless jabber by Fortunato who is from a rich and established family. This assumption is based on the name of the victim. The reason for the murder could just be because Fortunato has a better status and had exceeded Montresor in society; this itself could be considered as an insult by Montresor and become a reason for revenge.

There is a hint that Montresor holds Fortunato responsible for his despondency and forfeiture of respect and self-esteem in the society. It is simple to establish that Fortunato is a Freemason, whereas Montresor is not, and this may be one of the reasons for Fortunato's rise in the society and his step towards the upper class. For this rise, too, Montresor has blamed Fortunato through the following lines: 'You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was'. This switching of affluences makes a suggestion that, as the names Montresor and Fortunato are similar to each other, hence there is an emotional common empathy between the casualty and the killer. This implication of an empathetic interchange is further reinforced with the suggestion that Montresor buries Fortunato specifically in the Montresor family catacombs instead of killing him at any other place in the city which is in the middle of the commotion of the Carnival. It is due to these congregation of the two characters that the bigger symbolism of the Montresor's crest is seen—'the footsteps on the serpent while the serpent forever has his fangs embedded in the heel.'

Once the critics try to investigate the nature of Montresor, they realize that there could be another implication of Montresor's crest. One of the understandings is that Montresor is justified in crushing the rude Fortunato as that will put an end to the numerous wounds he has inflicted. But a more probable understanding is provided by the author that the unsighted fool Fortunato, mistakenly, puts his foot on the snake, who according to the author is the devious and scheming Montresor, who returns the unintentional hurting by sinking his teeth deeply in the heel of his wrongdoer.

L. Moffitt Cecil of Texas Christian University discusses that even though Fortunato has been projected as a wine expert but his activities in the story do not substantiate this assumption. For instance, Fortunato remarks that his fellow nobleman will not be able to correctly differentiate Amontillado from Sherry while Amontillado is actually a variation of Sherry, and he drinks expensive French wine, De Grave, in a much unsophisticated manner. Cecil also feels that a person who is truly a wine expert will never taste wine when he is not in a sober state as the delicate flavour of wine cannot be tasted over any other alcohol. On a lighter note, Cecil comments that since Fortunato was not showing the due regard to such an expensive and vintage French wine he deserved to be buried alive.

The way in which Montresor's bricklaying has been elaborately explained in the story has led to many commentators believing that the author must have personal experience of the art. They feel that it is a possibility since all parts of Poe's life are not known to people, especially about the period after 1837 when he left the Southern Literary

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Messenger. The way Montresor has imprisoned Fortunato alive within the confinement of four walls has been a feature in few other stories written by the author. The act of immurement is there in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Premature Burial*, *The Black Cat*, and *Berenice*.

Motivation for the Story

A mythical modern legend says that the motivation for *The Cask of Amontillado* arose from an account which was narrated to Poe in Castle Island, Massachusetts, in 1827. As per the legend, when Poe was based at Castle Island in 1827 he came across a memorial which was made in the memory of Lieutenant Robert Massie. Massie was killed on Christmas Day in 1817 by Lieutenant Gustavus Drane during a sword duel. They got into a duel after they have a tiff while they were playing cards. The legend has conferred that all the soldiers decided to take revenge. They got him drunk and in his drunken state they lured him into a cell, the way Montresor had chained Fortunato is the same way in which the soldiers chained Drane to a wall, and sealed him inside the cell. Though later it was claimed that this was a false story as the skeleton which the author had found at the Island in a cell did not belong to Drane as he is believed to have lived until 1846 after being court-martialled from the army.

Poe's main source could be the story *A Man Built in a Wall* by Joel Headley, who reportedly had seen a confined skeleton in the wall of a church in Italy. In fact, the story written by Headley has fine points which are there in *The Cask of Amontillado* as well: it not only has the part about the enemy being walled into a slot but also gives a description of the art of bricklaying which is also done by the Poe in his story, in Headley's story, too, the motive for murder is revenge; and in both the stories the victims plead to the murderer to let them go. The author of *The Cask of Amontillado* could have been inspired from the themes of *La Grande Bretèche* by Honoré de Balzac or from the story of *The Quaker City* and *The Monks of Monk Hall* written by George Lippard; he was also very close to Poe. There is also a conjecture that Poe might have copied the motto of Montresor's family % 'Nemo me impune lacessit' from *The last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper, which also features the same phrase.

It is believed that Poe had written the short story as a retort to Thomas Dunn English, an American politician, as both were rivals and had many conflicts, generally circling about literary travesties of each other. Poe was very offended by one of the works done by English; in fact, he was so upset that he sued the writer's editor for publishing it. The editor worked for *The New York Mirror*. In 1846, English wrote a novel titled as *1844, or, The Power of the S.F.* The theme of the novel was revenge. The plot of the story was complicated and the readers were not able to follow. Nonetheless, the story had references about secret societies and the central theme was revenge. It involved a character called Marmaduke Hammerhead. Poe retorted with *The Cask of Amontillado*, and throughout the story he made some particular mentions about the aspects of the novel written by English. In *The Cask of Amontillado*, the character of Fortunato makes a reference to the Masons belonging to a secret society; this can be a parallel to English's *1844's* secret societies. Fortunato gestures of distress are also portrayed in the similar fashion as in the novel, *1844*. The image used by English about the token with a hawk grasping a snake in its claws, is identical to the picture described on Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake, with the slight difference that the snake is at the same time biting the sole of the shoe. The scenario about the vault in *The Cask of Amontillado* is derived from the sequence in the novel which

happens in the underground vault. Finally, Poe does not take acknowledgment for his personal literary revenge and instead crafts a short story as a response to the novel. His story is written with a remarkable effect, as suggested by him in the essay 'The Philosophy of Composition'.

Poe could have also taken the inspiration from the Washingtonian movement that was promoted by the members who supported temperance. The group contained people who had given up drinking and asked people to stay away from alcohol. This group could have played a small role in motivating some parts of the story. It is believed that Poe might have been interested in joining the movement as he wanted to himself give up drinking. In 1843, Poe had anticipations about attaining an appointment in the politics and so he might have written this story to make people realise the ill-effects of drinking and how it can cost someone their life. *The Cask of Amontillado* might have been an attempt to tell a gloomy tale about adopting temperance.

Richard P. Benton was Poe's scholar and he has stated his view about the motivation of the story: 'Poe's protagonist is an Englished version of the French Montrésor and has argued forcefully that Poe's model for Montresor 'was Claude de Bourdeille, comte de Montrésor (Count of Montrésor), the 17th-century political conspirator in the entourage of King Louis XIII's weak-willed brother, Gaston d'Orléans'. The renowned intriguer and memoir-writer was initially connected to *The Cask of Amontillado* by Burton R. Pollin; he was also Poe's scholar.'

Additional motivation for the way Fortunato has been murdered originates from the dread of being buried alive. The period in which the story has been written, the coffins used to be designed with bells so that people outside could be alerted in case someone was being buried alive. On some occasions, the body used to be tied with bells so that an alerting signal could be easily given. The story incorporates this element through Fortunato attire; he is described as being dressed in a clown's outfit with bells on his hat. In the end, the narrator does hear the bells from inside the bricked wall but he decides to ignore them and leaves the catacomb.

The story, *The Cask of Amontillado*, has been adapted in form of movies as well as television series on a number of occasions:

- A British film was made by Mario Cavalli, the screenplay was given by Richard Deakin and Anton Blake played the role of Montresor and Patrick Monckton of Fortunato in 1998.
- The fourth part of 'American Masters' season 9, named 'Edgar Allan Poe: Terror of the Soul' adapts the story.
- In 2011, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado* was made into a film starring David JM Bielewicz and Frank Tirio, Jr. It was directed by Thad Ciechanowski, produced by Joe Serkoch, by production house DijitMedia, LLC/ Orionvega. In 2013, it won a regional Emmy Award.
- In 1976, The Alan Parsons Project put out an album named, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* and one of its tracks was 'The Cask of Amontillado'.
- In 1977, Marvel Comics made a version in *Marvel Classics Comics*.
- In 1977, Pendulum Press did a version in *The Best of Poe*.
- In 1979, Moby Books did an illustrated story version in *Tales of Mystery and Terror* (part of their *Great Illustrated Classics* series). Adaptation by Marjorie P. Katz, art by Pablo Marcos.

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- Organizacion Editorial Novaro of Mexico in 1980 made a version of the story in Cuentos De Edgar Allan Poe (part of their Clasicos Ilustrados series). Adaptation by Hector D. Shelley, art by Guido Del Carpio Rivera.
- In 1982, Troll Associates made a children book with illustration based on the story. Adaptation by David E. Cutts, art by Ann Toulmin-Rothe.
- Globe Communications Corp made an adaptation about the story in Monsters Attack #2 in 1982. Adaptation by Charles E. Hall, art by Walter James Brogan
- In 1995, Mojo Press did a version in The Tell-Tale Heart: Stories and Poems by Edgar Allan Poe. Art by Bill D. Fountain.
- Udon Entertainment's Manga Classics line published The Stories of Edgar Allan Poe, which included a manga presentation version of *The Cask of Amontillado*.

Themes

- **Independence and Captivity:** The divergence concerning independence and captivity is thrilling in *The Cask of Amontillado*. The freedom of Montresor is dependent on Fortunato; therefore, one has to die so that the other can be free.
- **Treachery:** It initiates the action in *The Cask of Amontillado*. A series of hideous retributions is started by the betrayal of one of the characters. Betrayal is done so that revenge and murder can take place.
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** Though there is mention of only wine in *The Cask of Amontillado*. But several other forms of drugs are referred in between the lines indirectly. The story also tries to deliver a message of ill-effects of alcohol; as had Fortunato not been in a drunken state, Montresor would not have been able to take his revenge.
- **Mortality:** *The Cask of Amontillado* has a scary obsession with death, corpses, and bones. This is one of the last stories written by the author before his death and it has many elements which are related to mortality.
- **Imprudence and Foolishness:** In *The Cask of Amontillado*, the author has clearly shown how imprudence and foolishness can become fatal. The tale strengthens human idiocy and madness to extravagances which can make them harm a friend and fellow human-being.

Characters

- Montresor is the narrator who in order to take revenge has resorted to murder. The author has not been able to completely justify the reasons for the revenge. The injuries and the insults mentioned by the narrator could have been his misunderstandings and assumption that his friend was demeaning him due to his lack of status. The character of Montresor has been shown to be very cold and ruthless, who has not shied away from committing murder for some petty insults which may as well be a part of his imagination.
- Fortunato seems like a gullible fool who loves to drink and as a result could be easily fooled and murdered by Montresor. He trusted people very easily and for that reason he could be fooled through just an outing of wine tasting. The character of Fortunato thinks himself to be an authority over wine and that is why he told Montresor that after he got his approval he did not have to get any more guarantees. He is not aware that his innocent gestures have annoyed Montresor so much so that he is about to kill him.

- Luchesi is a character who has been used by the author as a device to create the plot. His mention is only to instigate the action in the story. Montresor purposely mentions his name for tasting the wine so that he can get Fortunato excited and prove himself to be the expert where vintage wine is concerned.
- The mention of Montresor's family is made by the author just to stress the point that he comes from a socially well-off family and for that reason the catacomb has all the graves which belong to his ancestors.

Literary Devices

- **Symbolism, Imagery, Allegory:** The author has extensively used symbolism in his story as each detail is trying to convey a message. He has used symbols as he wants to keep the readers engrossed and compels them to decipher a lot of messages that he could have conveyed in a straight forward style. Each aspect appears to convey something else. In order to create suspense in the story, Poe has employed foreshadowing in the story. For instance, at the time when Fortunato says, 'I shall not die of a cough,' Montresor replies, 'True,' as he has already decided how Fortunato is going to die (he is going to be buried alive and die of hunger and thirst). Montresor's description of the family coat of arms, too, foreshadow the impending happenings. The shield has a human foot stamping on an obstinate snake in the grass. In this image, the foot symbolizes Montresor and the snake in the grass symbolizes Fortunato. Even though Fortunato has offended Montresor with bitter verbal abuses, Montresor will eventually crush him to death. The discussion about Masons also indicates the death of Fortunato. Fortunato contests Montresor's assertion that he is a fellow mason and Montresor responds by showing him that he is even carrying a trowel. The trowel is later on going to be used by Montresor in order to dig Fortunato's grave.
- **Setting:** The story has been set-up as a horror and gloomy fiction. The concluding dialogue between Montresor and Fortunato intensify the horror.
- **Narrator's point of view:** The entire story has been told from the point of view of Montresor, hence he is the narrator. He emotionless, cruel, ruthless, conspiratorial, and revengeful. He gives out every detail about how he mercilessly buried a man alive and at the end did not feel guilty about it.
- **Genre and tone of the story:** The story is a gloomy horror tale. Most of the story takes place inside an underground burial area and late at night. The author has tried to describe the interiors of the graveyard in a very descriptive and elegant style and tried to even describe the architecture of the graves. The author has used sarcasm at a number of places and he has managed to narrate a spine-tingling story with several elements of irony. The title of the story also adds elements of mystery to the tale of revenge of Montresor.

4.4 THE DUCHESS AND THE JEWELLER: VIRGINIA WOOLF

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

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Check Your Progress

3. When was *The Cask of Amontillado* originally published?
4. What is the enigmatic matter of the *The Cask of Amontillado*?
5. State the phrases through which Montresor explains his motive for murder in the story.
6. Name the story which mentions the image similar to that of Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake.

4.4.1 About the Author

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Adeline Virginia Woolf was born on 25 January 1882. The English writer has been regarded as notable modernists of her time. She has been identified as the forerunner of using the stream of consciousness as a device for narrations. She belonged to a well-off family in Kensington and she did her graduation from the King's College in London, as a result of which was very familiar with the initial activists of higher education for women. Her writing career started in 1900 and during the period between the World Wars, she became an important and a dominant personality of the intellectual group called the Bloomsbury. Her work began to be recognized in the London literary society. Her first novel, *The Voyage Out* was published in 1915, the book was published by Hogarth Press, and this publishing house was established by Woolf in partnership with her husband, Leonard Woolf. Her most popular writings consist of her novels namely, *Mrs Dalloway* which was published in 1925, *To the Lighthouse* published in 1927 and *Orlando* which was published in 1928. In 1929 she wrote an essay titled 'A Room of One's Own', the essay was as lengthy as a book and it carried a personal remark by her: 'A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.'

During the movements of feminist criticism in 1970, Woolf's work came to be recognised in a major way as it was believed that it inspired feminism. The movements during this time made her pro-feminist aspect in her writings stand out and as a result, her work began to be read world-wide. Due to its world-wide recognition her work was translated in many languages. Woolf died at a young age of 59 as she suffered from mental ill-ness. In 1941, she died due to drowning. As a modernist writer, her work was considered to be the most appreciated amongst her colleagues like Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. There was a decline in her fame post World War II, but then she gained popularity with the increase in feminist criticism during the 1970s. Her first writings were published by *The Guardian* in December 1904 and in 1905 she began to write for *The Times Literary Supplement*.

In 1915, *The Voyage Out*, was published by Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd, the publishing house owned by her half-brother. The original title of the novel was Melymbrosia, but then Woolf constantly kept changing the draft. Woolf's scholar Louise DeSalvo had redone the initial version of *The Voyage Out* and this is presently offered to public under the proposed title. DeSalvo claims that various revisions done by Woolf in the text were due to the changes happening in her personal life. Woolf continued to put out books and essays which got attention from critics as well her readers. Bhaskar A. Shukla, in his book *Feminism: From Mary Wollstonecraft to Betty Friedan*, has commented about the writings of Woolf stating- 'Virginia Woolf's peculiarities as a fiction writer have tended to obscure her central strength: she is arguably the major lyrical novelist in the English language. Her novels are highly experimental: a narrative, frequently uneventful and commonplace, is refracted—and sometimes almost dissolved—in the characters' receptive consciousness. Intense lyricism and stylistic virtuosity fuse to create a world overabundant with auditory and visual impressions'. He has further stated that, 'The intensity of Virginia Woolf's poetic vision elevates the ordinary, sometimes banal settings'—often wartime environments — 'of most of her novels'. 'For example, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) centres on the efforts of Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-aged society woman, to organize a party, even as her life is paralleled with that of Septimus Warren Smith, a working-class veteran who has returned from the First World War bearing deep psychological scars'.

Her book, *To the Lighthouse* reconnoitres the passage of time, and how women in the society become a source of emotional strength for men. *Orlando* is considered to be the least intense novels of the author. The story is a biography of a parodic nature about a young nobleman who does not age in thirty years and instead he changes into a woman suddenly. The book partially portrays the author's male friend Vita Sackville-West. The purpose of writing this book was to cheer up Vita after he had lost his family home. The techniques of historical biographers are being scoffed in the book, *Orlando*; the author projects the biographer's character to be pompous so that he can be ridiculed. *The Waves*, which was published in 1931, is a story about six friends whose reproductions, are similar to singings than to inner orations as a result they produce a wave-like atmosphere which resembles a prose poem more than a novel based on a plot. *Flush: A Biography* can be described as a fiction as well as a biography since it is partially both. The biography is a cross-genre amalgam of fiction and nonfiction by Virginia Woolf. She had written this after she completed the emotional novel, *The Waves*. It is the story of a cocker spaniel belonging to Victorian poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The book is transcribed from the point of view of the spaniel. Woolf was inspired after the popularity of the play titled, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* by Rudolf Besier.

In 1941, the author wrote her last novel titled as *Between the Acts*, and according to Bhaskar A. Shukla, 'Her last work, *Between the Acts* (1941), sums up and magnifies Woolf's chief preoccupations: the transformation of life through art, sexual ambivalence, and meditation on the themes of flux of time and life, presented simultaneously as corrosion and rejuvenation—all set in a highly imaginative and symbolic narrative encompassing almost all of English history.' The book is considered to be the most expressively poetic work of the author as it is not only emotional but the style which is adopted in the book closely resembles verses. The writings of Woolf were very supportive of the tendencies of rationalism followed by the Bloomsbury group. Writes like Jorge Luis Borges and Marguerite Yourcenar translated works by Woolf in more than fifty languages so that they could be read all over the world.

Influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf

Russian literature had a major influence on Woolf. From 1912 onwards she embraced the artistic conventions of Russian literature. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's style about depiction of a fluid mind in action facilitated to inspire Woolf's works on a 'discontinuous writing process', although Woolf was not in favour of his fixation with 'extreme psychosomatic' and the 'wild instability of emotions', which he projected through his characters. She also did not agree with his favourable attitude towards his right-wing, imperialist politics. Dostoyevsky was a fervent follower of the autocracy of Imperial Russia. Where Woolf was against the overrated emotional nature of Dostoyevsky's content she completely admired the work of Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy. Chekhov's stories about ordinary people performing their routine activities were liked by Woolf. The stories of Chekhov were about banal things and the plots lacked a well-ordered ending. Woolf was able to learn a lot from the way Tolstoy wrote his books, she learnt about how the storywriter must portray the psychological and inner state of the character. Woolf was influenced by the works of Ivan Turgenev and from his writings she learnt that an author has to consider several 'I's' while writing a novel, and the author has to not only consider the 'I's' but at the same time balance all of them first with the character and then with the entire plot. She realized that writing novels required the author to be completely passionate about the art of writing. The facts of the story should be in complete harmony with the author's overstretching visualization.

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American writer Henry David Thoreau was another significant influence on Woolf. In one of her essays in 1917, Woolf wrote that as a writer she constantly wanted to follow Thoreau so that she could incorporate his style into her work. Woolf admired Thoreau for the 'effortlessness' with which he was able to write about complex topics, like the soul. Corresponding to Thoreau, Woolf also believed that peaceful state of mind helps in contemplating and understanding the world better. Together they believed that writing and life are related to each other hence it is better to write about simple things so that people can relate to them. They felt that it is not necessary to have complexity in the plot to generate emotions, peace and presence of mind is enough. The struggles which were a part of human relationships in the present time were a matter of deep concern for both of them. Other important influences comprise of: William Shakespeare, George Eliot, Marcel Proust, Emily Brontë, Daniel Defoe, James Joyce and E. M. Forster.

The Duchess and the Jeweller is a short story written by Virginia Woolf in 1938. Being a promoter of addressing the 'stream of consciousness,' Woolf in her story illustrates the views and activities of a materialistic jeweller; According to Woolf, people who are corrupt are selfish as well and they do not regret their actions. The story has been written in order to prove this belief of the author. The story was initially published in *Harper's Bazaar Magazine* in 1938 and after Woolf's death as a part of a collection of short stories in *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* in 1944.

4.4.2 *The Duchess and The Jeweller*: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

The protagonist of the story is Oliver Bacon. He is one of the affluent jewellers in England, though at one time he was just a poor boy living on the streets of England. In order to earn money, as a boy, he stole dogs and sold them to rich women. He also procured fake watches and sold them to rich women. He suffers from subservience because of his past. Even though he has become rich and is well respected in the society he cannot mend his ways and continues to be greedy. Once, he is visited by the Duchess of Lambourne. She wants to sell pearls to him so that she can pay for her gambling debts. The pearls are imitation, but she is able to cleverly sell them to Oliver for the price of twenty thousand. When Oliver makes an attempt to check the authenticity of the pearls, the duchess very smartly invites him for a party which will be attended by aristocrats and she even mentions her daughter's presence. Oliver has a liking for the Duchess's daughter Diana, as soon as he hears her name he signs on the cheque. Oliver Bacon purchases the fake pearls as he wishes to be present at the party and be with Diana with whom he has fallen in love. Moreover, he wants to be a part of the rich circle of the society. After the Duchess leaves, he looks at his mother's picture and apologizes.

The story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* reproduces the English society during the author's time. Social mobility was slowly developing during that time. The common people were rising to an upper status whereas, due to self-indulgence, the well-offs were struggling. The protagonist of the story, Oliver Bacon becomes rich because of his hard work but is still unable to forget his past and suffers from an inferiority complex. Now he has his residence in posh and prime location of Piccadilly, in London. He has become a part of the rich English society and is invited to several functions by the aristocrats. The Duchess of Lambourne also visits him at his office. These aspects in the story show how Oliver, a commoner, had managed to rise in the social setup. The story also reveals how the rich are losing their wealth and status because of their gambling habits, the Duchess comes to Oliver to sell fake pearls as she is in need of some money

to repay her debts. In order to get the twenty-thousand, she lets go of all her dignity and nobleness. The Duchess does not shy away from using her daughter as a pawn in order to get the money. It can be concluded that the author has charmingly revealed the English society during her time. She has shown the falling of the bigwigs as a result of their self-indulgence and the moving ahead of the commoners due to their hard work.

The pearls traded by the Duchess of Lambourne to Oliver were fake yet Oliver Bacon accepted them and gave the cheque of twenty thousand, the author has stated two reasons for this, the first reason was because Bacon wanted to be a part of aristocratic circles. Even though he was rich yet he felt out of class, hence when the Duchess invited him for the party which was going to be attended by the high-ups of the society he got lured in. The second reason was that the Duchess mentioned that her daughter Diana was going to be present at the party and he could spend the weekend with the woman he loved. Oliver gets so carried away that writes the cheque without checking their genuine-ness.

In the story the Duchess and the Jeweller are referred to as ‘... friends, yet enemies; he was master, she was mistress; each cheated the other, each needed the other, each feared the other...’ When the characters of the Duchess and the jeweller are compared it is realized that the expression in the story is correct. The second part of the statement states: ‘He was master, she was mistress.’ During the course of the story it is revealed that Oliver had become rich using fair and unfair methods, so in a way he is a master in cheating people and the Duchess is a mistress as she also is a cheat who fools Oliver into buying fake pearls. The statement, ‘Each cheated the other, each needed the other, and each feared the other.’ reveals that both the characters cheated in their own way and for their personal gain. In spite of knowing that the pearls were not genuine, Oliver paid for them because he wanted to go for the party and be with Diana. When the Duchess came to visit him, Oliver purposely keeps her waiting. Also, since they both need each other for their own personal reasons, the writer has remarked that they feared each other, because they knew each other’s weaknesses and secrets. They have been called friends by the author as they now belonged to the same financial status in the society.

The author has addressed the British class system in the story. Woolf shows no mercy in her criticism of all those who use devious methods to rise in the society, she has included the vanities of the upper class as well as the people of the lower class.

Characters

The story has two main characters: The Duchess and Oliver. The character of Oliver Bacon has been given prominent development by the author in the story. The Duchess is one of the typical figures; the way of her entry into Oliver’s place of work has been described by the author as standard for all Dukes and Duchesses: ‘the aroma, the prestige, the arrogance, the pomp’. The author has conveyed that she has a commanding feature by comparing her presence metaphorically with the image of a wave and just as the wave breaks when it touches shore, she breaks down as soon as she takes a seat and begins to wallow and fall all over Oliver. The author has portrayed her to be oversized, and dressed in very tight fitting clothes. By providing this description of Duchess with the waves and the dressing, the author perhaps has tried to reflect that she lacked discipline and did not have a very strong character. Woolf depicts the Duchess to be a very careless person. She has been shown as an extravagant individual who loves to spend money and take advantage of her status. She is spoilt as well as selfish and

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because of her extravagance she has put herself into trouble and uses fraud to get out of the situation. She is having financial problems because of her habit of gambling and now she needs help from the jeweller so that she can gather cash to pay her debts. The other character in the story is Oliver Bacon, who is a rich jeweller. Like the Duchess, he is also projected as an unscrupulous individual who would not stop from taking advantage of others for his personal gain. The character of Oliver suffers from an inferiority complex, he has risen from rags to the riches and is yet not content with all that he has achieved. According to the author, both Oliver and the Duchess are materialistic and have no morals. They both cannot be described as friends as they are interacting with each other due to their personal motives. The Duchess has come to sell her fake pearls and in order to dupe him, she very manipulatively after showing him the pearls starts to talk about the party she is planning over the weekend with the guest list including the rich and the famous. When Oliver attempts to check the pearls she cleverly extends the invitation to him as well and informs him that her daughter Diana is also going to be present. On hearing this, Oliver promptly signs the check because he does not want to lose the opportunity to be with Diana as he is in love with her.

Although at one point, it appears that Oliver is truly in love with Diana but soon the readers realize that he is using her just as a means to an end as he wishes to be a part of the upper class. This can be seen from that fact that since the Duchess has subtly conveyed to Oliver that Diana can be his, for a price, the readers soon catch on that Oliver was not fooled by the Duchess to pay for the fake pearls but he actually paid the money because he wanted to be with Diana. He treated Diana as a commodity and this is what makes the readers observe a similarity between the Duchess and Oliver. They both have shown lack of ethics in order to gain personally and both are equally manipulative. Although Oliver apologizes to the picture of his mother for what his actions but in the end, he justifies it by saying that he paid the price for Diana, he plans to go for the party and become a part of the upper class.

The author feels that both are selfish and unethical. The greed inside is driving them and the author is concerned that most of the people in the society are like the jeweller and they could actually be ruling the country in near future by taking over the aristocrats. The author feels that people like Oliver are more corrupt than the aristocrats as they have just realized the luxuries of life and would go to extreme limits to get more. According to Woolf's assessment, it is not necessary that if one class overthrows the ruling class then change is bound to take place, particularly when the class in power is not better prepared and knowledgeable. Finally, it can be said that civilized society requires civilized individuals to bring about ethical changes and change is not always bought by the upper and the moneyed class.

Themes

- Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation. The story has been narrated in third person and is a part of the collection titled *The Complete Shorter Fiction*. The narrator of the story has not been introduced and this has managed to keep the readers interested and realize the importance of the setting of a story. The detailed description provided by the author about the residence in which Oliver stays highlights the theme related to appearance and its relevance in his life. The author gives a description of his earlier lifestyle so that the readers are able to understand the struggle he has gone through to reach his present status. Earlier

he used to live in a filthy alley in slums and now he lives in a posh flat in one of the prime locations of London. And yet the author has described his successful jewellery store as a 'dark little place.' This description is meant for the readers to realize that in spite of a grand outwardly appearance from inside Oliver has not changed. He is very concerned about what people think about him in the story and for that reason he wants to appear successful.

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- During the story the author tries to explore the theme of trust. Oliver is completely conscious about the ways of the Duchess, as on previous occasions too she had tried to sell fake jewellery. Hence she cannot be trusted. In the same way the author has made the readers aware that during his younger days, Oliver used to sell stolen dogs and fake watches to the rich. The author clearly suggests that it is not just the poor who cannot be trusted but the rich, too, are not trustworthy. This has been well established in the story.
- Vanity is another theme which the author uses in the story, especially when Oliver knowingly buys fake pearls from the Duchess. Oliver does not bother to verify the pearls because he wants to spend a weekend with Diana. He feels that by attending the party he will get an opportunity to be in the company of the aristocrats and he will be accepted by them. It is evident that Oliver links affluence and the accrual of riches to the upper class of the society. He feels that wealth will help him to be accepted by aristocrats of the society. Oliver believes that by being wealthy, he will be accepted by those who have been born upper class.
- The author has on several occasions has shown the manipulative nature of the characters. In order to sell her fake pearls, the Duchesses calls Oliver an old friend who has to help her to get out of the tricky situation. By calling him a friend the Duchess is trying to make him feel that they both belong to the same class, she is not only being charming but at the same time taking advantage of Oliver's insecurities and feeding his desire to be able to belong to the upper class.
- Another theme which stands out in the story is the lack of contentment, Oliver in spite of becoming a rich jeweller and acquiring many assets is not happy with his life and he is constantly aspiring for more wealth and recognition. Another aspect which highlights dissatisfaction is the fact that Oliver continues to try to impress his dead mother. His behaviour also suggests lack of self-confidence and for this reason he is constantly seeking others approval.
- The author's use of animal imagery in the story is very obvious. At one point the author has compared Oliver's pursuit for the impeccable jewellery to that of a hog trying to search a truffle piece. Well along in the story Oliver has been compared to a horse by the author, as he is constantly whinnying like a horse. These comparisons by the author are done in order to highlight the nature of Oliver to the readers. The author is trying to convey that Oliver is not a very pleasant individual. The author has used animal imagery to describe the bag which Duchess was carrying for the pearls; the author has compared it to a ferret. The use of animal imagery in the story on a number of occasions may also be the author's way to convey her own disregard for the people belonging to the upper society. The surname given by the author to Oliver could also be way of her trying to be uncomplimentary towards Oliver.
- In the concluding part of the story, the author has highlighted the insecurities and the vulnerabilities of Oliver as a result of which, he allows the Duchess to fool him once again. In the end, he asks for forgiveness from his mother and by this

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action the author is trying to show that in his mind, Oliver still belongs to the alley and is being scolded by his mother for selling stolen dogs. Oliver is unable to have control over his vanity and his constant aspiration to belong to the upper social circles. Even after realizing that the Duchess has sold him pearls which are fake, he does not take any action to get his lost money back, rather he states, 'it is to be a long week-end'. The Duchess has managed to not only take advantage of Oliver's insecurities but she has also used his vulnerability towards her daughter to get what she wants. The author has used control as one of the themes, but the irony of the situation is that it should have been Oliver who should have been in control rather than the Duchess who was desperately in need of money. The Duchess very cleverly controls the meeting and finally gets what she wanted.

Techniques

The author did not have too much opportunity to experiment and innovate in the short story as she is able to do while writing a novel. Nonetheless she was able to focus on a single feature and completely allowed it to control the outlook of the story. In *The Duchess and the Jeweller*, the author has concentrated on the tones of the central character as he is the main feature. The main aim of her technique, according to James Wood as he has mentioned in *The New Republic* was, 'to unwrap consciousness.' 'Character to the Edwardians,' he has further stated, 'was everything that could be described. For Woolf, it was everything that could not be described'. Therefore, her engagement of a stream-of-conscious narrative allowed her to precisely enter the mind of a character and since the mind functions in reaction to the direct present and as per the accumulated sensations present in the memory. Oliver's character has been unfolded by the author not only according to his present actions but the past too which has left a thorough impact.

The literary work of the British Isles was dominated by fiction novels during the major part of the nineteenth century. The short story written by Virginia Woolf can be considered as one of the pioneers of that time in England. Her style of writing in her short story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* bears resemblance to the work of Joseph Conrad as far as the detailed examination of one particular character is concerned. The description of the social standards is similar to the work of Guy de Maupassant, whereas the commanding expressive passages and conversation are resonant of few of the stories written by D. H. Lawrence and they are a part of his initial collection of 1914, titled as *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.

Check Your Progress

7. Name the first novel by Virginia Woolf.
8. What did Virginia Woolf like about Chekhov's stories?
9. How does the author refer to the Duchess and the Jeweller in the novel?
10. List some of the prominent themes of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*.

4.5 THE FLY: KATHERINE MANSFIELD

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Fly* by Katherine Mansfield. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

4.5.1 About the Author

Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a known modernist short story writer from New Zealand. She was born on 14 October 1888 and died at a young age of thirty-four. She grew up in colonial New Zealand and used her pen name Katherine Mansfield in her writings. Katherine left New Zealand at the age of nineteen years and went to the United Kingdom. The author was very close to D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. She was detected with extra pulmonary tuberculosis, and this became the cause of her early death.

Her initial stories were published in the High School Reporter and in the Wellington Girls' High School magazine in 1898 and 1899. In 1900, her foremost officially published writings featured in the society magazine *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*. Mansfield besides being a writer was an accomplished musician as well; she had received training from Thomas Trowell. In 1902 she became infatuated with her teacher's son, Arnold Trowell, who was also a prominent musician, though he did not reciprocate her feelings. In her journals, she has written about feeling lonely in New Zealand, and reasons her disillusionment as result of the subjugation of the Māori people. Māori characters were frequently represented in a compassionate way or with optimism in some of her stories which were written closer to her death, they are mentioned in her stories, *How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped*. In 1903, she shifted to London with her sisters and began to attend Queen's College. Mansfield resumed playing the cello, as she hoped that someday she would be able to make a career for herself in the field of music. During this time, she continued to write and contribute towards the college newspaper. Seeing her dedication, she was later made the editor of the college newspaper. She was mainly fascinated with the writings of French Symbolists and Oscar Wilde. Her vivacious and charismatic approach to life and work was highly appreciated by all her peers. During her college years she met a South African writer, Ida Baker known by the name Lesley Moore. Mansfield and Moore became close friends. Mansfield concentrated on her music and writings and while she was in London she did not become a part of political activities of the time.

In 1922 Katherine wrote her short story *The Fly* and on 18 March it was published in *The Nation & Athenaeum* and then in 1923 the story appeared as a part of the collection of short stories titled as *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.

4.5.2 *The Fly*: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

The story *The Fly* tries to establish the fact that time heals all sorrows of people. Mr. Woodifield, is a man in a sickly state due to his age. He is not allowed too many outings by his family, except on Tuesday, when he is allowed to have his day of outing. On one such occasion, Mr Woodifield comes to visit his friend who used to be his boss as well. The author refers to Mr Woodifield's friend as 'the boss' throughout the story. The boss is rich and in good health in spite of being five years older than Mr Woodifield. Mr Woodifield notices that his ex-boss has renovated his office and changed the furniture as well. With all the changes, he also notices that there is an old framed picture on the boss's table. The author reveals to the readers that the picture belongs to the boss's son who had died during the war. The identity of the person in the picture has not been mentioned by the boss in the story. While the friends are conversing, Woodifield mentions that he had wished to inform the boss about something but now he is unable to recollect what the topic was and he seems quite restless about his inability to remember. In order to cheer him up, the boss serves him a drink of vintage whisky. Though Mr Woodifield is surprised by the gesture yet he accepts the drink. The drink of whisky relaxes him and he is able to recall the topic he wished to bring out. It was regarding a visit made by his daughter to their brother's grave and while they were at the graveyard, his daughters came across the grave of the boss's son. At this point the readers come to know that the boss had lost his son six years ago during the war. The loss of the son had had a deep impact on the boss. Even the mention about his son makes the boss feel very miserable and for that reason even after Mr Woodifield departs he is upset and wishes to be alone. The memory saddens him but still he is not able to cry. He looks at the picture of his son

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on his desk and feels that he does not remember his son ever having such harsh expressions. The memory he has was of a boy who was cheerful and full of life. While he was engrossed in his thoughts, he suddenly notices that a fly had fallen into the inkpot on his desk and now it is struggling to come out. The boss takes the fly out of the pot and puts it on the blotting paper, the fly once out of the pot manages to dry itself but as soon as it is completely dry the boss puts little ink over it and as a result it starts struggling again. The boss is impressed by the way the fly tries to dry itself again though this time the fly is not able to be as quick given that it is weak from the constant struggling. When the boss drops the next ink drop the fly becomes completely powerless and dies. The boss realizes that his unkind actions has led to the death of the fly and he tosses the dead fly and the paper into the dustbin and calls the clerk to get new blotting paper for his desk. The boss all of a sudden 'feels a wretchedness that frightens him and finds himself bereft'. He attempts to think of what he was doing prior to noticing the fly but all of sudden he is completely blank and unable to even recall that he was thinking about his dead son and feeling sad remembering him.

Characters

The Fly is a short story which is a part of the collection of *Dove's Nest*. The story is considered to be one of the best works of the author and it is believed that she wrote this story after the death of her brother. *The Fly* mainly is the story of a person who has been trying to overcome the death of his son for the last six years. The author has tried to depict his anguish. Furthermore, she has tried to create an intense setup by providing indicative details. This technique has been used by Lawrence as well. The author has mentioned several characters in the story but she has concentrated only on Mr. Woodifield, who is a heart patient with very frail health. He is not allowed to be out of the house alone because of his health. He lives with his wife and daughters who let him go out of the house only on Tuesdays. Mr. Woodifield has lost his son in the war. Mr Woodifield is allowed to go visit his ex-boss. The boss is five years older than Mr Woodifield, and yet in better health. He has also lost his son during the war. There are a few other characters which have been mentioned in passing and have only been introduced in the story for effect.

The flowing characters in the story are:

- The office clerk - Macey
- The author's symbolic device in the story - the Fly
- One of Mr Woodifield's daughters - Gertrude
- Mr Woodifield's son - Reggie, who lost his life in the First World War

The main character is that of the boss and he has been fully developed by the author with the help of discourse, monologue and imagery. Woodifield visits his friend and ex-boss on a Tuesday and mentions that his daughter had been to the grave of their brother and during that visit they also happened to come across the grave of the boss's son. The Boss does not react to this information. The only way it is clear that he has heard this dialogue is described by the author as quivering of his eyelids. From here on, the author tries to convey that the boss is trying to suppress his emotions. The author establishes this by telling the readers that even though Mr Woodifield continues to talk about the graves of the boys, the boss tries to project that he is completely unaware about the context in which his friend is talking. At this point, a simple comparison can be made between the characters of *The Fly*. Mr Woodifield freely talks about the death of his son as he has come to terms with his loss, but at the same time the boss ignores these

topics as he is still struggling to overcome his loss; he hides his sorrow by avoiding the topic of his son. The author manages to evoke a sense of pity for the boss among the readers. The sorrow which was hidden inside him surfaces after his friend departs and he looks at the picture of his son and remembers him. He remembers his son as a cheerful boy and feels that the picture on his desk has a very stern look. The boss tries to cry but he is unable to do so and soon gets distracted by the fly in the inkpot and forgets about his son. Most of Mansfield's stories project the emotional state of the characters but she avoids sentiments like weeping and wallowing. By not showing them in tears she tries to evoke deeper sentiments.

The catastrophe of the boss's life is in his attempt to simplify human existence. It provides an additional aspect to his character which is his understanding of the uselessness and brittleness of human effort. He has been trying for the past six years to avoid the memory of his son who is dead, however just a passing reference of his grave made by his friend brings his memory back and he realizes that he has not been able to forget his loss. The boss submits to the unavoidability of human destiny. He cultivates a kind of cynicism and negativism. The episode with *the fly* in the inkpot depicts the boss as the unpredictable spirit who inflicts harm for getting negative pleasure. He feels that the plight of the fly could have been what his son must've had gone through at the battlefield as he would have also struggled for his life. Though his pessimism made see the fly struggle and suffer for its life. By the end, the boss begins to give an impression of a person who is insignificant, helpless and weak as he is not willing to accept the reality that his son is no more. Therefore, the boss reflects the strait of Dostoyevsky's acceptance of death.

Themes

The author never gives a clear understanding of her story's theme and what it is meant to signify and as a result the theme of the story has been considered to imply several subjects. Mansfield at no time clarified precisely what she denoted by the title *The Fly*. The story is repeatedly understood as a condemnation of the inhuman horrors of the First World War and its impact on property and people. Several researchers have commented that the time in which the author wrote the story concurs with the year of her brother's death. (he died in 1915 and was a causality of the same war). Another understanding about the theme is the fly being compared with war heroes who are innocuously trounced by war and it signifies their struggle for survival during the war. Few of the critics have reached to the conclusion after going through her papers and letters that the fly was meant to portray her own struggles with her aliment and how she lost due to her father's cruel and selfish attitude, which is similar to the character of the boss in the story.

There are many who feel that the author through her story only wants to convey that death is often not accepted by most easily and time proves to be the only healer. It has been established in the story *The Fly* that time conquers grief; hence this can be identified as one of the themes of the story. With the help of the character of Mr. Woodifield and the author has established that six years is long time and the passage of time has helped him to accept the death of his son. He is able to talk about his daughters visiting his son's grave without feeling sad. Similarly, the author mentions how the time has managed to heal the boss, who always thought that he will not be able to overcome the death of his son. In the story, after his friend leaves he wants to cry over the loss of his son but is unable to cry, then he looks at the photograph of his son, thinking that seeing his picture, will make him cry but actually he realizes that the picture does not

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resemble his son as he remembers him to be cheerful whereas the picture is making him look very stern. The author articulates his emotional state strikingly: 'He wanted, he intended, he arranged to weep.... But no tears came yet.' These lines reflect the current state of his grief. Time has helped him to heal. The fact that the boss easily gets distracted by the fly and its activities finally makes him forget all about his previous thoughts.

Another theme which has been reflected by the struggling fly is the helplessness which is faced by man to survive. The quote by William Shakespeare beautifully words the second theme of the story, 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.'

The readers realize that the author tries to symbolize the vulnerability of man in the hands of fate. The way the author describes the struggles of the fly, man attempts to struggle for its life but then he cannot go against his destiny. In the story the writer uses the fly to symbolize all the characters in the story. The strong are always able to crush the weak. The writer tries to use the struggles of the fly to symbolize her fight with the incurable disease of her time.

The author has paid a lot of attention in developing the character of the boss. He symbolizes malicious powers which are unjustified and groundless, he has been projected as the cruel forces of war that are just out to kill innocent people for their amusement. The readers were impressed by the character of the boss in the beginning of the story but as the author begins to bring forth his true nature the readers realize that he is just an intimidating sadomasochistic. He could have intimidated his son just as he was able to intimidate his friend and Macey. The way he behaves with the helpless fly he seems as a tormenter who takes the boyish pleasure in torturing others. On the other hand, some critics feel that the boss is not an unfeeling character, as he may have been just performing an experiment to check the survival instincts of a mere housefly. He is terrified with his discovery and clears the mess and the order for a new paper was just his way of diverting himself.

It has been observed by many critics that story has multifaceted symbolism. Initially the contrast between the boss and Mr Woodifield shows the boss to be stronger and energetic though he is five years older. During the story the attitude of Mr Woodifield about his son's death makes him appear as a stronger of the two. The critics feel that both are weak and immature as they do not face the realities of life. They both do not visit the grave of their dead sons. The fly has been shown as a symbol of struggle of life and power of destiny and at the same time the author uses the fly to symbolize strong men (bosses) taking advantage of the weak (staff members). The boss's behaviour with the fly is similar to how he behaves with Mr Woodifield and his clerk; he is benevolent towards his friend in the same way as he helps the fly out of the inkpot. But later he behaves in a condescending manner, when simply for his amusement, he puts ink over the struggling fly and expects it to survive; this is the way he orders his office clerk. These actions put a doubt in the minds of the readers about his behaviour towards his son.

There are many critics who believe that in *The Fly*, Katherine Mansfield has tried to employ themes of control, obliviousness, martyr, accountability and war. Though the story has been narrated in third person but she has completely developed the character of the boss. The story occurs at the boss's office; this could be a ploy of the author to highlight the theme of control. The way the office is described in the story and the mention made by Mr Woodifield about its snugness all point towards boss's nature to maintain control. The action of dropping ink on the fly by the boss in the later part of the

story also denotes his wish to be in complete control. The way he behaves with his staff is also an indication of his controlling nature. Through the boss the author may as well be referring to all the army generals who always liked to be in control and give instructions to the soldiers.

The author has symbolised the pen used to drop ink on the fly by the boss as constant signing of orders by the generals during the war. The pen helped in signing orders which caused tremendous loss of life and property and in the story pen seems to be the source of the fly's death as well. The remark made by Woodifield about the vastness of the graveyard in Belgium also points out towards the extent of damage and destruction that took place during the war. The boss has been compared with the generals of the army who have caused so many deaths as the boss became the cause of the fly's death.

It is shown in the story that the boss was able to get diverted by the fly so easily while he was remembering his son. In fact, he started to conduct a test about its survival skills. And even after he was done with his testing, he could not remember what his thoughts were prior to the starting of the test. The fly incident may also be an important indication that despite the boss feeling sorrow about the loss of his son, when he begins to experiment with the fly, he easily forgets him. It is possible that the author is trying to make the suggestion that just as the generals of the war have no recollection about the losses they caused during the war, similarly the boss has forgotten about his son.

The author's description and characterization of the main characters being old ages can be an attempt by the author to state that many young and productive people lost their lives during the war and the ones remaining are old and are not capable of much work. The author comments the characters being not wise by comparing Mr Woodifield to a baby. Additionally, the experiments of the boss with the fly does not portray him to be any more mature than a child who is playing games to end his boredom. Lack of wisdom in the characters can be the writer's way to convey that all the generals who supported war were also devoid of intelligence.

The story has an interesting ending as it is clear that the boss has not gained any insight after his childish experiment with the fly. The story tries to convey that in spite of such a large scale loss of life, the war, too, did not benefit anyone and it was a total wastage of resources and men. Like the death of fly did not prove anything similarly neither did the war. Furthermore, the no recollection of the boss's thoughts prior to the experiment signifies that even the generals do not realize the repercussions of their actions. The action of throwing the dead fly into the dustbin is similar to the generals not paying much heed to their actions. They are all leading a comfortable life as decorated generals like the boss remains in his redecorated comfortable office.

The distressing short story written by Katherine Mansfield has been put through several extensive and vivacious debates by the critics. There is not much agreement about the credibility or the relevance of the story. The story revolves around the visit of an old friend to the office of his ex-boss; his visit reminds the boss about the death of his son during the war. The second part of the story shows the boss first rescuing a housefly and then becoming the reason for its death. The simple plot of the story give an in depth description of the characters. The critics feel that the narration lacks humour and empathy. Other the other hand, many critics are of the opinion that the story also creates an interesting reading of an emotional crisis that affects a man in such a way that he becomes completely oblivious to his surroundings. The story has several elements which feature in other short stories written by the author. The story uses epiphany as the

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pivotal point of the storyline. Critics have found several issues with the internal aspects of the plot. The author has extensively used symbolic patterning in order to project the key aspects; she has used the main aspects along with imagery to stress up on the complexities of the situations as well as the characters. The work is often referred as an autobiographical creation as many similarities have been found with her situation during her last years of life in the story. The story tries to project the helplessness of the writer during her last days by showing the struggles of the fly. The story may be referred to as an analysis of war and domination of elders. It is an attempt to conduct a philosophical survey of finding the value of life. All versions, though, appear to be in accord that *The Fly* is possibly the gloomiest and utmost heart-breaking treatment of human venality amongst the literary compositions of the author, along with being the most blatant attempt at criticizing the war because of its noticeable impact after it ended.

The ending is very abrupt as it makes no conclusions and leaves the readers wondering. The boss kills the fly and his experiment has no outcome. He even forgets all about his previous conversation with his friend and how he was remembering his son. The reader is left to ponder whether the boss has so easily forgotten about his son out of grief or lack of affection for him.

The story has been analysed from other angles where the boss is stimulated by the memory of his dead son. The boss chooses to torture a housefly which he sees struggling for life in the inkpot in order to check the strength of the fly. The boss may be thought to be visualizing himself while seeing the fly struggling. It may be a representation of his subconscious mind and his own inquiry about whether he will ever be able to reconcile with the loss of his son. It tries to draw a comparison between their individual struggles. The writer wants the readers to realize the internal struggles the boss is undergoing. The author has set the tone of the story by providing a setting which is full of a feeling of bleakness, anger, and resentment. In spite of the third person narration the focus remains on the boss. The storyteller is not well-informed as he only conveys the feelings and the emotions of the boss and is completely ignorant about the feelings of Mr Woodifield. The metaphor of the fly has been used by the author to signify the recollections and tussles of the boss. The allegory is used to disperse meaning throughout the story and it aids describing the drives and views of the boss. The use of the metaphor helps in enhancing the overall appeal of the story for the readers. There are several detailed sentences, terms and expressions in the story that throw light on the character of the boss. It is clearly stated in the story that the boss 'was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by the old Woodifield'. This, in fact, displays to the readers that he wants to feel superior and perhaps is showing his arrogance. Once Woodifield departs, the boss states- 'My son! But no tears came yet' makes the readers question his love for the dead son. Lastly, the expression, 'Look sharp!' shows the readers that the boss makes too many demands over people who work for him. It also implies that maybe he had such expectations from his son as well and he expected him to take over his business after returning from the war.

Check Your Progress

11. List the flowing characters in the story *The Fly*.
12. How does the boss react when Woodifield talks about coming across the grave of the boss's son?
13. What does the character of the boss symbolize in *The Fly*?

4.6 THE TRAIL OF THE GREEN BLAZER: R.K. NARAYAN

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Trail of the Green Blazer* by R.K. Narayan. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

4.6.1 About the Author

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, popularly known as R.K Narayan was an Indian author famous for his writings set in the imaginary South Indian town of Malgudi. He was born on 10 October 1906. As an important author of early Indian literature in English he was as well-known as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Graham Greene was Narayan's mentor and close friend and he played an important role in helping Narayan get his first four books published. Among these were the partial-autobiographical trilogy of *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*. The imaginary town of Malgudi was initially created in *Swami and Friends*. Narayan's *The Financial Expert* is considered to be one of the most unique writings of 1951 and his work *The Guide* won the Sahitya Akademi Award and subsequently was adapted for a movie and for Broadway.

The writings of R.K Narayan try to highlight the social situations and routine life of the characters in the story. His work has been equated to William Faulkner as he had also introduced an imaginary town in his stories and reconnoitred the humour and care in the routine life of his characters. The short stories written by R.K Narayan have a similarity with the ones written by Guy de Maupassant. The readers can see the similarity in the way each manages to wrap up a story. On the other hand, the author has faced lot of criticism for the way he simplifies his text. R.K Narayan, in his writing career of more than sixty years, was presented with several accolades and awards. The Royal Society of Literature presented him with the AC Benson Medal; In India, he has been honoured with the second and the third highest civilian awards namely, the Padma Vibhushan the Padma Bhushan and the Rajya Sabha of the Indian parliament nominated him as a member.

Style of Writing

The technique of writing adopted by Narayan was natural and self-effecting and had a natural flare for hilarity and wittiness. The writer always focused on regular people, with whom the readers could easily relate. The simplicity of the characters helped the readers to understand the topic of writings. He managed to write intricately about the Indian society and was able to maintain the style of fictional writing throughout the story. The author was always able to maintain the simplicity that was an essential feature of his characters. The author often used Tamil overtones along with nuanced dialogic prose depending on the character's nature. Narayan has been often called as the Indian Chekhov by the critics as they find many similarities in his writing style with the author. Both the authors have the ability to present a tragic situation with ease and the calm splendour and wit which makes it an interesting reading. Narayan's mentor and friend Greene often found similarities in their work. According to Anthony West of *The New Yorker*, his work was close to Nikolai Gogol but it contained practical variability. Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri feels that Narayan's short stories are as entrancing as his novels, although they have a less word count and can be read very fast. Due to his style he is able to convey much more in a mere short story whereas few authors fail to deliver the same in a novel with hundreds of pages. The author is able to give a thorough understanding to the readers about the characters' lives. Due to these abilities, Lahiri feels that Narayan is at par with geniuses of short stories which O. Henry, Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor. She has like others compared Narayan to Guy de Maupassant for his ability to be able to make the story concise and yet not lose the charm of the story. Lahiri felt that both the authors were able to write about the life of a common man as their main

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theme. Critics have observed that his writings have a tendency to be extra expressive and there is not much of critical observations; the independent style of the author was a result of a disconnected life-force which made his stories seem real and genuine. The author's attitude and his approach towards life delivered an exceptional skill to blend characters and actions. The knack of being able to use common situations helped the readers to connect very easily with the events of the story. The creation of the fictional South Indian small town Malgudi enabled the author to introduce various superstitions and traditions which were stated to be in practice there. Malgudi is often considered to be an important element of his writings. Malgudi was a fictional, semi-urban town conjured by the author. The town was created by him in September 1930 on the day which happened to be the auspicious day of Vijayadashami. Narayan's grandmother wanted him to start his efforts on a good omen. The town was fictional but Narayan gave a very realistic appeal to it by providing a history about its origin. The author gave the full description to Susan and N. Ram during an interview while they were working on his biography. The town dates back to the period of Ramayana and Lord Rama is supposed to have visited the town. The history of the town has mentions of the visits made by Buddha during his explorations. Although Narayan did not offer any exacting physical limits for the town, he endorsed it as per the events of the stories, laying foundations for next story. A map of the town had been created by Dr James M. Fennelly, he had researched Narayan's writings very thoroughly and on the basis of the descriptions in the stories he gave an outline of the extent of the town. Malgudi progressed with the shifting political backdrop of India. During the 1980s, when the patriotic enthusiasm in India did away with several British names and statues and replaced them with Indian names and personalities, the mayor of Narayan's Malgudi removes the statue of Frederick Lawley in order to exhibit the same sentiments. Though, after the Historical Societies presented evidence that Lawley was a strong supporter of the independence movement in India, the mayor was compelled to reinstall his statue.

Critical Reception

Graham Greene was responsible for R.K Narayan's first break. When his friend read his stories in *Swaminathan and Tate*, he decided to act as the agent for the author. He changed the title to *Swami and Friends*, and found a publisher for the subsequent books written by Narayan. Although Narayan's initial writings were not successful commercially but he began to be noticed by other writers of that time. In 1938 Somerset Maugham, while travelling to Mysore, specially made an effort to meet Narayan. After reading *The Dark Room* by Narayan, Maugham wrote him a letter wherein he admired Narayan's work. E.M Forster was another modern author who liked the initial work done by Narayan. Few of the critics who found a stark similarity in the way both the authors equipped their narratives with dry humour began to call Narayan as 'South Indian E. M. Forster'. Although Narayan was very popular amongst his followers and colleagues, his work failed to impress the critics. His work did not receive similar critical consideration bestowed to other authors of his standing.

His accomplishment in the United States began to be noticed when Michigan State University Press began to publish his books. He visited United States for the first time while he was on a fellowship of the Rockefeller Foundation. During his visit he conducted lectures in several universities, and these included the Michigan State University and the University of California, Berkeley. His work was noticed by John Updike, he felt that his writings were similar to Charles Dickens. In an evaluation of Narayan's works printed in *The New Yorker*, Updike termed him as a writer who belonged to an endangered

variety. According to him, Narayan as an author was able to totally identify himself with his characters and he realized the importance of common people and their stories.

The author is instrumental in spreading Indian writings to the entire world, his novels, essays and short stories are now read in many parts across the globe. Critics have often regarded his writings to be pleasant, mild and benevolent. Notwithstanding these adjectives Narayan is considered to be the greatest writers of the Indian literature in the twentieth century. He has faced criticism at the hands of some of the present day writers, mainly of Indian origin. According to them, his writings have a very pedestrian style with a superficial vocabulary and lacks in vision. Shashi Tharoor had once stated that Narayan's subjects are like the subjects found in Jane Austen's stories since they both do not include the society as a whole. And moreover he felt that at least Austen was able to take her prose subjects away from their routineness, Narayan's fails to do that. Shashi Deshpande holds a similar view point about Narayan's writings, she feels that in his writings are pedestrian and childlike as the language and diction is very simple and this is further clubbed with the absence of intense emotions among his characters. According to V.S Naipaul and many others, Narayan never mixed himself or his works with the political affairs or concerns of India. On the other hand, Wyatt Mason of *The New Yorker* felt that even though Narayan's writings appeared unpretentious and displayed a lack of attention to the political situation, yet he delivered his story with a clever and illusory technique while dealing with such topics and has definitely included them very tactfully and it has left the readers guessing. According to former vice-chancellor of Andhra University, Srinivasa Iyengar, Narayan included politics only with reference to his subjects, rather distinct from his fellow writer Mulk Raj Anand as he mostly addressed the political situations and problems of the period. Paul Brians, has stated in his book *Modern South Asian Literature in English*, that Narayan totally overlooked British rule and stressed on the personal lives of his characters, this shows that he was not affected by the impact of colonialism.

Narayan's simplicity of writing was very much appreciated in the west. William Walsh, who has written one of his biographies, commented on the way his stories were a comedic art. Anita Desai who was nominated for Booker prize on several occasions considers his writings as '*compassionate realism*' according to which fundamental immoralities are cruelty and pretentiousness. Wyatt Mason feels that Narayan had his own individual style as he treated his characters to be a public entity instead of private being. Mason has identified Narayan's initial writings to be amongst the significant English-language fiction from India, with this development, he delivered his western readers the primary works in English to be instilled with an eastern and Hindu existential viewpoint. Mason felt that through his writings Narayan just does not provide description of events but portrays his true feelings.

4.6.2 The Trail of The Green Blazer: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

People are continuously cautioned about the pickpockets who are mostly found in crowded places so that they are able to gel in the crowd after they have spotted their victim. The pickpockets prudently watch the victim while they attempt to quietly check their wallet and reassure themselves but by doing this they provide the indication to the pickpocket that the presence and location of the wallet. *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is a short story about the grind and life of a proficient pickpocket. Raju or the pickpocket attempts to be dressed in such a way that he completely blends in with the crowd. His

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aim is to be extremely plain and ordinary. The readers come to know that he gets delighted when a stolen wallet holds sufficient cash to get by for many days and he is annoyed when stolen wallet has less money. While reading the story, the readers come to know the places which are more frequently visited by the pickpocket and the ones he avoids. For instance, he considers the market for stolen fountain pens as a waste of time. Since he gets and could get caught for pickpocketing he does not tell his wife the source of his income and his wife is almost scared to question him as she is afraid to find out. The author has very skilfully managed to depict the dynamics of their marriage by devoting just a few lines. The author feels that in spite of being a pickpocket, he is very much answerable to his wife. The plot revolves around one day, when he steals a wallet and decides to return the wallet. In the process of slipping the wallet back into the green blazer he gets caught and when he tells everyone that he was actually putting the wallet back in the owner's blazer, nobody believes his story and he is ridiculed. He is handed over to the police and goes to jail for a period of eighteen months. The jail term manages to change him slightly and in the end, the story puts forward a thought-provoking lesson in morals.

Summary

Raju masquerades himself as a resident and comes to a village fair in search of persons whose wallets he can flick. He notices a man wearing a green blazer. Raju starts following the man from a distance but keenly listens to what he is saying to the coconut vendor. From the way he is haggling with the coconut vendor about the cost, Raju realizes that the man in the green blazer is grouchy and miserly. During this time, Raju hears him talking about buying a balloon for his son as he does not want him to be upset and from this Raju deduces that the man is soft-hearted. Soon Raju manages to pick the wallet from the green blazer and as soon as he opens the wallet Raju is thrilled with the amount of money he finds inside. The wallet contained thirty rupees and some change. He gets super thrilled as with this amount he will not have to pick any pockets for at least two weeks and additionally, it will allow him to treat his wife to a movie. Raju even decides to give the change to beggars. While emptying the wallet, Raju notices the balloon the man had purchased for his motherless child, he cures the father for keeping the balloon folded inside the wallet. Now Raju realizes that if he throws the wallet the man will not have the balloon to give to his child. Raju imagines the disappointment of the child when his father would return without a balloon. The guilt of becoming the cause of the disappointment becomes too much for Raju to handle hence he decides to put the wallet back into the man's green blazer pocket. The moment he puts his hand inside the pocket to slip the wallet back, the man in the green blazer catches his hand and starts shouting. His shouting draws the attention of the people around and they all start to beat him. Nobody believes when Raju claims that he was putting the wallet back and not stealing. The police is called and Raju is sent to prison. His claim that he was putting the wallet back is not bought by the magistrate or even his wife. After serving the jail term of eighteen months when Raju comes out of the jail, he feels that he will never again in life return something that he has stolen as his hands are only efficient in picking things and not putting them back.

Characters

The protagonist of the short story *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is Raju who earns a living by picking pockets. Raju is very efficient at his job and goes about his job in a very skilful and systematic manner. This can be known given the reference in the story about

maintaining adequate distance and constantly keeping an eye on the prey. Moreover, Raju has been portrayed as a lazy person as he has all the energy to observe his prey for picking pockets but does not want to do any substantial job to take care of his family. The readers realize that in spite of being a thief Raju is a soft-hearted and compassionate man, who after seeing the balloon folded in the wallet thinks about the disappointment of the child and decides to take the risks of returning the wallet.

The other character in the story is the green blazer which from Raju's point of view is the antagonist. The green blazer may be described as the minor character or the flat character in the short story. It has been called as a flat character because it is not fully developed nor is described with enough details: The author portrays the owner of the green blazer to be a rich man as he stands out in the crowd and because of his outfit Raju decides to pick his pocket.

The setting of the story is a hot, sunny afternoon. A village fair is in progress and as a result there is lot of noise and activity happening at the market place. The author has depicted an Indian village during British period. The social conditions were bad due to poverty and over population. In the story, Raju is a pickpocket. Pickpocketing becomes easy at crowded places. Narayan has provided a very suitable start to the story:

The Green Blazer stood out prominently under the bright sun and blue sky. In all that jostling crowd one could not help noticing it. Villagers in shirts and turbans, townsmen in coats and caps, beggars bare bodied and women in multicoloured saris were thronging the narrow passage between the stalls and moving in great confused masses, but still the Green Blazer could not be missed.

Each occupation requires hard work and attentiveness. In profession of pickpocket, accountability is dual. Bulging wallets have an extra appeal for Raju and after spotting one, he picks it up with the utmost precision. He just keeps the cash and throws the wallet. Once he has picked pockets, his day's work is over and he returns home. His wife thinks he does a decent job in an office as she is not aware of his actual job and like all dutiful wives, she does not question him about his source of income and respects him for his hard work. Raju picks at pockets very skilfully as a lot of skill is required doing this job. The author describes the job of pickpocket very beautifully in the story:

It was a nicely calculated distance, acquired by intuition and practice. The distance must not be so much as to obscure the movement of the other's hand to and from his purse, nor so close as to become a nuisance and create suspicion.

Raju is very good at his work and after taking the cash he throws the wallet. It is while he is about to throw the wallet taken from the green blazer that he notices the balloon. On seeing the balloon, he suddenly gets very emotional and does not want to become the cause of disappointing a motherless boy. His feelings for the unknown child are poignantly described in the following lines in the story:

Raju almost sobbed at the thought of the disappointed child-the motherless boy. There was no one to comfort him. Perhaps this ruffian would beat him if he cried too long. The Green Blazer did not look like one who knew the language of children. Raju was filled with pity at the thought of the young child-perhaps of the same age as his second son.

Raju, on thinking of the disappointed child, becomes troubled and unwilling to take the stress. He decides to put the wallet back into the blazer's pocket. Regrettably, while he is putting the wallet back into the pocket he gets caught by the man in the green blazer. When he tries to explain that he was keeping the wallet back and not taking it.

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nobody in the crowd believes him. Instead all ridicule him. He is sent to jail. The policemen also do not believe him and think he is joking. His wife also condemns his acts and reprimands him for the disgrace he has brought to the family. After finishing his sentence of eighteen months as soon as he comes out, he decides that never in his life would he steal and return anything. He decides:

If ever I pick up something again, I shall make sure I don't have to put it back. For now, he believed God had gifted the likes of him with only one-way deftness. Those fingers were not meant to put anything back.

The poor pitiable individual mislaid many things starting from his freedom for a short period and his respect in his family. This can be described as the irony of life.

According to Disha Sharma, 'the short story is a good example of Narayan's use of irony. Life is full of contradictions and this is what the story conveys to us in a typical Narayan's way. The pickpocket was successful so far he was professional devoid of human sentiments.

The lesson learnt by Raju at the end of the story is not correct as it is essential to realize that one good deed does not make up for all the wrong doings in life.

Analysis of Structure

Like all short stories, *The Trail of a Green Blazer* evolves from a solo incident. The story develops from the point, when Raju picks the pocket of the person wearing the green blazer and then the events which follow form the structure of the story. The story has three parts: starting, middle and ending.

- **Starting:** Raju lookouts for the man wearing the green blazer with the poise of a specialized pick-pocket.
- **Middle:** The middle consists of two parts, the first part portrays Raju as a hunter and the second part he himself becomes the prey. First, Raju skilfully picks the pocket and he is as usual not caught. So he is the hunter. Then while he is putting the wallet back he gets caught and from a hunter he becomes the prey.
- **Ending:** Raju is not able to comprehend why he is being punished for returning the wallet, as he feels that it was his moral action.

Themes

The author has tried to convey many themes in the short story. The main theme of the story is crime as the central character of the story is a professional pickpocket. The author also tries to tell the readers that illegal ways of life cannot become permanent and all criminals are bound to be caught. Another theme is of hesitation; which Raju feels after stealing the wallet, as he did not want to become the cause of disappointment of a motherless child. His hesitation to keep the wallet led to his downfall. The author admires the patience which is shown by the pickpocket in order to closely observe his prey.

Conflicts: There are several conflicts in the story, some of them are listed below:

- **Human vs human:** This type of conflict in a story means that the central character is in conflict with other characters, especially the antagonist. In this story the protagonist is Raju and the antagonist is the green blazer. The person wearing the green blazer stood out in the crowd amongst the villagers and he seemed to be a rich person because of the blazer. This makes Raju select him to be his victim as he feels that his wallet will have ample money. Raju gets into trouble while he is

attempting to put the wallet back into the blazer and nobody in the crowd believes his innocence. Hence one of the conflicts is between Raju and green blazer. The other struggle of this nature is between Raju and his wife as she also does not believe that he is innocent.

- **Human vs Society:** When the story involves a struggle between the central character and the society. In the story, when Raju returns the wallet nobody is willing to believe that he was actually putting the wallet back. The society condemns the acts of the pickpocket and ridicules him.
- **Human vs Self:** The protagonist's struggle with his own self in the story is visible when after stealing the wallet, Raju remembers the child and gets emotional thinking about his tears and disappointment. He is going through a struggle with his conscience about returning the wallet. He keeps the money and decides to put the wallet back as it still has the folded balloon inside.

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Point of View in the Story

The story has been narrated from the point of view of the third person. The narrator is able to convey the thoughts of all the characters besides Raju together with the wife, green blazer, coconut seller or even the police. The narrator has clearly described the thoughts of Raju after he discovers the folded balloon in the wallet which he has stolen and what is going to be the plight of the child when he does not get the balloon.

Language Style of the Story

- The story uses the flashback in the initial paragraphs. While Raju is following the green blazer, the author mentions about his skill of pickpocketing and his preference for crowded places or his reluctance to pick fountain pens.
- The author externalises Raju's emotional side while narrating the state of the child when he does not get the promised balloon: 'Raju almost sobbed at the thought of the disappointed child – the motherless boy. There was no one to comfort him. Perhaps this ruffian would beat him if he cried too long. The Green Blazer did not look like one who knew the language of children'. Raju feels that since his mother is dead who shall comfort the crying child as he could not picture the person in the green blazer being capable of consoling a crying child.
- The author has used the simile in order to make a figurative comparison in the story. He has compared the act of pickpocket waiting for targeting his victim with how a hunter waits for his prey. 'It had to be finely balanced and calculated – the same sort of calculations as carry a shikari through his tracking of game and see him safely home again. Only this hunter's task was more complicated. The hunter in the forest could count his day a success if he laid his quarry flat; but here one had to extract the heart out of the quarry without injuring it'. In paragraph four, the author has compared the pitch of the person in the green blazer with a tiger's growl.
- The use of metaphor is noticed in the story. At one point the author has compared Raju with a hunter: 'only this hunter's task was more complicated. The hunter in the forest could count his day a success if he laid his quarry flat; but here one had to extract the heart out of the quarry without injuring it. But in the following lines he has been described as a lazy person. Constitutionally he was an idler and had just the amount of energy to watch in a crowd and put his hand into another

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person's pocket.' These extreme comparisons in relation of the same person exhibit the metaphorical language used by the author.

- The author has personified the green blazer in the following lines of the story, 'Over and above it all the Green Blazer seemed to cry out an invitation. Raju could not ignore it'. The use of imagery is very prominent in the beginning lines of the story where the author manages to make the readers clearly picture the market scene as described by him in the story. Symbolism is used when the author uses the green blazer to state that the owner of the green blazer is a foreigner.

The short story written by R.K Narayan has been described as an irony of life as Raju get punished for the one good deed that he was trying to do in life.

4.7 SUMMARY

- The father or originator of contemporary short stories, Edgar Allen Poe has defined short story as a tale which can be read in a short duration. According to him, any story which can be read in thirty minutes to two hours falls under the category of short story; the story has a single focal point and the rest of the story revolves around that '*certain unique or single effect*' to which every detail is subordinate.
- Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables.
- The most typical elements of every short story would be to have a small number of characters; stress is given on a single self-contained event so that a 'single effect' or mood can be evoked among the readers.
- *The Cask of Amontillado* was published in 1846 by the American short-story writer, essayist, and poet Edgar Allan Poe. The short story was the last creation of the author and is considered to be one of his best short stories. It is a story of revenge, murder, suffering, and obsession. The story is set in a vast Italian underground cemetery (Italian catacomb). The story is a journey into the gloomy and cryptic recesses of the human inner self. It features a narrator telling his friend about a murder he committed.
- Most readers find Edgar Allan Poe's stories to be enjoyable as they are comparable to an intricate puzzle. The readers have to exercise their brains in order to figure out the story. *The Cask of Amontillado* is very crisp, and it helps the readers follow the details very easily.
- Major themes involved in *The Cask of Amontillado* are: independence and captivity, treachery, drugs and alcohol, imprudence and foolishness, etc.
- Adeline Virginia Woolf was born on 25 January 1882. The English writer has been regarded as notable modernists of her time. She has been identified as the forerunner of using the stream of consciousness as a device for narrations.
- Amongst Virginia Woolf's prominent works are: *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and essay titled 'A Room of One's Own'.
- *The Duchess and the Jeweller* is a short story written by Virginia Woolf in 1938. Being a promoter of addressing the 'stream of consciousness,' Woolf in her story illustrates the views and activities of a materialistic jeweller; According to Woolf,

Check Your Progress

14. Why is the writing style of R.K.Narayan equated with that of William Faulkner?
15. What is Raju's reaction on finding the wallet of the man with the green blazer?
16. Which character is the antagonist of *The Trail of the Green Blazer* according to Raju?
17. State the simile which is used by the author to talk about the act of pickpocketing in the story.

people who are corrupt are selfish as well and they do not regret their actions. The story has been written in order to prove this belief of the author.

- Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation.
- Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a known modernist short story writer from New Zealand. She was born on 14 October 1888 and died at a young age of thirty-four. She grew up in colonial New Zealand and used her pen name Katherine Mansfield in her writings.
- In 1922 Katherine wrote her short story *The Fly* and on 18 March it was published in *The Nation & Athenaeum* and then in 1923 the story appeared as a part of the collection of short stories titled as *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.
- *The Fly* mainly is the story of a person who has been trying to overcome the death of his son for the last six years. The author has tried to depict his anguish.
- The story is repeatedly understood as a condemnation of the inhuman horrors of the First World War and its impact on property and people. Another understanding about the theme is the fly being compared with war heroes who are innocuously trounced by war and it signifies their struggle for survival during the war. There are many who feel that the author through her story only wants to convey that death is often not accepted by most easily and time proves to be the only healer.
- Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, popularly known as R.K. Narayan was an Indian author famous for his writings set in the imaginary South Indian town of Malgudi. He was born on 10 October 1906. As an important author of early Indian literature in English he was as well-known as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.
- Prominent works of the R.K. Narayan include: *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*, *The Financial Expert* and *The Guide* which won the Sahitya Akademi Award and subsequently was adapted for a movie and for Broadway.
- The technique of writing adopted by Narayan was natural and self-effecting and had a natural flare for hilarity and wittiness. The writer always focused on regular people, with whom the readers could easily relate.
- *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is a short story about the grind and life of a proficient pickpocket. The plot revolves around one day, when he steals a wallet and decides to return the wallet. In the process of slipping the wallet back into the green blazer he gets caught and when he tells everyone that he was actually putting the wallet back in the owner's blazer, nobody believes his story and he is ridiculed. He is handed over to the police and goes to jail for a period of eighteen months. The jail term manages to change him slightly and in the end, the story puts forward a thought-provoking lesson in morals.
- R.K. Narayan has tried to convey many themes in the short story. The main theme of the story is crime as the central character of the story is a professional pickpocket. The author also tries to tell the readers that illegal ways of life cannot become permanent and all criminals are bound to be caught. Another theme is of hesitation; which Raju feels after stealing the wallet, as he did not want to become the cause of disappointment of a motherless child.

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4.8 KEY TERMS

- **Short story:** It is a work of fiction that is written in prose, in a narrative form. It usually presents a single significant episode or scene involving a limited number of characters.
- **Fable:** It refers to short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness.
- **Simile:** It refers to a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g. as brave as a lion).
- **Metaphor:** It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.
- **Stream of consciousness:** It is a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust are among its notable early exponents.

4.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables. This category of short stories is mostly meant to give spiritual and religious messages and hence used by various religious gurus and leaders for inspiring and enlightening their supporters.
2. Some of the initial experts of short story in America were Washington Irving, Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe.
3. *The Cask of Amontillado*, occasionally known as *The Casque of Amontillado* was published as a short story in the November (1846) edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The book was one of the most widely read magazines in America at that time.
4. The enigmatic matter in *The Cask of Amontillado* is the motive behind the act of murder committed by the narrator or Montresor.
5. The motive has been explained vaguely by Montresor through phrases like the '*thousand injuries*' and '*when he ventured upon insult*'.
6. The story which mentions the image similar to that of Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake *1844, or, The Power of the S.F* by Thomas Dunn English.
7. Virginia Woolf's first novel is *The Voyage Out*, which was published in 1915. The book was published by Hogarth Press, and this publishing house was established by Woolf in partnership with her husband, Leonard Woolf.
8. Chekhov's stories about ordinary people performing their routine activities were liked by Woolf.
9. In the story the Duchess and the Jeweller are referred to as '*... friends, yet enemies; he was master, she was mistress; each cheated the other, each needed the other, each feared the other...*'.

10. Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation.
11. The flowing characters in the story, *The Fly*, are:
 - The office clerk- Macey
 - The author's symbolic device in the story- the Fly
 - One of Mr Woodifield's daughters- Gertrude
 - Mr Woodifield's son-Reggie, who lost his life in the First World War
12. The Boss does not react to the information given by Woodifield about coming across the grave of his son. The only way it is clear that he has heard this dialogue is described by the author as quivering of his eyelids. From here on, the author tries to convey that the boss is trying to suppress his emotions.
13. The author has paid a lot of attention in developing the character of the boss. He symbolizes malicious powers which are unjustified and groundless, he has been projected as the cruel forces of war that are just out to kill innocent people for their amusement.
14. The writings of R.K Narayan try to highlight the social situations and routine life of the characters in the story. His work has been equated to William Faulkner as he had also introduced an imaginary town in his stories and reconnoitred the humour and care in the routine life of his characters.
15. Raju is thrilled with the amount of money he finds inside the wallet of the man with the green blazer. He gets super thrilled as with the amount he will not have to pick any pockets for at least two weeks and additionally, it will allow him to treat his wife to a movie. Raju even decides to give the change to beggars.
16. According to Raju, the green blazer is the antagonist of the story.
17. The simile used by the author in *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is the comparison of the act of pickpocket waiting for targeting his victim with how a hunter waits for his prey.

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4.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. State the elements of short stories.
2. Briefly state the themes of *The Cask of Amontillado*.
3. What are the literary devices used in *The Cask of Amontillado*?
4. Write a short-note on the influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf.
5. What tragic situations helped Mansfield create a tragic world?
6. What are the kinds of symbolism used by Mansfield in *The Fly*? How does the story end?
7. Write a short-note on the critical reception that R.K. Narayan received for his writing style.

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the motivation for Edgar Allan Poe for writing *The Cask of Amontillado*.
2. How does Virginia Woolf depict the relationship between the Duchess and the jeweller?
3. Explain the themes of the short story, *The Duchess and the Jeweller*.
4. Evaluate *The Fly* as a story of the post-war period.
5. 'The Fly by Katherine Mansfield, can be fruitfully read as potent social criticism.' Discuss.
6. Describe the conflicts that are raised in *The Trail of the Green Blazer*.
7. Critically analyse the short story, *The Trail of the Green Blazer*.

4.11 FURTHER READING

- Prasad, B. 2010. *A Background to the Study of English Literature*. New Delhi: Macmillan.
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- Denforth Ross. 1963. *American Short Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
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UNIT 5 PRACTICAL CRITICISM: APPRECIATION OF UNSEEN PROSE PASSAGES

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Non-Fiction Prose and English Prose Fiction: An Introduction
 - 5.2.1 Letter and Biography
 - 5.2.2 Autobiography
 - 5.2.3 Essay
- 5.3 Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One's Own*
- 5.4 R.K. Narayan: *The Axe*
 - 5.4.1 *The Axe*: Summary and Analysis
- 5.5 J.L. Nehru: Speech on Indian Independence
 - 5.5.1 Overview of 'Tryst with Destiny'
 - 5.5.2 Critical Analysis
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Key Terms
- 5.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.9 Questions and Exercises
- 5.10 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Prose is the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing.

There are many prose forms. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches. Each form of prose has its own style and has to be dealt with in its own particular way. Travel writing is also one form of prose. Through this, we get a first-hand account of the travels of the writer, the places he has visited, and the experiences he has encountered.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the different styles of non-fiction prose
- Understand the treatment of unseen prose passages
- Critically analyse Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*
- Discuss Narayan's short story *The Axe*

5.2 NON-FICTION PROSE AND ENGLISH PROSE FICTION: AN INTRODUCTION

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Non-fictional prose is any literary work founded chiefly on fact or reality, even though it supposedly incorporates elements of fiction or fancy. Its example can be essays, biographies, letters, diaries, autobiographies, confessions, and so on. Non-fictional prose differs from factual business letters or prescriptions and is used to define an aesthetic writing which aims to teach, convert or impart experience or reality through factual or spiritual revelation. Under this, infinite themes and subject-matter can be dealt with, which may vary from personal to objective. It encompasses political, philosophical, moral, historical, biographical, autobiographical, religious, romantic and argumentative literature. It came into existence after the Renaissance in the sixteenth century England. Non-fictional literature has been used as an effective source of displaying emotions in modern literature. In such prose, the complexities of life give way to self-revelation and introspection on different issues, both personal and objective. There are numerous eminent writers of non-fictional prose, such as Sir Thomas Browne, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Thomas Moore, Jonathan Swift, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, among others.

5.2.1 Letter and Biography

Letter: A letter is a written message which is usually sent by post. It is a familiar source that gives an insight into the personal life and feelings of a writer. It can be both personal and impersonal. Generally, a letter is a personal expression. In English literature, we have a number of writers whose letters are of literary and aesthetic importance. Among them, Keats is the foremost. His letters are personal in expression and are a very important source of information on his poetic progress and his poetic theories. There are many other letter writers of significance including Horace Walpole, Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, William Cowper, Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley, Charles Lamb and Charles Dickens.

Biography: Biography is a story of a person's life told by someone else. It is a description in detail or a complete account of someone's life. It covers the happenings from the beginning to the end of a person's life which include birth, education, youth, experience, marriage, middle age, professional achievements, old age and his or her death. It also includes information about family and important acquaintances. It is a literary form of writing, based only on facts.

Origin and Example: Earlier, biographies used to be in the form of information about saints, monks and priests so that people could follow them for the betterment of society. But in the late Middle Ages, biographies became a form of literature which was secular. The focus was on famous kings, queens, political figures, and people of different classes. Sir Thomas Malory's (1405–1471) *Le Morte d'Arthur*, first published in 1485, is the life sketch of King Arthur of England. With the passage of time, man started taking interest in various streams like science, fine arts, literature, architecture, and so on, and his curiosity to know about people paved the way for biographies of notable persons. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563) was the first dictionary of the biography in Europe. Thomas Fuller (1608–1661) wrote *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662) which focused on public life. *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724) was a well-known record of notorious pirates. This form of literature saw considerable change as earlier it used to record the lives of saints and during the eighteenth century, biographies of thieves became a fashion.

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Modern biography: In the eighteenth century, this form of writing was revived by James Boswell (1740–1795) and Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784). Johnson's critical *Lives of the Poets* (1779–81) was a famous example of an eighteenth century biography. James Boswell had to undergo much nuisance and a number of oddities while recording his work *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (1791). This is considered a monumental piece of literature from that period. In the twentieth century, Lytton Strachey (1880–1932) was a famous biographer during the 1920s–1930s. His *Eminent Victorians* (1918) is a notable biographical work. Robert Graves (1895–1985) also wrote a biography known as *I Claudius* (1934). It is the life sketch of the Roman emperor Claudius.

5.2.2 Autobiography

An autobiography means the story of the life of a person written by the person himself. The term was coined by William Taylor (1786–1858) in 1797 in the English periodical, *the Monthly Review*. For Taylor, the word was a hybrid coinage and had to be shunned because it was too 'pedantic.' Robert Southey (1774–1843) also used the term in 1809. For him, it was a story based on the writer's memory about himself. Autobiography is a form of literature in which the writer writes about his own life, experiences and achievements. It aims at a successful presentation of the self or personality. It is a record of the most important events and periods of the writer's life.

Earlier autobiographies were called or entitled *Apologia*. They were meant to provide self-justification for the life of the author. John Henry Newman's (1801–1890) autobiography (1864) is called *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Saint Augustine's (354–430) *Confessions* is his famous autobiographical work. Rousseau (1712–1778) used *Confessions* (1782) as the basis for writing his autobiography. In India, Babur (1483–1530) wrote *Baburnama* between 1493–1529. During the Renaissance, the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571) wrote his biography, *Vita* (Life) between 1558 to 1562. During this period autobiography became a medium to express political, social, philosophical, psychological and aesthetic thoughts. In the twentieth century, Adolf Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* and Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* are very famous example of autobiographies which also reflect their political views. An autobiography does not mention the end of a person, as a writer himself is supposedly writing it. Dr. Samuel Johnson, a noted critic and writer of the eighteenth century, considered autobiography as a better medium than biography. According to him:

'The writer of his own life has at last the first qualification of an historian, the knowledge of truth; and though it may be plausibly objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartiality may be expected with equal confidence from him that related the passages of his own life, as from him that delivers the transactions of another'

According to Longfellow, 'Autobiography is a product of first-hand experience...' Thus, it is a thing expressed more truthfully and objectively because it is a writer's first-hand experience. The felt experiences can be expressed best by a person himself. An autobiography can be written in two forms: (i) Subjective (ii) objective or fictionalized. A subjective autobiography is that which expresses the author's own ideas about himself and centres the events around it. It speaks about his personal life, childhood, youth, emotional experiences, his career, profession, status, and so on. It is generally expected that a writer would write his autobiography after he has passed a considerable period of his life. St. Augustine's *Confessions* of 5th century A.D. can be quoted as one of the first examples of full and candid analysis of the self. Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* published during the later half of the eighteenth century influenced European thought in the 18th century, becoming one of the inspirations for the French Revolution.

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An autobiography can also become an instrument to express a person's philosophical, political, social, economical and psychological ideas. It may also turn from subjective to objective like Rousseau's *Confession*. The autobiographies of David Hume, Edward Gibbon and Benjamin Franklin, written in the 18th century, are notable works of art. There are autobiographies in which the name of the writer and his real stories are not revealed. They are called fictionalized autobiographies. In such types of autobiography, the important ideas, emotions, experiences are all mentioned but names of the characters are different. Here, the writer expresses his emotions through an invented set of characters and events. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is one such example. William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823) is a sad story of the writer's love-life. Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and others wrote autobiographies using their personal experiences of life. Henry Brooks Adams, John Stuart Mill, and Cardinal Newman all are considered as famous writers of autobiography.

The subject and treatment of an autobiography differ according to the profession, skill, learning and intellectual inclination of a writer of autobiography. Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography *Left Hand, Right Hand!* is a great piece of literature. Thomas De Quincey, Benjamin Robert Haydon (painter), Leigh Hunt, Trelawny, J.S. Mill, John Ruskin, Morley, H.G. Wells, Lloyd George, Rudyard Kipling, George Moore, Sir Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru all are known as the masters of the art of autobiographical writing. Their autobiographies inspire people with literary taste and artistic fervour. Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* are all categorized as fictional autobiographies. In short, autobiography is a form of literary expression which expresses the writer's own personality in art subjectively. Like the novel, this is a very popular form of expression in the modern age.

5.2.3 Essay

An essay is a short piece of writing which reflects the writer's own point of view about a particular subject. Essays are essentially written in prose form. They may have diverse elements in focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, criticism of life, events or happenings, and so on. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'essay is a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range.' A philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. W.H. Hudson says that an essay should be subjective because it is a literature of self-expression. An essay should be brief, precise, argumentative, fact or philosophy-based and logically satisfying. It should aim to fulfil or give some understanding of a certain aspect of a subject. Francis Bacon's essays are the best examples of these types of essays.

According to M.H. Abrams, an essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, and persuade to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain. The Frenchman, Montaigne and the Englishman, Sir Francis Bacon are called the fathers of the modern essay. Essays are of many kinds. The four broad categories are, narrative, descriptive, persuasive and expository essays. There are other types such as cause and effect, classification and division, compare and contrast, dialectic, exemplification, familiar, personal, history, critical, economic and logical. **Critical** essays are those in which the subject matter is impersonal. It comes more from the brain than the heart and is generally an evaluation of a subject or work of art. All the

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important critics of English letters come into this category. It also aims at theorising literature. We have chiefly two types of critics in English: (i) Classic (ii) Romantic. But in the post war period, we have numerous variations in this genre. **Personal** essays have more to do with inner feelings and the heart of the writer than the brain. **Familiar essay** is a type in which the essayist addresses a single person and he speaks about himself and a particular subject. Charles Lamb in the Romantic Age of English literature has been called the greatest exponent of familiar essays. This essay type is a blend of both personal and critical, and hence, use both heart and brain equally.

An essay is a composition of short prose. The English essay has many forms, but there are hardly any cut and dried rules to guide and govern their writing. Sir Francis Bacon rightly suggests that there is a very close relationship between the word 'essay' and the word of the mineralogist 'assay' which means the process employed in mineralogy to remove the dust away to be left with specks of gold. Bacon thinks deeply over some topics of social custom or behaviour till his conclusions are reduced to well written concise statements, justifying the appropriateness of the remark, 'Brevity is the soul of wit'. It is for this reason that Bacon's essays can be called a collection of sayings, mottoes and proverbs. Bacon has the power of explaining a bare truth with the help of an appropriate image or metaphor.

It is as relevant as it is important to note that although Bacon is called the father of the English Essay, he did not invent the form. He should be given the credit for importing the idea from France and transplanting it into the literary soil of England. In his essays, Bacon does not appear as a scientist or a philosopher but as a man of action or in the words of Bacon himself a 'Citizen of the World'. However, he is too much of an English man, or rather an Elizabethan-Jacobean Englishman, to be more precise, to fit into the category of a citizen of the world. Bacon was not only a speculative philosopher. He lived in a world of action and formulated a philosophy for a man of action. Many of Bacon's essays are written for the benefit of kings. Bacon was a very shrewd observer of society and took a keen interest into the nature and affairs of men. He was born in the age which was remarkable in many ways. It was a period of great importance in the history of England. He was the true son of Renaissance. The elements of wonder, of enquiry, of admiration, is all found in Bacon's works.

Early English Prose Fiction is a balanced and representative collection of fictional prose works from the 16th and 17th centuries, and many of these important texts are difficult to obtain elsewhere.

Early English Prose Fiction is the largest corpus of works of prose fiction available in electronic form. It includes Elizabethan fiction, Jest Books, collections of short pieces and novellas, Restoration fiction, and works of popular fiction.

Early English Prose Fiction is the perfect complement to English Poetry and English Drama. It contains prose versions of some of the poetry in those databases and includes many of the same authors.

5.3 VIRGINIA WOOLF: A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

A Room of One's Own is a comprehensive composition by Woolf. Initially published on 24 October 1929, the composition was based on a sequence of lectures she gave at Newham College and Girton College, the two women's colleges at Cambridge University. Although this comprehensive composition actually make use of an imaginary storyteller

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and storyline to look at women, both, as writers of and characters in fiction, the text for the delivery of the series of lectures, named 'Women and Fiction' and consequently the essay, are regarded as non-fiction. The composition is by and large viewed as women-oriented and is well-known in its argument for both, a factual and outlining space for women writers in a literary practice governed by.

Chapter 1

The chapter opens with Woolf saying she has been asked to give a lecture on women and fiction. She tells her audience that the topic made her think on subject matters from a woman's viewpoint: what was it that made a uniquely female experience, what were the salient features of the fiction women themselves wrote and how was it different from the creative output of men when they talked of women in their works. She goes on to say that she could not come to any definitive conclusion in her ramblings. She did, however, come to one conclusion and that was 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction'. To further explain her point she decides to use the fictional narrator Mary Belton as her alter ego.

She goes on to say that a week ago she was sitting by the riverside and thinking about the topic. However, her thoughts were not very productive. She compares them to the measly catch of a fisherman who throws the half grown fish back into the water since it is useless to him. However she is excited by the simile and rushes over the lawns of Oxbridge to go to the library. However she is stopped and told that she cannot be there since only 'fellows' and 'scholars' are allowed. She forgets whatever she was thinking about at this interruption. Her thought changes direction and she wonders as to the creative genius of the literary giants like Milton and Shakespeare. She decides to research their creative minds in the library. However, she is denied entry again: women can enter only if they are accompanied by a scholar or if they can produce a Letter of Introduction written by one of them. She is angered by this denial and refuses to enter the library again. While leaving she passes the chapel and notices a service about to begin. However she doesn't contemplate entering: she would only be denied entry. At this point she looks at the wealth that was consumed to create these magnificent structures and realizes men can create these because they have money.

She goes to lunch and sees a huge variety laid out before her: soles, partridges, a delicious dessert, and excellent wine. The relaxed atmosphere and the food inspire 'rational intercourse' in the conversation. At this point she sees a tailless minx cat and feels as if something is lacking in the scene. When she goes back to Fernham College, where she is staying as a guest, she has a plain dinner. The food is starkly different from that served in Oxbridge: it comprises of plain soup, mediocre beef, vegetables, potatoes, bad custard, prunes, biscuits cheese and water. She starts a conversation with her friend Mary Seton. As the conversation meanders she thinks of kings and magnates and their contribution to the field of education. Looking at the bare food and surroundings she is reminded of the opulence she saw in the morning. The women wonder what lies beneath their building and Mary talks of the perpetual shortage of funds required to run the college.

Their strained circumstances make the women realize that their own mothers did not leave them any monetary legacy; had they done so they would have been financially independent and could have lived a life of luxury as enjoyed by their male counterparts in Oxbridge. However, as they discuss this the narrator realizes two things: one, women never had ownership of their own wealth and it passed from father to husband. The

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situation had changed only in the last 48 years. She also realizes that their mothers would have had gone into business to earn financial independence and there is a real possibility that they would not have been born. In other words it seems a Hobson's choice. On the way back to her inn, the narrator ponders over issues of wealth and poverty and how the former is assigned to men and the latter to women. This in turn leads her to think of the issue as to whether this has any impact on the literary tradition or the lack of it when it comes to creative writing by women. This is her last thought as she goes to sleep.

Chapter 2

The next day the narrator goes to the British Museum in London in an effort to get some answers to questions regarding men, women, creativity and wealth, that had occurred to her in her ramblings. When she reaches the hallowed halls of the Museum she realizes that there is no dearth of books on women. However, she is dismayed to learn that most of these are books about women, but written by men. In other words the male mind has been constructing the approved female mind and is playing it for consumption for a long time. In contrast she finds that there are very few books on men written by women. She selects some of these books randomly and studies them in order to get a satisfactory answer to the question as to why women are poor. Trying to come up with an answer for why women are poor, she locates a multitude of other topics on women in the books, and a contradictory array of men's opinions on women. She is frustrated in her endeavors and imagines that these tomes expounding the inferiority of women have been written by a dour, angry looking professor. It is at this point that she realizes that it is the professor's anger towards women that is making her angry as well. She realizes her reaction would have been different if he had written about women 'dispassionately.' She returns the books since she finds them useless. When her anger dissipates she is left wondering as to why these men are all angry towards women.

During lunch while reading the newspaper she is struck with the realization that every news item and opinion in the paper underlines the fact that England is a patriarchal society. She realizes that men hold all the power and money in their hand. They are in the position to make decisions and the decisions they make are those that are in their interests. She wonders as to why men are angry when they hold so much power in their hands. One reason that she can think of is that they are fearful that their power may be snatched from them and this fear causes anger in them. She qualifies her statement when she realizes that men are angry only in their interactions with women. This leads her to the realization that when men claim women to be inferior to them, they are in effect laying claim to their own superiority. The narrator acknowledges that both the genders find life difficult. She believes that the only way to make some sense of the disappointments of life is to live it with a modicum of self-confidence. It is easier to generate this self-confidence if one considers the other to be inferior. Her belief is that male self-confidence comes from their belief that women are inferior. Such a formulation immediately raises questions about the supposed innate inferiority of women and proves it false. The narrator states that throughout history, women have served as models of inferiority that enlarge the superiority of men: 'Looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size.' She extrapolates her argument to suggest that men become angry and violent with women whenever the latter criticizes them because such a criticism directly challenges their inferior status when compared to men.

At this point the narrator is grateful for her inheritance of 500 pounds a year which she receives from her aunt. She recalls that before she received this largesse she

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had to rely on menial degrading work to earn money. This work made her feel like a slave with no soul. Her inheritance serves as an antidote to this feeling of powerlessness. She further goes on to say that her money has changed the tenor of her relationship with men: since she does not rely on them for her well-being she does not fear or resent them anymore. She also goes on to point out a basic difference between men and women. She suggests that while she was happy and satisfied to be able to feel free and was happy to be able to 'think of things in themselves,' men do not respond to money and power in a similar way. They are never satisfied with the power or money they have and are constantly looking for ways to enhance it. On her way back home, she witnesses men working on the street. She ends the day's journey in the hope and anticipation that a day will soon come when women will no longer be considered the weaker sex in need of 'protection' and will have access to the same jobs and opportunities as men.

Chapter 3

This part of the essay begins with the narrator expressing her disappointment at failing to draw any conclusion as to why women are poorer than men. While she was wondering about this question her attention is drawn to the relative lack of female writers in the most fertile period of literary creation in British history. She suspects that this disjunction exists because there is a connection between living conditions and creative works: it is difficult to be creative if one is living in difficult and strained conditions. When she studies the history of the age she realizes that even though there were strong women during the age they did not have many occasions to express this strength of character simply because they did not have any rights. However she cannot arrive at any firm answer and her query remains incomplete.

At this point she recalls the bishop's statement that Shakespeare is the greatest creative genius of his age. His recognition leads her to conjecture as to what would have been the fate of his equally talented sister, if he had had one. This leads her to comparing the lives of Shakespeare and his mythical sister Judith. She realizes that while Shakespeare would have gone to school, married, gone to work in the theatre where he would have met interesting people and made a name for himself; his sister's life would have been radically different. Despite possessing an equal talent not only would it not have been acknowledged, in fact steps would have been taken to actively stifle it. She would not have been allowed to go to school and would have been forced to marry before she was willing to do so. Instead she would have been forced to become pregnant. The narrator conjectures that these disappointments in life would have so broken her spirit that she would have committed suicide. In other words there was no place for a female Shakespeare in the time. Despite this she agrees with the bishop's statement that no woman of the time could have been a comparable genius simply because a genius like Shakespeare's is not born among laboring, uneducated, servile people. Another point she makes that the age must have witnessed female talent of some sort, even if it was not of the calibre of Shakespeare. The tragedy is that even if this creative voice succeeded in surmounting obstacles and was successful in creating a literary work it would have survived as an anonymous piece.

This leads her to explore the question of what is the desirable state for the mind to reach the optimum creative level. She realizes that creativity is a very difficult process. The artist has to face a perpetual scarcity of privacy and money; at the same time the world is indifferent to the writer's ability or inability to write. The situation is even direr for women since the indulgence granted to male authors is denied to them. The world is indifferent to the female writers' creative desires and impulses which in time are subdued

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if not totally killed by an unsympathetic public. She believes that the male gaze is unsympathetic to the female desire for creativity simply because it gives him another item to express his superiority. However, she believes that the truly creative mind rises above such mundane matters and is 'incandescent.' It filters out personal 'grudges and spites and antipathies' to present the distilled essential human experience. Her argument here is that for all its supposed superiority a lot of the work the male mind produces is worthless since it is inspired by a desire to prove superiority over women. Such a work is not 'free and unimpeded' like Shakespeare's is.

Chapter 4

The narrator continues her search for an unimpeded creative mind during the Elizabethan Age. She fails to find any creative female voice. The only candidate she can find is Lady Winchilsea. However she discounts her because according to the narrator her writing is marred by fear and hatred. She believes that if she had not been consumed by these negative emotions she had the potential of writing brilliant verse. She finds the same drawback in the writings of Duchess Margaret of Newcastle. She believes that Margaret too would have been a better poet had she lived in the modern age. She finds that the letters of Dorothy Osborne another Elizabethan to reveal a similar insecurity. Though brilliant she was an insecure writer since looked for affirmation not within herself but from the patriarchal society. As long as women do this they will never succeed in creating a viable creative piece.

She considers Aphra Behn a milestone in the history of women's literature. She is the first middle class female voice who was forced to enter the public realm to earn money after the death of her husband. The narrator considers the first female writer who successfully achieved 'freedom of the mind' and surpasses even her own innate skill as an artist in her work. She further goes on to present Behn as a model younger women can use in their literary journeys. Though she did not influence her immediate descendents since being recognized as an author was considered nearly sacrilegious, nevertheless she did influence women writers from the 18th century onwards. Another importance of Aphra Behn lies in the fact that she was living proof that monetary stability made one immune to snide comments and unflattering statements which anyway decreased as a writer became financially successful.

The fact that nineteenth century women writing primarily produced novels, in spite of the fact that women began with poetry writing, confuses the narrator of the essay. She wonders why all women writers of the nineteenth century chose to write novels. She thinks about the four famous novelist of the said period — George Eliot, Emily and Charlotte Bronte, and Jane Austen — and concludes that they had little in common apart from the fact that they all were childless. The narrator tries to speculate regarding their choice of novel form. All the four mentioned novelists belonged to the middle class, which meant the lack of privacy. Perhaps, it was this lack of privacy that prompted them to choose novel form, for they might have seen it as harder form than poetry or plays in the climate of middle class distraction. For example, it is a known fact that once when Austen was distracted in her family's sitting room whilst writing, she hid the manuscript. Another reason could have been that these writers might have found the novel form an absolute fit for her talents, given the customary training of nineteenth century women in the art of social observation.

The narrator does not find any sign in the work of Austen that might suggest that her work was affected due to her lack of privacy or her personal hatred or fear. She

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writes: her novels are 'without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching'. The narrator suggests that Charlotte Bronte might have had more genius than Austen but the reason that she is not able to write with the same incandescence is that her works bear the shadows of her own personal hatred and wounds. The narrator thinks that amongst the four mentioned novelist, Charlotte Bronte could have gained most from some travel, experience, and a better financial situation.

While talking about diverse effects of a novel on different readers, the narrator comes to talk about the integrity of a novel, which she thinks is the quality that makes a novel universal in nature. She defines integrity as 'the conviction that' a novelist 'gives one that this is the truth'. According to the narrator, integrity not only holds the entire novel together, but also makes the novel exciting and interesting. She then comes to the question of whether the sex of the writer affects the artistic integrity.

Considering the works of Bronte, the narrator thinks it certainly did. She writes: 'She left her story, to which her entire devotion was due, to attend to some personal grievance. She remembered that she had been starved of her proper due of experience. ...Her imagination swerved from indignation and we felt it swerve.' In Bronte's case, the gender residue leads not only anger, but also to fear, pain and ignorance. She asserts that Bronte was not the only novelist whose work was affected by her own personal grievances: 'One has only to skim those old forgotten novels and listen to the tone of voice in which they are written to divine that the writer was meeting criticism; she was saying this by way of aggression, or that by way of conciliation. ...She was thinking of something other than the thing itself.' The only two female novelists, according to her, who successfully maintained their artistic integrity in the face of misunderstanding, criticism, and opposition are Austen and Emily Bronte.

The narrator argues that tradition had masculine values, such as war, as the subject of novels and other forms of literature, instead of more feminine ones, like character studies in a drawing room setting. And because of such tradition the women writers of nineteenth century had to adapt by adjustments and compromises in order to escape the inevitable criticism of their works being insubstantial. The compromises affected their works, for they had to deviate from their original ideas to suit the critical and traditional demands. The narrator thinks that it is no less than a miracle that in such an uncongenial climate, writers like Austen and Emily Bronte were able to survive and thrive as a writer.

The greatest impediment for the women writers of the nineteenth century was the nonexistence of any literary tradition to follow, for they could not possibly have followed the existing male literary tradition. They might have had a little help from the male writers, but the narrator says that 'the weight, the pace, the stride of a man's mind are too unlike her own for her to lift anything substantial from him successfully'. 'There was no common sentence' for these women writers to follow. The masculine sentence of male writers like Johnson could not have done much to help her. '

According to the narrator, Austen successfully created her own 'natural, shapely sentence' which enabled her to articulate her deeper expressions, unlike Charlotte Bronte and Eliot, who could not successfully deal with the lack of feminine sentences. The narrator thinks that this could have been another reason for their inclination towards the novel form, for it was the only literary form 'young enough to be soft in their hands'. She predicts that in future women writers will move onto other forms of literature, for they have poetry inside them that is still unexpressed. This does not mean that women will

begin writing poems. They may find some 'new vehicle' to express what resides within them still unexpressed.

Chapter 5

The narrator shifts her focus on the book shelf which contains books by her contemporary male and female writer on wide variety of topics. The number of books produced by women is nearly as much as men, and interestingly they are not only novels; they cover all sorts of subjects. She feels that women could not possibly have touched these subjects a generation ago. The narrator feels that women have grown past novels to express themselves. In order to assess the development in the contemporary women's writing, she picks a novel called 'Life's Adventure or some such title', by Mary Carmichael. This is the first novel of Carmichael. The narrator sees this young writer as a direct descendent of other female writers like Lady Winchilsea and Aphra Behn. She goes on to assess her novel to see that how this young female writer has inherited from the women writers of the past, both their 'characteristics and restrictions'.

The narrator finds the prose uneven and not as good as Austen's. She writes: 'The smooth gliding of sentence after sentence was interrupted. Something tore, something scratched.' She then corrects her previous remark and says that Carmichael is attempting something very different from that of Austen and that there is nothing common between the two writers. She then says that perhaps the unevenness of her prose style is a break away from the 'flowery' writing style that is so characteristic of women's writing. But she cautions that the breaking is good if it is done for the purpose of creating: 'First she broke the sentence; now she has broken the sequence. Very well, she has every right to do both these things if she does them not for the sake of breaking, but for the sake of creating.'

As the narrator continues her reading, she comes across a simple sentence – 'Chloe liked Olivia'. The narrator is surprised. She considers this to be a critical moment in the Carmichael's innovation as a writer. How rarely, she realizes, has literature viewed women in relation to other women. For centuries women in literature have been seen only in relation to other men, and that is why the narrator finds the idea of friendship between two women as something very innovating and groundbreaking. The romance, says the narrator, in the life of a woman has a role to play, but a minor one.

The problem arises when the writers have their fictional women characters concern excessively about it, for it is this excessive concern with romance that results in their portrayals as either beautiful and good or depraved and horrific: 'Hence, perhaps, the peculiar nature of woman in fiction; the astonishing extremes of her beauty and horror; her alternations between heavenly goodness and hellish depravity—for so a lover would see her as his love rose or sank, was prosperous or unhappy.' Such an attitude towards the women characters in fiction changed by the nineteenth century, and the women characters grew more complex in novels and other forms of literature, but the narrator still holds that both men and women are limited in their knowledge about the opposite sex.

The narrator continues to read Carmichael's novel to find that the women characters in the novel are not confined in the limitation of their house, and that they have interests and pursuit outside the home. Both Chloe and Olivia have work in a laboratory. This little fact greatly changes the dynamics of their friendship. The narrator speculates about the significance of this detail and how important a transition this little

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detail could bring about, 'for if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been'.

The narrator contemplates on the destituteness of literature if men were perceived only in relation to the women. She firmly believes that a little more genius in her work, and Carmichael's book will have a significant place in the history of women's literature. She continues reading the novel and come to a scene that has both the women in it. The narrator reflects that it is a 'sight that has never been seen since the world began.' She has grown very fond and hopeful for the Carmichael's descriptions of the complexities and female mind, and it is this hope that makes her realize that she has betrayed her original aim, i.e. not to praise her own sex. She acknowledges that in spite of whatever genius or greatness they may possess, women have not yet made much of mark in the world when compared to the achievements of men. But still, the narrator thinks that all the great men in history received 'some stimulus, some renewal or creative power' from the women, something that they could not possibly have received from other men. She asserts that there is a vast difference in the creativity of men and women, and 'It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how we should manage with one only?'

The narrator is of the opinion that 'merely as an observer', Carmichael has much to do. She will have to explore the lives of 'courtesan' and 'harlot' who, for a long time, have been stereotyped by the male writers. The narrator, however, expresses her fear that while writing about these subjects controversial in nature, Carmichael will be self-conscious. While writing about the countless women, whose lives are still not recorded, Carmichael will have to resist the anger against men. As the narrator continues to read her novel, she feels that even though Carmichael's writing bears no traces of anger or fear, she is 'no more than a clever girl'. The narrator feels in a century or so, with a room of her own and a little money, Carmichael will evolve as better writer than she is now.

Chapter 6

In the last chapter the narrator is left wondering if her thoughts regarding the differences between men and women have had a negative impact on her view of the two sexes. She sees a young couple get into a taxi and their unity soothes her. Their unity forces her to question as what 'unity of the mind' actually means especially since it keeps changing. Remembering the couple in the taxi, she concludes that this unity could also mean that the two are in 'complete satisfaction and happiness' and are living in harmony. This leads her to the conclusion that what Coleridge meant by a creative mind being 'androgynous' is that it does not think as male or female. His belief was that the androgynous mind does not think in terms of gender. The narrator explains this when she says that the 'androgynous mind transmits emotion without impediment it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided.' She considers Shakespeare to be the perfect example of such an androgynous mind and rues the fact that such minds are not found in the present age.

She believes the Suffrage campaign for the women's vote provoked men's defensiveness over their own sex. To prove this point she reads a novel by a respected male writer. She notes that though the writing is strong and clear it betrays a bias against women. She notes that he protests 'against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority.' This is destructive since it prevents the representation of women as

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viable creatures capable of expression in their own right. She uses his argument to state that only a truly androgynous mind can foster 'perpetual life' in its reader's mind. She finds both male and female writers at fault in this and posits the idea that as long as a sexual identity and a sexual bias permeates a text the writer and the writing is not free and will not be 'fertilized.' In other words there is a dire need in both sexes to rise above the self-consciousness of gender in their works.

The narrator says that women's suffrage campaign to gain the right to vote incited the men to be more defensive against their own sex. To illustrate further, she chooses a respected male author's novel to read. She points out the novel betrays a sense of bias against women, though she acknowledges that the writing is strong and clear. She highlights that in order to protests 'against the equality of the other sex,' he asserts the superiority of his own sex. According to the narrator, such an attitude is destructive, for it does not allow women to be represented as capable of expressing in their own right. She takes his own argument back to him in order to assert that it takes a true androgynous mind to further 'perpetual life' in the minds of the readers. She argues that both male and female writers should be blamed for this, and continues with the idea that there is no possibility for the writer and the writing to be free and 'fertilized' as long as the sexual identity and sexual bias continues to influence a text.

At this point in the text, Virginia Woolf takes over the narrative voice. She anticipates and responds to the two possible criticism of the narrator's voice. First, she points that it was not a mistake that's he did not express any opinions regarding the relative merits of the two genders, it was a deliberate decision, for such a judgment is neither possible nor desirable. Second objection that may come from the reader is that she excessively emphasized the importance of thing material in nature, while underplaying the role of mind, which is perfectly capable of overcoming poverty and lack of privacy. To respond to this objection she cites an argument of a professor claiming that only three amongst the best poets of the last century were well educated, and all but Keats was fairly well off. She asserts that without material freedom one cannot possibly imagine to have intellectual freedom, and without that creation of great poetry is impossible. Women who have been less fortunate as far as the material things are concerned, have not yet produced anything to be called as great. She writes:

Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. . . . Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own.

She then talks about her position on women's writing, and explains why she consider it to be important. She says that she is an avid reader, and of lately she has been disappointed by the writings that are masculine in nature. Besides, she believes that a good writer are good human beings, who are more close to reality than anyone else, and through their writings they can communicate this sense of reality to the readers of their works. She asks her readers to 'Think of things in themselves,' and write not only in the genre of fiction but in all kinds of genre. She urges her readers to remember what men have thought of women. She acknowledges that in spite of the various opportunities that presented themselves to the young women in the audience, they have taken but few steps ahead. But she is not disappointed, and asserts that Judith Shakespeare still lives in all women, and with little financial freedom and privacy, she will soon be reborn.

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Critical Appreciation

A Room of One's Own (1929) is an extended essay by Woolf. In the essay she employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women in their role as writers of fiction and as characters in it. The title of the essay focuses on the author's need to create art and her need for poetic license. She also examines the question as to whether women can actually produce a viable piece of art. The central premise of the essay, which the title further exemplifies, is that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction'. In other words, it is the lack of independent financial resources and not an inability to create viable art that prevents women from creating it. It is not a woman's limitations but the limitations imposed on her from outside that prevent her from creating art. Here it should be pointed out that while Woolf never received a formal education, here audience was getting precisely such an education. So her purpose in the essay becomes manifold: on the one hand she wants her audience to understand the significance of the education they are receiving and not waste it; she also wants them to be conscious of the burden they carry vis a vis other women who are not present in the university with them; and she also wants them to realize that their education and freedom can easily be taken from them and so wants them to work to prevent such a thing from happening.

The essay is a partly fictionalized narrative that led her to the belief that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.' The dramatic setting of the essay is that Woolf has been invited to speak on the topic of Women and Fiction. She creates a fictional narrator; the four Mary's who dramatize the process she took before she arrived at this conclusion.

The fictional narrator starts her exploration by delineating the different educational and material experiences of both men and women. She then talks of her experiences researching the British Library only to find that it is the male voice that presents the authoritative female experience. She also shares another discovery: most of these experiences are written in anger with an aim to control if not silence the subversive female voice. Another discovery she makes is that the female voice and persona is absent from history: it is almost as if women do not exist in the history. She uses this absence to justify her project of creating her own female history of the world. When she tries to do so she realizes that history is unforgiving to women. She uses the fictional character of Judith Shakespeare to prove this point. The intelligent woman faces a tragic future simply because she cannot reconcile her limited constraining reality to her unrealized potential. The fictional narrator then travels further into time to re-create a feminine canon which any aspiring authoress can draw inspiration from. When she does this she realizes that very few writers are expounding a truly female voice and experience and an only these need to be emulated. Then the narrator goes on to survey her contemporaries and finds them wanting. The essay concludes with the fictional narrator expounding her audience to build on the tradition they have been bequeathed and to enrich it further.

In the essay Woolf argues that women be granted a literal and figurative space as legitimate writers within a male dominated literary tradition. In other words she stakes claim for the acknowledgement of female writers and their creative endeavors. The ideas propounded by the essay were revolutionary for their time, especially if we consider the fact that while men were encouraged to forge their own path in life, women were expected to do nothing more than support their men in this effort. The essay verbalizes the dissatisfaction and resistance to this discriminatory patriarchal system. In the essay

she states: 'Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, and no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.'

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In the essay she insists the only way to ensure independence was having access to one's own money, i.e. money for which one did not have to give explanations to anybody. Since she spent her life on the 500 pounds per annum she received as inheritance from an aunt; she postulated that this was the amount necessary to achieve financial freedom. In the essay she asks the question 'What effect has poverty on fiction?' Her answer is that 'Intellectual freedom depends on material things. Poetry depends on intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time.' Her argument is that women are intellectually poor and unable to express themselves, not because they don't know how to do so but because they are not allowed to do so. She further states that if one's survival depends on the approval of the other, creativity will be stifled. To ensure creativity therefore material freedom is a must.

In the essay Woolf presents George Eliot, Emily Bronte, Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte as the 'four great novelists' to be studied, emulated and appreciated. Through these writers she attempts to create a female canon that can rival the patriarchal canon. She considers this attempt important also because she believes that only female writers can express female experience in all its shades. She considers them to be worthy of study and presents them as proofs that if allowed to be themselves women of any age can produce literary works which will not just stand the test of time but will also rival the literary creations of the best male writers. She also uses their example to point out the fact that it is only when women write of women that the true depth and complexity of the female mind and soul is revealed in the character they create. She further adds that when masculine writers present female characters in their works they project flat characters devoid of any richness of emotion and feeling. In fact these female characters serve as foils to the male protagonists. Instead of standing on their own they gain their identity and legitimacy within the text only in relation to their role with respect to the male protagonist. Therefore not only is the presentation of female characters flawed, such a representation detracts from the value and role of literature in society. In the essays she posits this idea when she says: 'Suppose, for instance, that men were only represented in literature as the lovers of women, and were never the friends of men, soldiers, thinkers, dreams; how few parts in the plays of Shakespeare could be allotted to them; how literature would suffer.'

Another argument she makes is that the writings of earlier women novelists can be attributed to either one of two reasons: either they wrote in defiance of masculine standards or in deference to them. In most of these authors we rarely find the true female voice. She argues that George Eliot and the Bronte sisters wrote as per the prevailing notions of a masculine idea of the novel. Hence their works are inferior. By contrast she considers Jane Austen's novels to be reflective of the female voice and experience. Virginia Woolf goes on to criticize her contemporary novelists of being sex-inhibited. She goes on to argue that though one's sex is important the effective artist is androgynous. By this she means that the artist is harmoniously bisexual in comprehension (which affects a creative fusion). This argument links with her statement regarding lesbianism in the sense that the artists' sexual orientation is irrelevant while considering the efficacy of his/her work.

Therefore she conjectures that a great deal of literary wealth has been lost since women are unable to write as they deem fit. As proof of this she points out the fact that

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even Jane Austen a recognized canonical author was forced to hide her work because she feared that she not only would not be accepted but instead she would be ridiculed. In the essay she writes: 'Imaginatively [a woman] is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant.' This bold statement highlights the wealth of fiction and poetry written about women and the lack of it actually written by them. She highlights the difficulties women face in their effort to create art through Judith, Shakespeare's fictional sister. She argues that while Shakespeare is encouraged to go to school and learn new ideas and thoughts, Judith is confined to the life of performing household chores. Though she wishes to learn, she is scolded by her parents whenever they find her holding a book: they believe that any time she spends reading detracts her from completing her household tasks. As they grow up she is forcibly betrothed to a man she does not love. When she resists she is beaten into submission. After marriage she is condemned to a life of drudgery and more household work. In contrast Shakespeare is encouraged to go out in the world and make a name for himself. He succeeds spectacularly and his name is synonymous with literature.

In contrast Judith's talents are not just lost; tragically they are never even given an opportunity to be realized. She highlights the tragedy of Judith's life when she says that 'She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as a boy to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school.' The 'but' makes it clear that her desires do not matter and that she is considered valuable only in the degree to which she fulfils social roles assigned to her. Woolf's argument here is that it is a woman's gender and not her lack or presence of skills that closes doors for her. This is the reason she wants her listeners to be conscious of their role in history: they are the privileged few who have the opportunity to have an education and make intelligent choices. They should ensure that they do so that others may find it easier to follow. At the same time she does not deny the fact that the way will not be easy for them. Nevertheless, it is the one which has to be travelled to ensure that women receive their due not just in the field of art and literature but in other areas as well. The argument she makes here was used by later feminists to work against the glass ceiling in various professions and to demand for more inclusive policies in various fields of public life.

In addition to the four novelists she also refers to the feminist scholar Jane Ellen Harrison and also to Rebecca West. She presents them as proof of a woman's ability to think critically. At the same time she uses their example to present the extent to which the patriarchal set up is uncomfortable with decisive feminist voices and the extent to which it will go to discredit them. To support this claim she refers to Desmond MacCarthy's (referred to as 'Z') claim that West a mere 'arrant feminist' and need not be taken seriously. She also refers to F. E. Smith, 1st Earl of Birkenhead and his retrogressive attitude to women; especially his resistance in granting them suffrage. Through these examples she shows that women will only be indulged if they expect men to treat them seriously and with respect. These will have to be snatched from them and only the financially independent woman will be able to do this. She refers to the term Oxbridge, a not too subtle amalgam of the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge to suggest that such regressive ideas are shared by the intellectuals residing in these hallowed walls as well. The idea she wishes to put across is that the dice is laden against women since they can expect no support from either the intellectual or the political front. They will have to fight their battles on their own. Moreover, in this way they can rely only on their fellow sisters for support. In this too the essay lays a central argument of the feminist movement: the essential universality of the female experience and its discriminatory nature across class and social barriers.

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To argue her viewpoint Woolf creates a fictional narrator. At several points in the text she is identified as 'Mary Beaton, Mary Seton, or Mary Carmichael.' This line refers to the 16th century ballad of Mary Hamilton, a woman who was hanged since she refused to don the socially accepted roles of wife and mother. This made her a subversive figure which needed to be silenced. It needs to be remembered that Judith too commits suicide when she becomes pregnant and is expecting an actor's child. Her death is the only way available to her to register her protest at the life imposed on her. Through all these examples Woolf is trying to underline the point that the imposition of socially sanctioned role on women while reprehensible will continue until women develop strategies to resist them. Art therefore becomes not just an expression of the essential female experience; it is also a tool of resistance.

The reference to the four Mary's is important on many levels. On a personal level it draws attention to Woolf's own position as someone who is not a mother, and so by extension someone who is not nurturing and can, therefore, be destructive. On another level this reference draws attention to the fact that the narrator's demand that her female audience chart their own path of freedom and redefine art and create the same according to a feminine sensibility is not without danger. It can have severe repercussions on the physical wellbeing of the individual since the exercise is a direct challenge to held patriarchal beliefs. The reprisal can take many forms ranging from being indulged as a child to being dismissed as being unimportant. To support this argument she gives the example of female critics and the reaction of the establishment to them.

Woolf acknowledges that fact that in her essay she offers no opinion and puts a lot of importance on material things. She justifies this by suggesting that creative output is possible only when one is financially secure. She also states the purpose of the essay is not so much to create an artifact for her; it is instead a clarion call to her sisters around the world to realize that the creative instinct lives in them as well and needs to be given voice. She justifies the right of women to create a literature about themselves and for themselves and says in the essay that even though Shakespeare's sister never wrote a word she 'lives in you and in me... For great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh.'

Woolf lays claim that women's attraction towards each other is a legitimate emotion. In other words she brings lesbianism to the fore both as a sexual choice and as a political statement. She suggests that any sexual attraction women feel for each other is legitimate emotion since only they can truly understand each other. As a political statement it implies that women can only find comfort and a sense of self only in the community of other women. It is this idea that is later used to justify the creation of a purely female literature. Since only women can understand the deeper emotions of each other, therefore it is only in the literature of women that the true female experience will be reflected. The reference to lesbianism needs to be considered in the backdrop of the obscenity trial and public uproar resulting from the publishing of Radclyffe Hall's lesbian-themed novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Jane Marcus believes that in her talk of lesbianism and the way she approached it, Woolf was showing the way on how to treat this issue in public: 'Woolf was offering her besieged fellow writer a lesson in how to give a lesbian talk and write a lesbian work and get away with it.'

Woolf's central premise and the justification of her call for a feminist fiction that presents the true female character and the true female experience is evident in the following extract from the tract. The tract also highlights her fundamental objection to the canon: it deifies the woman and in doing so do defamiliarizes her experiences from

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herself. A female fiction is the only solution to this: 'Women have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time. Indeed if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some would say greater. But this is woman in fiction. In fact, as Professor Trevelyan points out, she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room. A very queer, composite being thus emerges. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words and profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read; scarcely spell; and was the property of her husband.'

Alice Walker criticized Woolf on the grounds that in her assertion that a woman needed her own room and money in order to create art she was referring to a purely white female Anglo-Saxon identity. Her charge is that Woolf's conception of a primarily female art form excludes women of colour and so is reductive and discriminatory in its own way. Nevertheless Woolf's argument was an improvement on the current debates regarding women's issues and their capabilities and skills and paved the way for opening doors for them.

5.4 R.K. NARAYAN: *THE AXE*

It was Graham Greene's who in his introduction to '*The Bachelor of Arts*' drew comparisons between Chekhov and Narayan which eventually became the benchmark of successive critical analysis of Narayan's works. Both Chekhov and Narayan's prose style is full of pathos and humour, as Greene while speaking of Narayan says, 'Sadness and humour in the later books go hand in hand like twins, inseparable as they do in the stories of Chekhov.'

According to Thieme, Chekhov and Narayan exhibit a similar capacity 'to give voice to the languor of provincial life and ... artistry in rendering the mundane.'

However, the most abiding quality of his works is the ever pervading sense of irony; almost all his works are informed with the 'quintessential irony of what man can make of himself and of the entire business of living.' Nearly, all his novels are neatly structured and use the omniscient author method of narration. His protagonists are extremely appealing on account of their simplicity. To quote Naik, 'The protagonist in each of Narayan's novels is made to play his life-role during the course of which he or she either matures in the process or rebels, or simply drifts or gain is chastised or even destroyed by a characteristic inner weakness.'

Although not as popular as the novels, Narayan's short stories are remarkable for their workmanship and '... finish than for the quality of reading of life they offer... a persistent note of irony is, by and large, their distinguishing feature.' Deeply influenced by the various eminent writers whom Narayan had diligently pursued since early childhood, Narayan's writings often illustrate the impact of various authors upon his writing. For instance, the endings of his short stories show a strong influence of O. Henry's celebrated technique of the trick finale.

Thematic connections between the short stories and the novels of Narayan are interesting. Almost in each work of Narayan, situations, characters and motifs from

Check Your Progress

1. What does Virginia Woolf's dinner at Fernham College comprise?
2. How does Chapter 3 of the essay begin?
3. Why does the narrator mark down the literary work of Lady Winchilsea?

other works of his resurface making an interesting pattern. Although none of his short stories can be criticized on account of being dull or mundane yet none are of such merit that they can be compared to O Henry's '*The Gift of Magi*', Maupassant's '*The Umbrella*', Chekhov's '*The Cherry Orchard*', or Mulk Raj Anand's '*Birth*'.

He has often been criticized for inadequacy of expression, for instance in his short story, '*The Axe*' he concludes the story at a very vulnerable moment of Velan turning his back to his beloved garden, Narayan does not fully develop the situation. To quote Naik, '*The Axe*,' the story of an old gardener attached to a sprawling house who is dismissed when the ownership changes hands. The gardener leaves as the garden is being demolished – a situation reminiscent of *The Cherry Orchard*, but here again, the reader gets the impression that in contrast to Chekhov, Narayan has not adequately met the challenge of his tragic theme here, and there is a failure of the imagination in apprehending with the requisite power the experience sought to be conveyed.'

It is the simplicity of narration that has been most vehemently criticized by innumerable critics. For critic's Narayan's stylistic rendition is detached, concomitantly lacking in depth to the point of being benign. His writing lacks the imaginative flair displayed by Raja Rao. In stead it is his informal ease, directness, precision and readability which account for his popularity. He avoids use of figurative language which along with his limited capability to imaginatively evoke scenes often leads to colourlessness in his narrative. In fact to quote Shashi Deshpande, a prominent writer of Indian writing in English, 'Narayan's writings as pedestrian and naive because of the simplicity of his language and diction, combined with the lack of any complexity in the emotions and behaviors' of his characters.' His works have also been criticized for being completely out of league with Indian politics and instead creating a parochial and chimerical town of Malgudi.

5.4.1 *The Axe*: Summary and Analysis

Velan is a village boy living with his family in a humble manner for the family had little means to support themselves. His life changes when one day an astrologer makes the prediction that Velan is destined to live in a palatial three storied building encompassed by a huge garden. This prediction elicits as lot of ill will among the villagers who taunt Velan and make fun of him. However, the prediction does come true although several decades later. When Velan was just eighteen years old he left his native village for good. He had been slapped by his father in front of the village men for bringing his mid-day meal late. This hurt Velan so much that he decided to leave his village and family for ever.

After walking for days on end, he reached the town of Malgudi. Having nowhere to go, he was distraught when an old man took him as an assistant for laying out a garden. Velan was set a very difficult and uphill task, he had to clear singlehandedly a few acres of land which was completely covered by weeds and plants. Working determinedly and continuously for days on end he finished the task satisfactorily. Hereafter, he started to help the old gardener with the laying of the foundation for a big garden. As fate would have it the old gardener fell ill and died. After his demise, Velan was made the chief gardener. Velan, a hardworking simple soul dedicated him completely to the task of creating a beautiful garden. In the meantime, adjoining the garden the majestic house being built for the master was also completed. As the plants were still tender Velan asked his beloved plants to grow faster and quicker. Nature responded to his call and the flower plants, the numerous trees he had planted grew up in abundance and

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beauty. The garden gave a very scenic and peaceful appearance to the mansion. The mansion came to be known as 'Kumar Baugh'. Velan tended to the plants with utmost love and care, innumerable varieties of plants grew in his garden.

One particular tree that Velan was very fond of was the Margosa tree. Velan treated this tree almost like his own child. He showered upon it his best attention and care.

Velan lived simply in a humble thatched hut but he was happy and content. Years quickly rolled by and with the passage of time Velan started growing old. Age and decay also claimed the once beautiful mansion which had for long now had lost its glitter and charm. Velan's master also started keeping ill health and was soon bed-ridden. After few years of suffering the master died. The master's death came as a severe blow for Velan not only on compassionate grounds for his master but more so because Velan knew that his master's sons wouldn't care for his garden. Soon after the master's death the sons started quarrelling amongst themselves and went to live in another house. Thereafter, a few tenants came to stay in a big house but none of them stayed long in the house. Gradually, the house started to be known as a 'Ghost House'. However, Velan continued to live in his thatched hut. A few years passed this way until the master's sons entrusted the key of the mansion to Velan. When because of lack of repair Velan's hut began to leak, he had to recourse but to live in the verandah of the big mansion. In this way the astrologer's prophecy about Velan living in a three-storeyed building came true.

One day a group of people came to the mansion and examined the house very carefully. Velan heard them remark that the house and the entire garden had to be destroyed and in its place, new buildings would be constructed. Following their departure, within a few days, Velan was informed that the entire property had been sold out to a company and Velan's services were no longer required. Velan was asked to vacate the place within a fortnight. In a couple of days, even before Velan had time to vacate the mansion, the developers arrived with the wood cutters. Velan heard the harsh sound of the woodcutter's axe ripping through his beloved Margosa tree. Velan pleaded to them not to cut his favourite tree but to no avail. The woodcutter's were working under orders and could not pay heed to Velan's request. Velan was so saddened that he asked the woodcutters to wait until he had left the place. He quickly packed his meager belongings and left the place with tears in his eyes. Reaching some distance, he shouted back to the woodcutters saying to wait a little more till he had gone a little farther. The wood-cutters waited for a few more minutes in respect to the old man's wishes and felled the mighty Margosa tree to the ground.

5.5 J.L. NEHRU: SPEECH ON INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The Text

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially.

At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

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At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.

The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity.

The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for anyone of them to imagine that it can live apart.

Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

The appointed day has come - the day appointed by destiny - and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent. The past clings on to us still in some measure and we have to do much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. Yet the turning point is past, and history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act and others will write about.

It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the east, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materialises. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed!

We rejoice in that freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrow-stricken and difficult problems encompass us. But freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people.

On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the father of our nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us.

We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.

Our next thoughts must be of the unknown volunteers and soldiers of freedom who, without praise or reward, have served India even unto death.

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We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good and ill fortune alike.

The future beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be.

We are citizens of a great country, on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action.

To the nations and peoples of the world we send greetings and pledge ourselves to cooperate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy.

And to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service. Jai Hind [Victory to India].

5.5.1 Overview of ‘Tryst with Destiny’

Some words and speeches by great men are always remembered by people for generations. They become timeless because of their universal appeal. They always have a unique place in the hearts of the people for ages. Their words serve as a torch bearer for generations to come. Abraham Lincoln’s ‘Gettysburg Address’, Thomas Jefferson’s ‘Declaration of the Independence’, Martin Luther King’s (Jr.) ‘I have a Dream’, have gone down in the history as memorable events. These addresses are quite brief but enormously inspiring. In this particular speech by Nehru, the tone, substance, style render ample scope for a range of interpretations.

‘Tryst with Destiny’ was a speech made by Nehru to the Indian Constituent Assembly, on the eve of India’s Independence towards midnight on 14 August 1947. It is considered one of the greatest speeches of all time. Nehru points out though the rest of the world is in deep sleep, for this moment little matters for them, but India finally awakes to life and freedom.

This forced slumber that India finally woke up from was due to colonial suppression for one and a half century. Millions in the nation took a pledge to make India free at that long awaited moment. The speech signifies a kind of phase of salvation which comes after retribution. It is a stage of redemption and reawakening.

Nehru describes the mission in the speech as ‘a pledge’, ‘an unending quest’, ‘the ideal’, ‘the triumph’, ‘a challenge’, ‘a responsibility’, ‘an ambition’, ‘a dream’, ‘a noble mansion’, ‘a great adventure’, a bold advance’, and the like. Throughout his speech, Nehru outlines the vision for an ideal India. Nehru says, ‘we had made a tryst with destiny long ago and now we are to redeem the pledge.’ Therefore, making India free from the foreign rule was a pledge that India took long back and when India becomes free, Nehru questions how this sort of freedom would actually work. The speech brilliantly answers this very question. It has become relevant once again as the task of freedom

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has been accomplished now the next step is to wipe tears from the face of the poor citizens in the country. The idea of freedom and nation remain incomplete if the poor are in tears. His main motive now will be to find out means to improve the lot of the common men, peasants and workers. This is the challenge he puts to the public during his freedom speech. Thus, we have redeemed the first pledge now it is the time to take another pledge to serve nation and her people. The pledge can be redeemed only when the fruits reach to the grassroots in this nation.

Nehru terms this freedom as another opportunity as a bright future awaits the nation. Freedom is a means not an end. Such transitions do not happen again and again. The end of the freedom should be accomplishments and achievements and these opportunities bring both material and spiritual prospects. We all have to forget the harrowing experience of the past and we should focus on future and its possibilities fully. We should focus on the future very positively.

India had always been powerful in mind through the times of hardships. It has always been striving for 'unending quest'. India has great culture since pre-historic dawn. This is the reason why great civilization called Harappa flourished on the banks of rivers in the subcontinent. Nehru therefore, asks them to live up to that high standard. Indians have always been hard-working by nature; they have to maintain that hard-work. Their first priority should be to give a helping hand to millions who are suffering. Until the last man is happy, the hard work will continue.

Nehru magnifies the idea of nationalism saying that the dream of India for the cause of suffers is also the dream of the whole humanity. The suffering of the people has been called 'disaster'. We cannot split peace, freedom and prosperity into fragments as they are the common property of the whole world.

Nehru embraces a broad idea of profound change beyond the stereotypes of social and economic connotations. He believes that approaching freedom is the first step and even the first step assumes importance. He also says that the unity of all nations should be considered as 'one world'. He integrates the idea of nationalism with universal brotherhood. The appeal here is for universal peace as freedom of every single individual is at stake. Therefore, it is the pledge to serve India and her people to a larger cause of humanity. There are certain universal ideas that connect all. It hardly depends where we are living. Thus dreams for India are actually for the world. Hence, the well-being of Indian is connected to the well-being of the whole world as no nation can progress in isolation. He says:

'In finding the solution of our problem we shall have helped to solve the world problem as well. What India has been, the whole world is now.'

Nehru is also aware of the fact that on such occasions, people criticize and blame others and how we should not indulge in such practices as this is a very crucial time. We should not focus our energy on past now as this is the time to think of future only. We should respect the future which stores innumerable opportunities. We have to discard 'narrow-mindedness' as it is the major obstacle in nation building. Broad-mindedness is the need of the hour. He also narrates how on the strength of the principle of non-violence that 'the greatest man of our generation', Mahatma Gandhi endowed us and led us to the luminous path of freedom. He is also, deeply pained over the partition that is dividing the people who fought together for this dream. Thus, in this hour of rejoice, the 'clouds surround us'.

The speaker also insists that freedom brings responsibility to build the destiny of India and this is not, in any way, different from that of the people living in the rest of the

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world. This relationship is reciprocal as whatever happens in India will impact the other parts of the world. He also emphasizes that India has an important role of leadership for the cause of the larger humanity. His sole intention is not that we must turn a blind eye to the past; rather he expresses great reverence for the past, to the history in terms of its inspirational and educational value.

Therefore, we can say that Nehru's thrust towards independence was more political. He was a visionary who wanted India to succeed in all her missions and that can only be possible through unity.

5.5.2 Critical Analysis

The phrase 'tryst with destiny' is inspired by the phrase 'rendezvous with destiny' used by Franklin .D. Roosevelt in his Democratic National Convention speech in 1936. In his own speech, Nehru acknowledges the role of Satyagraha leading to the never-ending struggle for Independence. The speech was so powerful that it instilled the spirit of patriotism in the heart of any Indian who listened to it as Gandhi's contribution through Satyagraha was quite acknowledged he was the Father of Nation whom everyone respected. The speech was deeply imbibed with devotion to his country and his people. Every word and sentence of it was filled with pride. Nehru expresses at one point in his speech:

'A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.'

The Indian who had been a part of that oppression and suppression since ages, or the exploitation faced by his or her ancestors, felt a sense of pride that he or she was one of those thousands, who brought peace, sovereignty to his or her nation. Throughout his speech, Nehru maintained his sensibility and at no point did he make any reference to the freedom movement as being an intense struggle due to the injustice meted out by the British. He uses very positive words full of positive connotations. He also mentions that this was not the time for the discussion of petty and trivial things. People should not waste their energy now on destructive criticism nor should they blame each other. India is proud enough to have a reawakening after a long slumber and struggle.

Throughout his speech, Nehru cultivated the feelings of humility in his fellow-men. He also paid homage to all people and their efforts to bring about the position of self-governance to India. Nehru makes an appeal to the newly-independent populace to dedicate themselves to the service of India and to the service of the whole mankind.

Nehru recognizes the stupendous efforts made by abundant freedom fighters of several generations. He knows that the people of India will imbibe courage from past examples and the success celebrated on 15 August is only an opportunity for greater success in the coming future. He asks Indians to accept this challenge to serve the future generations of India.

Nehru reminds the people that now India is her own master. It can no longer lean on England for any sort of guidance or leadership. Now his country is able to take her own decisions, learn from her mistakes and move forward, for India has to mature and grow into a wise nation. He specifies that it is of great importance that India should also try to be a model to other nations.

Nehru appeals to all Indians to work harder for the development for their dream nation. To serve India means to serve millions of poor people who suffer all over the country. The past is over and only the future is in front of everyone which has to be

taken care of. The dreams to build India are not only for India but are in fact for the entire world as all countries are closely connected to each other and no one can live in isolation. The entire humanity can be built on the foundation stone of peace, freedom and prosperity. The disaster that happens in one part of the world can affect other parts of the world as the world cannot be divided into small pieces.

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5.6 SUMMARY

- Non-fictional prose is any literary work founded chiefly on fact or reality, even though it supposedly incorporates elements of fiction or fancy. Its example can be essays, biographies, letters, diaries, autobiographies, confessions, and so on.
- Earlier autobiographies were called or entitled *Apologia*. They were meant to provide self-justification for the life of the author. John Henry Newman's (1801–1890) autobiography (1864) is called *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Saint Augustine's (354–430) *Confessions* is his famous autobiographical work. Rousseau (1712–1778) used *Confessions* (1782) as the basis for writing his autobiography.
- An essay is a short piece of writing which reflects the writer's own point of view about a particular subject. Essays are essentially written in prose form. They may have diverse elements in focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, criticism of life, events or happenings, and so on.
- *A Room of One's Own* is a comprehensive composition by Woolf. Initially published on 24 October 1929, the composition was based on a sequence of lectures she gave at Newnham College and Girton College, the two women's colleges at Cambridge University.
- In the essay she employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women in their role as writers of fiction and as characters in it. The title of the essay focuses on the author's need to create art and her need for poetic license. She also examines the question as to whether women can actually produce a viable piece of art.
- In the essay Woolf argues that women be granted a literal and figurative space as legitimate writers within a male dominated literary tradition. In other words she stakes claim for the acknowledgement of female writers and their creative endeavors.
- In the essay Woolf presents George Eliot, Emily Bronte, Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte as the 'four great novelists' to be studied, emulated and appreciated. Through these writers she attempts to create a female canon that can rival the patriarchal canon. She considers this attempt important also because she believes that only female writers can express female experience in all its shades.
- For critic's Narayan's stylistic rendition is detached, concomitantly lacking in depth to the point of being benign. His writing lacks the imaginative flair displayed by Raja Rao.
- In stead it is his informal ease, directness, precision and readability which account for his popularity. He avoids use of figurative language which along with his limited capability to imaginatively evoke scenes often leads to colorlessness in his narrative.

Check Your Progress

4. When was the 'Tryst with Destiny' speech made?
5. How was the phrase 'Tryst with Destiny' coined?

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- Thematic connections between the short stories and the novels of Narayan are interesting. Almost in each work of Narayan, situations, characters and motifs from other works of his resurface making an interesting pattern.
- Some words and speeches by great men are always remembered by people for generations. They become timeless because of their universal appeal. They always have a unique place in the hearts of the people for ages.
- ‘Tryst with Destiny’ was a speech made by Nehru to the Indian Constituent Assembly, on the eve of India’s Independence towards midnight on 14 August 1947. It is considered one of the greatest speeches of all time.
- The speech signifies a kind of phase of salvation which comes after retribution. It is a stage of redemption and reawakening.
- Nehru describes the mission in the speech as ‘a pledge’, ‘an unending quest’, ‘the ideal’, ‘the triumph’, ‘a challenge’, ‘a responsibility’, ‘an ambition’, ‘a dream’, ‘a noble mansion’, ‘a great adventure’, a bold advance’, and the like.

5.7 KEY TERMS

- **Protagonist:** The protagonist is the main character of a story and is at the center of the story, makes the key decisions, and experiences the consequences of those decisions.
- **Apologia:** Apologia is a formal defense of a conduct, opinion, position or action.

5.8 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Her dinner at Fernham College is starkly different from that served in Oxbridge: it comprises of plain soup, mediocre beef, vegetables, potatoes, bad custard, prunes, biscuits cheese and water.
2. This part of the essay begins with the narrator expressing her disappointment at failing to draw any conclusion as to why women are poorer than men.
3. The narrator marks down the literary work of Lady Winchilsea because according to the narrator, her writing is marred by fear and hatred. She believes that if she had not been consumed by these negative emotions she had the potential of writing brilliant verse.
4. The ‘Tryst with Destiny’ speech was made by Nehru on the eve of India’s Independence towards midnight on 14 August 1947.
5. The phrase ‘tryst with destiny’ is inspired by the phrase ‘rendezvous with destiny’ used by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his Democratic National Convention speech in 1936.

5.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the different types of essays.
2. On what grounds has Alice Walker criticized Woolf?

3. State some of the similarities between Chekhov and Narayan.
4. Write a short note on Velan and margosa tree.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the different forms of non-fiction prose.
2. Critically examine the story *The Axe* by Narayan.
3. 'Narayan's writings are pedestrian and naive because of the simplicity of his language and diction, combined with the lack of any complexity in the emotions and behaviors' of his characters.' Discuss.
4. Provide an overview of Nehru's *Tryst with Destiny*.

NOTES

5.10 FURTHER READING

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READING PROSE AND FICTION

BA [English]

Third Year

Paper - IV



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About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Reading Prose and Fiction

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| Unit II- Novel - I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - R.K. Narayan - The Guide | Unit 2: Novel - I: R.K. Narayan (Pages 19-80) |
| Unit III- Novel - II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jane Austen - Pride and Prejudice - Anita Desai - Fire on the Mountain | Unit 3: Novel - II: Austen and Desai (Pages 81-107) |
| Unit IV- Short Stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Edgar Allan Poe - The Cask of Amontillado - Virginia Woolf - The Duchess and the Jeweller - K. Mansfield - The Fly - R K Narayan - The Trail of the Green Blazer | Unit 4: Short Stories (Pages 109-144) |
| Unit V- Practical Criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciation of an unseen prose passage. | Unit 5: Practical Criticism: Appreciation of Unseen Prose Passages (Pages 145-183) |

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

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Prose is the most fundamental form of written language. It applies common grammatical structure and a natural flow of speech. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement enhances its usage in spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. Fiction on the other hand is the most popular form of literature present in today's world. It is any narrative that deals with events that are not factual, but rather imaginary. It is often applied to theatrical and musical work.

The content of this book *Reading Prose and Fiction* is divided into five units. It will discuss some of the prominent writers in prose and fiction such as, George Orwell, R.K. Narayan, Jane Austen, Anita Desai, Virginia Woolf, and many more.

The book has been written in the self-instructional mode wherein each unit begins with the Objectives of the topic, followed by an Introduction to the unit before going on to the presentation of the detailed content in a simple and structured format. Check Your Progress questions are provided at regular intervals to test the student's understanding of the topics. A Summary and a set of Self-Assessment Questions are provided at the end of each unit. Answers to Self-Assessment Questions have also been provided which would help the students assess their progress.

UNIT 1 PROSE

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature as a term is used to describe written or spoken material. It consists of anything from creative writing to technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used while referring to works of the creative imagination, including fiction, drama, prose, etc.

Prose is the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing. There are many prose forms. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches. Each form of prose has its own style and has to be dealt with in its own particular way. Travel writing is also one form of prose. Through this, we get a first-hand account of the travels of the writer, the places he has visited, and the experiences he has encountered. Speech is vocal communication with the purpose of conveying something. In this unit, you will get acquainted with three prose writings of famous writers, i.e., George Orwell, J.L. Nehru and N.C. Chaudhuri.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse George Orwell as an essayist
- Analyse Orwell's 'The Prevention of Literature'
- Describe the life and works of Jawaharlal Nehru
- Critically analyse 'Homage to Gandhi'
- Examine N.C. Chaudhuri 'Money and the Englishman'

1.2 GEORGE ORWELL: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The effects of the Second World War are clearly visible in the literature of that period, reflecting the spirit of revolt and the feeling of distrust. Established literary figures like Aldous Huxley, Evelyn Waugh and George Orwell rightfully satirized the socio-political insecurity and instability among the masses by depicting the feeling of futility, gloom and despair.



Fig. 1.1 George Orwell

George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell. His childhood was not a happy one as he did not have pleasant memories of his parents. Even his school life at St. Cyprian's was very miserable and lonely. He won a scholarship to Eton despite his depression at school.

For some time, he worked as an assistant to the District Superintendent of Police in the capital of upper Burma and then resigned and returned to England in 1927. He worked at various positions and also participated in the Spanish Civil War. After the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, he became very famous and financially prosperous for the first time in his life. Another famous work *Nineteen Eighty Four* was published in 1949. However, he did not live long enough to enjoy his popularity and succumbed to pulmonary tuberculosis in 1950, at the age of 46.

List of Works

The following is the list of the prominent works of George Orwell.

Novels

- 1934 – *Burmese Days*
- 1935 – *A Clergyman's Daughter*
- 1936 – *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*
- 1939 – *Coming Up for Air*
- 1945 – *Animal Farm*
- 1949 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Non-fiction

- 1933 – *Down and Out in Paris and London*
- 1937 – *The Road to Wigan Pier*
- 1938 – *Homage to Catalonia*

1.2.1 The Prevention of Literature: Critical Appreciation

'The Prevention of Literature' is an essay printed in 1946 by the English essayist and writer George Orwell. The essay deals with the freedom of thought and expression; especially in an atmosphere where the intellectuals were not speaking against the communism of the Soviet Union. Orwell noted that intellectual liberty in England was under attack from three sources, i.e., totalitarians, monopolies (radio, films, etc.), and bureaucracies. By bureaucracies, he meant particularly the Ministry of Information and the British Council, which employed writers, while assuming that the writers could have their opinions dictated to them. The main focus of Orwell's essay was on the intellectuals who should be strong in their defence of individual integrity, but who were not speaking out. Orwell stated that the left-wing authors and academicians were turning a blind eye towards all the events which would project the Soviet Union in a derogatory manner. The left-wing intellectuals had accepted a kind of self-censorship to preserve their ideologies before the need for objective truth.

Summary of the Essay

Orwell starts his essay by recalling a meeting of the PEN Club, which was held in defence of the press, where the speakers were mostly concerned with the issues of obscenity and in presenting the matter that praises the Soviet Russia. In a footnote of his essay, Orwell acknowledges that maybe he has picked a bad day, but this provides an opportunity for Orwell to discuss about the issue of freedom of thought and the enemies of intellectual liberty. He mentioned the enemies of freedom of thought in England to be the monopoly of radio, control of the press in a few hands, bureaucracy and the unwillingness of the public to buy books. At the same time, Orwell was extremely worried about the freedom of the writers being weak and their failure to defend this dominance. The main issue was the right to report contemporary events truthfully. According to him, a decade ago, it was necessary to defend freedom against Catholics and Conservatives, however, now it is necessary to defend it against Communists who claim that there is 'no doubt about the poisonous effect of the Russian mythos on English intellectual life'.

Orwell mentioned the Spanish Civil War, the Ukrainian famine and Poland as topics which have been ignored by pro-soviet authors because of the existing orthodoxy. Orwell stated that prose literature was unable to grow under totalitarianism, just as it was unable to grow under the oppressive religious culture of the Middle ages. However, under totalitarianism the doctrines are unstable, which means that the lies always have to be changed to keep up with a continual re-writing of the past.

Orwell stated that poetry can survive under totalitarianism for several reasons, whereas the prose writers have lost their power by the destruction of intellectual liberty. In the essay, he has tried to speculate the state of literature in times to come. According to him, the totalitarianism prevailing in the society will not provide enough encouragement to the literature. Moreover, he observed that people were willing to spend time and money on various other sources of recreation, but were reluctant to do the same for

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literature. In the essay, he has condemned the Russophile intellectuals as they were not worried about the state of literature and adopted a completely uninterested approach in order to maintain their privileges under the dictatorial situations. Orwell strongly believed that in the absence of freedom of thoughts, literature will not be able to survive or flourish. He also blamed the intellectuals for the state of the literature as they were themselves driving it to such a situation.

Extracts from the Essay

In our age the idea of intellectual liberty is under attack from two directions. On the one side are its theoretical enemies, the apologists of totalitarianism, and on the other its immediate, practical enemies, monopoly and bureaucracy. Any writer or journalist who wants to retain his integrity finds himself thwarted by the general drift of society rather than by active persecution.

The journalist is unfree, and is conscious of unfreedom, when he is forced to write lies or suppress what seems to him important news: the imaginative writer is unfree when he has to falsify his subjective feelings, which from his point of view are facts. He may distort and caricature reality in order to make his meaning clearer, but he cannot misrepresent the scenery of his own mind.

Political writing in our time consists almost entirely of prefabricated phrases bolted together like the pieces of a child's Meccano set. It is the unavoidable result of self-censorship. To write in plain vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox.

Responses towards Orwell's Essay

There were many authors who responded towards Orwell's views about the state of literature. Randall Swingler, a communist poet, reacted to the essay by giving his views in his article that 'The Right to Free Expression' in Polemic 5. Swingler agreed with Orwell, as he also felt that an author needs to take a strong stand against all situations or persons where the freedom of an intellect is at threat. He agrees with Orwell's views on the way dictatorships in Soviet Union tried to implement policies to curb cultural freedom. In spite of his agreement with the essay, he felt that due to the high degree of 'intellectual swashbucklery', it was difficult to completely respond to the essay. Swingler felt that Orwell had made several claims in the essay which he was unable to provide enough evidence and they seemed more like sweeping statement and uncorroborated declarations. This response by Swingler was not taken well by Orwell and he considered it to be a mocking personal attack on himself. Orwell began to socially avoid Swingler for the response he presented about the essay.

Orwell's essay was reviewed by Christopher Sykes; in fact, Sykes even studied his other works and finally established that his essays were very good and made a lot of sense, but at the same time they seemed to be slightly exaggerated and all his views were not supported with facts. He stated his views in following words; 'They contain much admirable sense, but they contain too some over-stated views, and some prophecies as doubtful as those of John Burnham.'

Critical Analysis

During the period of World War II, Orwell began to start feeling about the prevailing censorship and he started to express his feelings through his writings. Orwell was able to identify the sources for the censorship and openly spoke about them in his essay 'The

Prevention of Literature'. To a large extent, he blamed the intellects of the time as they were allowing the Ministry of Information and the British Council, who provided monetary aid to writers so that they could make them write in their favour. He felt that the left-wing authors and intellectuals were allowing self-censorship and were willingly preserving ideologies which were hindering the flourishing of the literature.

Orwell has always been very worried about the contents of political writing. He had commented about the state of writing in his essay 'Politics and the English Language', which was published in 1946. Orwell felt that the language of politics had extremely depreciated and it only contained weasel words which acted as a camouflage and undermined the true extent of the happenings. The language used in the texts was able to hide the real meaning of the actions and the dealings. False statements were considered to be the true and brutal acts like murder were also presented in a positive manner.

The essay 'The Prevention of Literature' was a reaction to all the indecencies which were taking place at that time. The essay has been described as one of Orwell's most expressive deliveries and his attempt to assert decorousness. While attending the PEN meeting, Orwell was upset at the prevailing situation because he felt that it was permitted to talk or print texts related to sexual context, but the same liberty did not apply to political situations. He felt that this clearly points towards lying low attitude adopted by the intellectuals of the contemporary society who were not concerned about the suppression of their freedom of thought. Orwell could not fathom this behaviour, hence he openly criticised the state of affairs through his essay and completely blames intellectuals and calls them weak. Orwell sets high standards for himself and felt that writing should be done in simple language and fearlessly. He stated his views in the following words; 'To write in plain, vigorous language one has to think fearlessly, and if one thinks fearlessly one cannot be politically orthodox.' His standards are clear from his subsequent works where he took full care so that the 'Prevention of Literature' could be prevented. The freedom of thought is visible in his books like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*.

1.3 J.L. NEHRU: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nehru was born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani at Allahabad in India. He was the first of three children to the couple. His father being a barrister was actively engaged in the Indian independence movement. He had also served as the President of Indian National Congress, twice.

Nehru received most of his primary education at home from several tutors and governess. At the age of sixteen, Nehru was enrolled at the Harrow School in England after which he got admission at the Trinity College, Cambridge where he earned his honours degree in natural science. He was highly influenced by the writings of Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, J.M. Keynes and G.M. Trevelyan who shaped much of his political and economic thinking.

After attaining his graduate degree, Nehru relocated to London in 1910 and enrolled himself at the Inns of Court School of Law where he studied law for two years. After completing his bar examination, he was offered to be admitted to the English bar, but Nehru returned to his homeland in 1912 and started practicing law as a barrister at the Allahabad High Court and gradually, he involved himself in Indian politics.

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Check Your Progress

1. List the various kinds of prose.
2. When was George Orwell born?
3. List some of the prominent novels of George Orwell.

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Fig. 1.2 Jawaharlal Nehru

Nehru's contribution to India's freedom struggle

At the time when Nehru joined Indian National Congress, he was not happy with its functioning as it was dominated by the English knowing upper class elite, yet he participated in the civil rights campaign initiated by Gandhi. Nehru condemned the Indian Civil Service for its support of British policies radically. He was not happy with the slow progression of the nationalist movement, so he joined his hands with aggressive nationalist leaders who were demanding Home Rule for Indians. He argued for self-government and a status of Dominion within the British Empire as enjoyed by Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand. In 1916, Nehru met Gandhi for the first time and nobody knew that this relationship would turn for the lifetime of the both. Under Gandhi's tutelage, Nehru was raised to the position of General Secretary of the Congress. Nehru not only contributed to national movement of India, but also gave the freedom struggle an international outlook in 1927 when, he attended the congress of oppressed nationalities in Brussels in Belgium.

Nehru appealed for complete independence, but he was objected to by Gandhi who proposed a dominion status for India in two years' time frame. When Gandhi's plea was rejected, and so was Nehru's presidency over the Lahore session in 1928, Nehru demanded for complete independence. This resolution made him the most significant leaders of the independence movement. Due to his participation in the salt Satyagraha, he was put into prison with a large number of nationalists. During the World War II, Nehru demanded for full assurance for India's independence and also the share of power and responsibility in the central government, but the British did not oblige. In 1947, as India enjoyed the British departure from the Indian soil, it also suffered the pain of partition as the British had decided to divide the country into two-India and Pakistan.

Nehru's contribution to the country as a Prime Minister

Nehru was appointed the head of the interim government. Though he opposed the partition of India initially, due to Jinnah's powerful opposition, communal violence and political disorder, he was forced to accept this decision. Pakistan was formed on 14 August 1947 and Nehru became the Prime Minister of India. Nehru propelled India towards technological advancements and innovations. He also professed equality for all, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. He brought many radical changes in domestic, international and social policies. Nehru established several industries and also advocated for a mixed

economy where the government controlled public sector co-existed with the private sector. He was passionate about education. He believed that only education can bring reformation in young India. Under his administration, he established many higher institutes for learning including All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) and the National Institutes of Technology (NIT). He brought free and compulsory education to all children in his five year plan. Nehru also laid the stepping stone for the foundation of National Defense Academy, India. He realized the importance of defence and tried to equip the nation with the best modern equipment. Thus, Nehru toiled hard for the fast growth and development of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru as a Prose Writer

Nehru was not only a chief Indian spokesman for political affairs, but also a great thinker and writer of India. Next only to Gandhi, his writings and speeches have brought a new shape of things to be followed in the years to come. In his writings, his mind ranges over all human problems with equal interest. An avid reader, he inspires the youth of India to be proud of their national heritage along with the rational points of the scientific temper.

Nehru's contribution is immense to Indo-English literature. He has enriched the store of Indian writing in English through voluminous works like *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* (1930), *Glimpses of World History* (1934), *An Autobiography* (1936), 'India and the World' (1936), *The Unity of India* (1941), *The Discovery of India* (1946) and *A Bunch of Old Letters* (1958).

As an Indo-English writer and as a politician, Nehru had chosen a vast area for his works. The crux of his writing comes from the freedom struggles of India. Hence, he came across several people with their different languages throughout India, more especially the languages of Northern India. The following words from *The Discovery of India* like shikar, the satyagraha sabha, khilafat committee, moulvis, ulema, charkha, kuttaghar, lathi charges, bania, to quote a few indeed, show his deliberate liking for the use of Indianised lexis items. Sometimes this code switching from English to Hindustani root words like 'Bramanisation' and 'Sahib log', develops a new syntax of sentence-formation. At time, he quotes the entire sentence in original form in order to emphasize his point. However, his language as a prose writer is simple and easy to grasp in spite of its complex structure. He has a wonderful mastery of language which provides a concrete shape to his prose writing.

Nehru as a Democrat

Jawaharlal Nehru was no Caesar, despite his obvious imperiousness. 'We want no Caesars' he said, when dictators were fashionable in Europe and many were fascinated by Hitler's or Mussolini's dazzling conquests of power. He had been a democrat for a long time before he took to the practice of parliamentary democracy. Nehru had watched with amusement and indifference, the burlesque of the Council entry programme of his father and others. He was an agitator and a soldier in the livery of freedom. He could not think of democracy without transfer of power and the sensation of real self-government.

For him, freedom of the people came first, freedom to shape their freedom as they liked, and they were not an abstraction. He thought of them as millions and millions of individuals, each with his individuality, each master of his fate; in spite of the exhilaration

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he felt before crowds, he did not think of them in mass or as groups. The ardent spirit with which he threw himself into the freedom struggle and the many battles he fought for civil liberties were a part of his passion for individual liberty, as a condition of national freedom.

Jawaharlal Nehru made no secret that he enjoyed power, not for itself, but because it enabled him to make some history. Power does not rise from a vacuum, from adventurism or from the magic of personality. To be real, it must be a part of social power. He derived his power, not from the electorate, not even from Parliament, but from the appeal to the mass mind which he achieved as a part of the social processes which Gandhi had released and he accelerated. He achieved leadership through rational means. However, he was a democrat by faith and self-discipline and was no less successful than Gandhi, because he was always prepared to take his chances in the inner party struggles of the Congress party.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to articulate the idea of a Constituent Assembly long before such an assembly was set up under the Cabinet Mission scheme. A Constituent Assembly had for him the implications of a revolution; and in spite of the limitations under which the Constituent Assembly met and the intransigence of the Muslim League, he sought to endow it with revolutionary temper, and when freedom was not yet in sight, he sought to make it the instrument of revolution, not merely political but social and economic. He could see that it was not enough to have a constitution, a concept of territorial integrity, and armed forces to defend it.

The basis of the Constituent Assembly was the sovereignty of the people, and it was something more than a phrase for him. His speech on the 'Objectives Resolution' was one of the greatest he ever made, not only eloquent in words, but inspiring in its amplitude and depth. India was to be an Independent Sovereign Republic, wherein all the power and authority of the republic, its constituent parts and organs of the government were derived from the people. Justice, social, economic and political, was to be guaranteed; there was to be equality of status and of opportunity; freedom of thought and expression and other freedoms were enumerated.

Despite his legal training, Nehru's mind was not legalistic and he did not profess to be learned in law, even in constitutional law, but he left his impress on constitution making, and even he could not make it as simple, easy and short as he would have liked. He thought much about its content and made provision for the future. The constitution had to be given the flesh and blood of an economic base, if it was not to be a paper constitution; it must serve the needs of the people, if it is not to be treated as a scrap of paper; and it must work, if it was not to break up. The problem was to make a nation from a confused, distraught people, and Jawaharlal Nehru sought to fit all problems into the framework of national unity. India was still a land of many races and religions and languages, and the diversity of its composite culture did not disturb Jawaharlal Nehru. He rather welcomed it as he understood the long drama of the past, of an India changing, but with a continuity of tradition, and he also understood the transitional nature of the present and the unfolding of the future. The concept of a monolithic state in the name of oneness of culture was not acceptable to him, and he rejected the imposition of any majority culture. Behind the forms of democracy which the country was adopting, he saw the spirit of it in all its complex yet simple processes.

Nehru treated the Parliament with deference and respect because he believed in the virtues of parliamentary democracy, in the value of good precedents, and in the laying down and carrying out of policies with the consent of the people or their

representatives. It was not easy, for with vast reserves of illiteracy the country had started with adult suffrage. However, he knew that there was no other way. With many limitations, he enabled three general elections to become an impressive demonstration of the working of the world's largest democracy. After all, any democracy, whatever the forms and the rules, is government by deliberation, and it demands capacity for debate, and he taught this lesson ceaselessly. Democracy must ensure good government; it must allow criticism and correction; it means balances and checks.

He had, however, no new fanciful notions about democracy. To him the content was more important than the form. He sometimes suggested reform and thought aloud about better methods. However as a democrat, he waited for a consensus to develop. He did not think of a party less democracy; he rather thought that a party system would help principled working. Among his feats was the way he preserved the strength of the Congress and used it as a mighty instrument of his purposes.

The democracy which developed under Jawaharlal Nehru was not Jeffersonian or Jacksonian democracy or even the slavery-free democracy of Lincoln. It was a twentieth century democracy based on social and economic equality, trying to develop the temper of peace and prepared to undertake an industrial and technological revolution. The democratic process cannot be free unless it is freed from the grip of vested interests. Parliamentary democracy in this sense was Jawaharlal Nehru's dream. Whatever its failures, whatever the setbacks whatever the variations that are possible, he largely fulfilled that dream.

1.3.1 Homage to Gandhi: Critical Appreciation

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru made a speech to the entire nation after the assassination of Gandhi on All India Radio. He gave an extempore speech and it was very emotional. Nehru started the speech by saying, 'The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. He feels very helpless and says that he has no appropriate words to help them overcome their grief. In a state of grief, Nehru feels it is important to realise the threats from communalism and he warns the people about it. He urges them to stay united and peaceful, as he feels that this will be the best way to pay homage to Gandhi as he sacrificed his life so that India could be united and be free from violence. All through, Nehru equates Gandhi to an everlasting inspiration, foreseeing that the path he showed will guide people in times to come.

'That light will be seen ... the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present; it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.'

In the speech, Nehru feels that just praising Gandhi about his greatness and kindness would not be the correct homage to him. According to him, his vacuum will always remain in lives of all Indians. In his speech, he stated that:

'A glory has departed and the sun that warmed and brightened our lives has set and we shiver in the cold and dark. Yet, he would not have us feel this way. After all, that glory that we saw for all these years, that man with the divine fire, changed us also— and such as we are, we have been moulded by him during these years; and out of that divine fire many of us also took a small spark which strengthened and made us work to some extent on the lines that he fashioned. And so if we praise him, our words seem rather small and if we praise him, to some extent we also praise ourselves. Great men and eminent men have monuments in bronze and marble set up for them, but this man of divine fire

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managed in his life-time to become enshrined in millions and millions of hearts so that all of us became somewhat of the stuff that he was made of, though to an infinitely lesser degree. He spread out in this way all over India not in palaces only, or in select places or in assemblies but in every hamlet and hut of the lowly and those who suffer. He lives in the hearts of millions and he will live for immemorial ages.'

Nehru felt that such great people can be praised by following the path that they showed. He stated that just words of praise will not be enough and adequate, but if the people remain united, worked hard and worked towards developing the country that will actually be true homage as his sacrifice will not go waste.

Nehru called this phase as a period of darkness, which will soon pass, if the people continued to follow the principles of Gandhi.

'All we know is that there was a glory and that it is no more; all we know is that for the moment there is darkness, not so dark certainly because when we look into our hearts we still find the living flame which he lighted there. And if those living flames exist, there will not be darkness in this land and we shall be able, with our effort, remembering him and following his path, to illumine this land again, small as we are, but still with the fire that he instilled into us.'

Nehru felt that Gandhi was one of the greatest symbol of the country who will be remembered in future as well.

'The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate past, it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.'

Nehru felt that building monuments in the name of Gandhi were not required as he lived in the hearts of the people and they were going to remember him without a physically made structure.

Critical Analysis

Nehru's work was considered as a superior illustration of oration. The speech was well appreciated not only because of the content, but also the usage of language. The book contains totality in its paragraphs and themes. It contains a poetic selection of terms which enhance the theme and give a meaningful image to the content. Nehru has adopted a very peaceful style of writing which gives a very soothing effect to the situation. He takes care to be sensitive about the grief of the people, but at the same time does not fail to inform them about the continuing threat of communalism and the only way to stop it will be to remain united.

1.4 N.C. CHAUDHURI: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

One of the most famous writers of English in India, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897 and was educated in Kolkata. He started his career as a clerk in the Indian Army, but later was able to obtain the job of secretary to the freedom fighter Sarat Chandra Bose, the older brother of Subhas Chandra Bose. Chaudhuri went on to contribute articles to popular magazines and became a renowned author in English and Bengali. Chaudhuri also worked as a journalist and

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4. Whose writings influenced Jawaharlal Nehru's thinking?
5. What propelled Nehru to become a highly significant leader of the Indian freedom struggle movement?

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editor and was the political commentator for the All India Radio for some time. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975 for his biography on Max Müller.

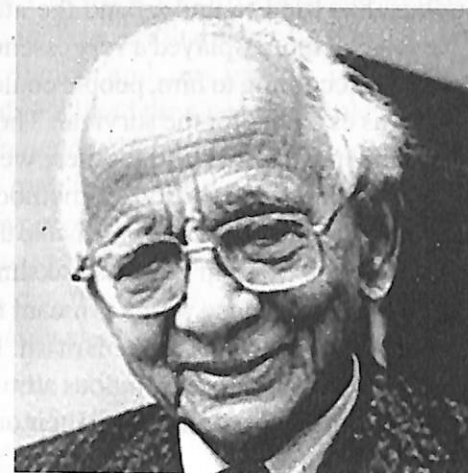


Fig. 1.3 N.C. Chaudhuri

Along with his many achievements, Nirad Chaudhuri was also an extremely polarizing figure. He was accused of being anti-Muslim and supporting the ideology of Hindu extremism. In this regard, he made some inflammatory statements after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. However, his most well-known controversy was regarding his most famous book called *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The book courted controversy in newly independent India because of its dedication which stated:

"To the memory of the British Empire in India,

Which conferred subjecthood upon us,

But withheld citizenship.

To which yet every one of us threw out the challenge:

'Civis Britannicus sum'

Because all that was good and living within us

Was made, shaped and quickened

By the same British rule."

The dedication infuriated many Indians and Chaudhuri was accused of praising the British over India. The ensuing controversy resulted in him being thrown out of government service, deprived of his pension and being blacklisted as a writer in India. Chaudhuri himself denied that he had praised the British Empire, explaining that the dedication was written in a mock imperial rhetoric style which he used to condemn the British for not treating Indians as equals. Along with this controversy, he was also accused by the family of Subhas Chandra Bose of having leaked information to the British regarding the whereabouts of Sarat Chandra Bose, leading to his arrest.

After the controversy over *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Chaudhuri moved to England where he received enormous literary success, receiving the Duff Cooper Memorial Award, the only Indian to have received the prize. Chaudhuri was awarded the title of the Commander of Order of the British Empire from Queen Elizabeth II in 1992. He died in 1999 at the age of 101 in Oxfordshire.

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1.4.1 Money and the Englishman: Critical Appreciation

Like all his other works, the essay 'Money and the Englishman', also features the west. In this essay Nirad Chaudhuri has tried to understand the attitude of the people of England towards money. He felt that money played a very essential role in every society and people living in that society. According to him, people could sacrifice most of their passions, except money as it was essential for the survival. The author was not able to judge the attachment of Englishmen towards money as there were no direct indicatives. Hence, he felt that he would have to find some indirect method for investigating their attachment. In England, the money mindedness was not visible through their religious or social attitude as it is in India. Indians worship goddess Lakshmi who is the symbol of wealth. Most households in India have a place which is meant for worship. Chaudhuri was not able to locate any such area in homes of the British. In the essay, he clearly specifies that with all this he is not trying to assert religious attitudes of the people of the east and the west, but actually just trying to understand their outlook towards such an important aspect of life.

Chaudhuri also mentions that people in England are very prompt in paying their dues irrespective of their financial status, whereas in India the rich are more reluctant to pay their dues even though they have more resources. He has stated in the essay that 'everybody was not only expected to pay his dues promptly and regularly, but also, generally speaking did so. In our society the willingness to pay decreases as the capacity to pay increases'. Another aspect about money, which makes him excited is that the banks and shops are considerably more tolerant and trustful in matters of money.

The author is amazed by the honesty he witnesses in the economic and money-making matters. He has called this as a virtuous quality. Nonetheless, the people of England restrain from any type of money-talk. Whereas this is not the case in India; people freely talk about money. On a lighter note, the author stated that in India money-making is as open as love-making in West. The people in England consider it impolite to talk about money related issues or nature of business publically; people who indulge in such conversation are considered to be capitalists, who get pleasure only in discussing financial matters. The author realises that talking about money in the West is considered as a negative aspect of the English personality. The economic world is essentially divided into two groups—one group believes in saving money and the other group consists of people who enjoy spending money. One group consists of penny pincher and the other of the compulsive shopper. He has stated from producing point of '...love for money in order to be enjoyed must be restricted'. The sight is changed when it comes to expenditure. 'On this side there was as much assertiveness as there was secrecy on the other.' The author identifies spending to be the optimistic need of the people in West and saving as a remedial measure.

Through the essay, Chaudhuri tries to offer an understanding about the attitude of the people of England and of Indians when it comes to money. He feels that people of India like to hoard money, whereas English people spend money in a systematic and strategic style. In India, money is one and the same as enticement, passion and anxiety. The author also talks about the assortment and lavishness of merchandise in shops in England and he feels that a person who has no clue about his requirements will go crazy while shopping. The essay mentions that a hierarchy can be seen in the shopping pattern of the English people as they shop according to their financial status. He mentions that people belonging to the middle-class will not be at ease if they had to shop in Bond Street and would prefer to go to Cambridge, where the things in the shop will suit their

pockets and they will not experience awkwardness. The author has further elaborated that even the shop assistants are well-dressed in shops at Bond-Street.

The author being a tourist is able to experience both the shopping experiences to the fullest and he states in the essay that 'I can hardly say how it gladdened the heart of a spendthrift in both principle and...my means...to find myself in a country in which spending was respectable. I liked the English people for their devotion to spending—that's the way the money goes.' The essay gives a detailed view about the financial matters of the west and mentions about the experiences of the author during his stay. He realises that the English people live very stylishly and are constantly striving for a better standard of life. He has stated that 'the best use of money is to spend it on the good things of life.' He also comments at the end that this philosophy about money is not adopted by the Indians as they are constantly busy in saving money rather than spending it on good things in life.

1.5 SUMMARY

- George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India. His father Richard Walmseley Blair named him Eric Arthur Blair, the name which he forsook for his pen name George Orwell.
- He worked at various positions and also participated in the Spanish Civil War. After the publication of *Animal Farm* in 1945, he became very famous and financially prosperous for the first time in his life.
- 'The Prevention of Literature' is an essay printed in 1946 by the English essayist and writer George Orwell.
- The essay deals with the freedom of thought and expression; especially in an atmosphere where the intellectuals were not speaking against the communism of the Soviet Union.
- The essay 'The Prevention of Literature' was a reaction to all the indecencies which were taking place at that time. The essay has been described as one of Orwell's most expressive deliveries and his attempt to assert decorousness.
- Nehru was born to Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani at Allahabad in India. He was the first of three children to the couple.
- As an Indo-English writer and as a politician, Nehru had chosen a vast area for his works. The crux of his writing comes from the freedom struggles of India.
- Jawaharlal Nehru was the first to articulate the idea of a Constituent Assembly long before such an assembly was set up under the Cabinet Mission scheme.
- The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru made a speech to the entire nation after the assassination of Gandhi on All India Radio.
- Nehru's work was considered as a superior illustration of oration. The speech was well appreciated not only because of the content, but also the usage of language, the book contains totality in its paragraphs and themes.
- One of the most famous writers of English in India, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897 and was educated in Kolkata.
- After the controversy over *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Chaudhuri moved to England where he received enormous literary success,

Check Your Progress

6. When was Nirad C. Chaudhuri born?
7. When did Nirad C. Chaudhuri receive the Sahitya Akademi Award?

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receiving the Duff Cooper Memorial Award, the only Indian to have received the prize.

- Like all his other works, the essay 'Money and the Englishman', also features the west. In this essay Nirad Chaudhuri has tried to understand the attitude of the people of England towards money.
- Through the essay, Chaudhuri tries to offer an understanding about the attitude of the people of England and of Indians when it comes to money.

1.6 KEY TERMS

- **Bar examination:** A bar examination is a test intended to determine whether a candidate is qualified to practice law in a given jurisdiction.
- **Communalism:** Communalism usually refers to a system that integrates communal ownership and federations of highly localized independent communities.
- **Extempore:** An extempore speech is an impromptu speech which the candidate is required to make on a topic given then and there.

1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches.
2. George Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 in Bihar, India.
3. The following is the list of the prominent novels of George Orwell.
 - 1934 – *Burmese Days*
 - 1935 – *A Clergyman's Daughter*
 - 1936 – *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*
 - 1939 – *Coming Up for Air*
 - 1945 – *Animal Farm*
 - 1949 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
4. Jawaharlal Nehru was highly influenced by the writings of Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, J.M. Keynes and G.M. Trevelyan who shaped much of his political and economic thinking.
5. Nehru's demand for total independence after the Lahore session in 1928 propelled Nehru to become a highly significant leader of the Indian freedom struggle movement.
6. Nirad C. Chaudhuri was born in Kishoreganj (now a part of Bangladesh) in 1897.
7. Nirad C. Chaudhuri received his Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975 for his biography on Max Müller.

1.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a note on the life and works of Jawaharlal Nehru.
2. What are Orwell's political views in his essay 'The Prevention of Literature'?
3. Write a critical summary of 'Homage to Gandhi'.
4. Write a short note on the life of Nirad C. Chaudhuri.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the merits and demerits of George Orwell as an essayist.
2. Explain the purpose of politics and the English language.
3. How does Nehru react to Gandhi's death and how does he finally reconcile himself to it? Discuss.
4. Critically analyse the speech 'Homage to Gandhi' by J. L. Nehru.

1.9 FURTHER READING

- Panda, H. 1997. *Selections from Modern Prose*. Hyderabad: Universities Press (India) Private Ltd.
- Liebler Naomi Conn. 2006. *Early Modern Prose Fiction: The Cultural Politics of Reading*. London: Routledge.
- Hudson, W.H. 2006. *Introduction to the Study of Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd.

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UNIT 2 NOVEL - I: R.K. NARAYAN

Novel - I: R.K. Narayan

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 R.K. Narayan: About the Author
- 2.3 Social Aspects of Indian Society in the Novel
- 2.4 Major Themes
- 2.5 Major Characters in *The Guide*
- 2.6 Narayan's Technique of Writing
- 2.7 Critical Appreciation of the Novel
 - 2.7.1 Brief Overview of Other Works by R.K. Narayan
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Key Terms
- 2.10 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.11 Questions and Exercises
- 2.12 Further Reading

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses R.K. Narayan's novel *The Guide*.

R.K. Narayan is one of the most famous and widely read Indian authors of the twentieth century. His literary pursuits are evident of the mundane joys of ordinary life and are known to be full of humour and compassion. He was born in Madras (present-day Chennai) on 10 October, 1906. Narayan's father was a provincial headmaster and due to his transferable job, Narayan spent his initial years with his maternal grandmother Parvathi at Madras. It was during this time that he studied at the Lutheran Mission School and the CRC High School. Once his father was appointed the headmaster of Maharaja High School in Mysore, Narayan moved back with his parents and went on to complete his graduation from the University of Mysore.

In the year 1935, Narayan began his writing career with *Swami and Friends*. It has been observed that not only *Swami and Friends* but most of his works are set in the backdrop of a fictional town called Malgudi. Not only has the Indian culture been described intricately in Narayan's writings, but it also possesses a uniqueness of its own. He was a gifted author who immaculately described the simplicity of olden days and how people tried to cope with the changing world.

Some of R.K. Narayan's famous works include *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *Malgudi Days* (1982), and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993). *The Guide* is another remarkable achievement of his career. This novel not only won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958, but was later adapted into a movie and a Broadway play. *The Guide* reflects the tragicomic aspect of the modern Indian penchant for half-baked philosophy. Other notable works include an autobiography which was published in 1974 titled *My Days* and a shortened English prose version of the Mahabharata in 1972.

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R.K. Narayan was bestowed with many honours and awards during his writing career which spanned over six decades. Besides being nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1989, Narayan won the Padma Vibhushan, one of India's highest civilian awards, in 1964. He also received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958 for *The Guide*. In 1980, the Royal Society of Literature honoured Narayan with the AC Benson Medal and in 1982 he was made an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Apart from these awards, Narayan was conferred honorary doctorates by the University of Mysore, Delhi University and the University of Leeds.

R.K. Narayan is a renowned author who is credited with introducing Indian culture to the rest of the world and is regarded as one of India's greatest English language novelists. Though Narayan's work has been often criticized for being too simple in prose and diction, he has managed to gain international visibility based on his highly-localized novels that are usually set in the fictional Mysorean village of Malgudi—the single most endearing 'character' created by Narayan.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe Narayan's development as a writer
- Discuss Narayan's role as an Indian English novelist
- Explain the social context of the novel
- Identify the major characters of the novel
- Analyse the concept of emancipation of woman in *The Guide*
- Explain Narayan's theory of karma and moksha in relation to *The Guide*

2.2 R.K. NARAYAN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Let us begin by discussing R.K. Narayan's life and works.

Among the Indian writers in English, R.K. Narayan has a special place in Indian history. As a novelist, he maintained India's essence in all his works rather than adopting traditional western style. Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan was born on 10 October 1906 to R.V. Krishnaswami Iyer and Gnanambal at Puraswalkam, Madras. It was a congested, noisy and dusty downtown locality. The large family of Iyers included many uncles, brothers, sisters and cousins. Narayan himself was the third of eighteen children of his parents. The household included grandmothers and grandfathers on both mother's and father's side besides grand uncles and aunts. This was because of the practice of intermarriage between the sister's and brother's children. Narayan himself was looked after more by his maternal grandmother addressed as Ammani, rather than by his own mother. His grandmother was a great influence on his life. She affectionately called him Kunjappa, a name that he was called by among his family. She took on the responsibility of educating him, teaching him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. English was the language spoken in their house. According to R.K. Laxman, Narayan's youngest brother, grammatical errors the siblings made were not looked upon too kindly. During his stay with his grandmother, Narayan attended many schools including the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam, the C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Reading was a passion for Narayan and his early reading included

the works of Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy. At the age of twelve, Narayan took part in a pro-independence march. His act was frowned upon by his uncle. The family was not inclined towards politics as they regarded all governments as wicked.

Narayan's Education

Narayan studied at his father's school and disappointed his family's emerging middle-class aspirations as he failed his first attempt to qualify for the graduate course in Arts.

When his father was transferred to the Maharajah's Collegiate High School, Mysore, Narayan too shifted there to be with his family. Narayan delighted in the well-stocked library at the school as well as his father's own and intensified his reading habit. It was at this time that he started writing as well. After a failed attempt at the university entrance exam, he spent a year at home just reading and writing. He cleared the exam in 1926 and joined the Maharaja College of Mysore. A formal education did not seem to suit him as he took four years to complete his graduation, a year more than normal. He would have pursued an MA degree but was dissuaded by a friend who was convinced this would kill his interest in literature. Instead, he took to teaching in a school but walked out when he was asked by the headmaster to act as a stand-in for the physical training instructor. With this experience came the realization that, for him, writing was the only career. He then made up his mind to stay at home and concentrate on writing novels. His first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*. In the meantime, he never faltered in his resolve to write for a living; he also tried to make ends meet by freelance journalism and keeping odd jobs. He kept on writing and submitting stories for newspapers and magazines.

Narayan's Career

The completion of his first novel did not bear immediate fruition as, for Narayan, it was not easy to find either a publisher or a reading audience. In 1933, while on vacation at his sister's house, Narayan met and fell in love with a fifteen year old girl Rajam, who lived nearby. Astrologically and financially they were mismatched but with great difficulty Narayan managed to obtain parental approval and married her. Subsequent to this, Narayan joined a paper called *The Justice* as a reporter. His strict rebellion against the caste-difference in India, especially between a Brahmin and a non-Brahmin, was displayed in this newspaper which was dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. As part of his job, he was exposed to a variety of people and various causes. Earlier, Narayan had sent the manuscript of a novel to a friend at Oxford, who showed it to Graham Greene. It was this first novel, '*Swami and Friends*', which brought him into contact with Graham Greene. The first novel of Narayan was published again in 1935 under Greene's care in England. Greene also advised Narayan to shorten his name to enable it to be easier for the English-speaking readers. In his first novel, he attempted to be a realist and used his own experiences in the form of a story. Though it elicited favourable reviews, sales figures did not go up. The Indian publishing industry in the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s was not very well organized. There were not many readers of Indian fiction in English. This meant small or non-existent means to support oneself as a writer.

In 1931, after trying to interest all available publishers in his short stories and after trying to find a job in the newspaper *The Hindu* as a trainee reporter, he had a book review and short story published in *The Indian Review*. In 1933, *Punch* published his short satirical article, 'How to Write an Indian Novel.' In 1934 and 1935, he worked as the Mysore reporter for *The Justice*, the official organ of the non-Brahmin movement.

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Towards the end of the 1930s, Narayan started to contribute regularly with short stories and other pieces to *The Hindu*. This paper published many of his short stories and essays. During the latter half of the 1980s, Narayan's work was published in the magazine, *Frontline*. These included some essays, short stories, and three novels in a serial form. During the middle of his literary graph, Narayan had a fruitful association with *The Illustrated Weekly* and *The Times of India*. R.K. Laxman, India's greatest cartoonist and the writer's youngest brother, was also deeply associated with these periodicals.

Narayan did not have a bright academic career and after unsuccessfully trying to become a railway officer and bank official, he gave up. He also had a brief stint as a teacher, which too did not meet with much success. He gave up his gloomy living quarters and went home. As Narayan was struggling with a writing career, he couldn't contribute financially to household expenses. The lot fell on his elder brother who literally had to burn the midnight oil to keep the family going. Narayan stayed at home, typing the script of a play on a noisy typewriter, while his father, along with others, were certain that he was wasting his time trying to make a living as a writer.

His next novel was *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) which is a picture of his own college life and experiences. In this book, Narayan described how marriages in India are finalized based on horoscopes and how a wife bears all animosities of her husband in the social contract of marriage. A different publisher on the recommendation of Greene published it. Soon *The Dark Room* (1938) was published which dealt with the theme of domestic disharmony. In his third book, he wrote about a dominating husband whose wife was a victim of his oppression. Narayan's first three books dealt with socially accepted practices. In 1937 after his father's death, he accepted a commission from the Government of Mysore, which was a proposal to write a book to promote tourism in the state.

Narayan as a Successful Writer

Narayan is unusual among Indian authors writing in English in that he has stayed contentedly in his home country venturing abroad only rarely. He rarely addresses political issues or tries to explore the cutting edge of fiction. He is a traditional teller of tales, a creator of realist fiction which is often gentle, humorous and warm rather than hard hitting or profound. William Walsh regards him as one of the most distinguished novelists, writing in English in the Commonwealth. He regards his style as an original blend of Western method and Eastern material, and he succeeded in the way that only a talent of the finest kind could, in making Indian sensibility wholly at home in English art.

As is the case with many successful people, Narayan did not find instant success in his literary career. His life was one of struggle. He had to eke his living out of the paltry sum he got by writing stories and essays for various newspapers. His luck changed when his first story based on Malgudi titled *Swami and Friends*, was read by Graham Greene. With Greene's financial help it was published in England. This was a turning point for Narayan and his career took an upward swing after that. His writings delighted millions around the world. In all, he wrote twenty-nine novels, all based on Malgudi, and numerous short stories. His novel, *The Guide*, won him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award (given first time ever to a book in English).

Narayan's wife, Rajam, died of typhoid in 1939. Narayan mourned her deeply and was in distress for a long time. Their daughter, Hemalatha, was only three years old at that time. This tragedy affected his life considerably. It also formed the base for his

next novel, *The English Teacher*. Like the first two books, this is also largely autobiographical, and is part of an unintentional trilogy with *Swami and Friends* and the *Bachelor of Arts*. Narayan has acknowledged that *The English Teacher* was almost entirely an autobiography, with different names for the characters and the change of setting in Malgudi. He also explains that the emotions expressed in the book reflected his own at the time of Rajam's death.

Malgudi Days, his first collection of short stories, was published in November 1942. *The English Teacher* was published in 1945. In the interim period, due to the war, Narayan was cut off from England. During this time, he started his own publishing company and named it Indian Thought Publications. This company still thrives today and is managed by his granddaughter. His literary career picked up rapidly and he was read right from New York to Moscow. With popularity came money and in 1948, Narayan was now able to commence construction of his own house on the outskirts of Mysore. The house was completed in 1953.

As a Great Artist

Narayan is the great artist who has achieved greatness by recognizing the limitations of his range, and keeping within them. Like Jane Austen, he achieved greatness by working on his, 'two inches of ivory'. He knew only one particular region most intimately, and he rarely went out of it. He himself belonged to the middle class, intimately knew only this class, and so draws his characters from this class alone. He studied men in relation to each other and not in relation to God, or religion or politics, because such relationships were outside his range. Contemporary Indian politics rarely entered his novels. Gandhi and his freedom movement were introduced only in one of his novels, *Waiting for the Mahatma* and the result was rather unfortunate. Further, his range was limited by his comic vision, and so only such aspects of life were selected as were susceptible to comic treatment. It is for this reason that the passions, 'the stormy sisterhood', are eschewed and attention is confined to the surface reality of life. There is no probing of the subconscious or the unconscious. Narayan does not soar high because such soaring is incompatible with the comic mode. His problem is to give the reader a picture which strikes him as typical of everyday reality. For this, he depends on attraction. He, therefore, excludes from his picture such aspects of reality as not susceptible to comic treatment. His picture of life is always true to facts but to those facts only at which a reasonable being can be expected to react. He is also careful to survey his subject matter from an angle from which its comic aspects are most prominently visible.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, better known as V.S. Naipaul, a Trinidadian-born British writer of Indo-Trinidadian descent, currently resident in Wiltshire, called Narayan 'the Gandhi of modern Indian literature'. Oral literature in the vernacular languages of India is of great antiquity, but it was not until about the 16th century that an extensive written literature appeared for his mystical, community-oriented themes. If Raja Rao is termed as a novelist of metaphysics, Narayan is often applauded as a painter of vivid Malgudi, a microcosm of Indian social milieu. He has always been claimed as a novelist par excellence in matters of social criticism of India. However, little has been written on how Narayan incorporates the most profound of Indian thoughts, philosophies and spiritualism in general and theory of *Karma* in particular, in his novels. In an interview, R.K. Narayan says: 'To be a good writer anywhere, you must have roots - both in religion and family. I have these things'.

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Narayan's Place in Indian English Literature

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R.K. Narayan is considered one of the three best Indian authors writing in English; the other two are Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan's fiction contains a unique blend of Indian mysticism and English form. He narrates tales in a traditional way. His fiction is realistic and this comes across as gently humorous rather than being too philosophical. The fictional town of Malgudi is the setting for most of Narayan's stories. The people there are simple and humble, and represent the middle class. Narayan was not a devout Hindu, and has accused Westerners of wrongly supposing that all Indians are deeply spiritual beings. However, he did have deeply spiritual experiences after the death of his young wife.

His perfect objectivity is to be contrasted with the partiality of Mulk Raj Anand for the underdog of society, whose propagandist and spokesperson he is in every one of his novels. That is why his novels have grown dated, while those of Narayan's have a perennial freshness about them. They have the universal appeal of all great art. He is to be contrasted with Anand in another way also. His novels are not disfigured by any such literal translations of regional words and idiomatic expressions, of the coarse and the vulgar, as many pages of Anand. Narayan's work remains not only an object of study in the academy, but also a source of delight for readers across the English-speaking world and in translation to several languages. Besides, Narayan and Raja Rao, having mastered the language and the technique of the craft of novelist writing, have uniquely deployed their particular genius. Raja Rao, who wrote in the symbolist tradition of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce and E.M. Forster, used the large and overflowing symbols in his works. On the other hand, Narayan is generally recognized as the master of comic, portraying life and characters of Malgudi with subtle humour and delightful laughter.

The most remarkable fact about Narayan was that once he came up with his fictional South Indian town, Malgudi, he stayed with it for life. All his inventiveness and philosophical resources were invested in this small town, now familiar to millions of people in and outside India through his short stories and novels, not to mention TV series, and films. Graham Greene's famous line: 'Without Narayan I wouldn't know what it is like to be an Indian' has shaped virtually all criticism, either providing elements that concur to his role in approximating India to the western readership of questioning the basis for his realism and avoidance of overt politics.

Narayan's Death

During his final years, Narayan spent quality time with N. Ram, the publisher of *Hindu*, discussing about various significant topics. However, he was admitted to hospital in May 2001. A short while before he was to be put on a ventilator, he had intended to start writing his next novel. It was to be a story about a grandfather. Being very choosy about the notebooks he used, he asked N. Ram to get him one. But his health deteriorated and he could not commence his new novel. He died on 13 May 2001 in Chennai at the age of ninety-four.

When *The Guide* was published in 1958 by Methuen in London and by Viking Press in New York, Narayan was already a fairly well-known writer in India, England and the United States. His previous novels, *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952) and *The Printer of Malgudi* (1957) had gained him a faithful reading audience.

Narayan—A Voice of Great Distinction

Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships—relationships within the family circle and relationships centering around sex and money—are his ever-recurring themes. According to Narayan, wisdom is not gained through meditation or by spiritual contemplation, but by going through the experiences that life has to offer. The law of life is unavoidable. The law comes into operation the moment we detach ourselves from our mother's womb. All struggle and misery in life is due to our attempt to arrest this law or get away from it or in allowing ourselves to be hurt by it. We are blinded by our attachments. Every attachment creates a delusion and we are carried away by it.

Narayan also strongly believed in the life which was lived in correlation with tradition and philosophy, and deviation from it brought suffering and dissatisfaction. The human relationships presented by Narayan in his novels have originated from Indian tradition and philosophy. As William Walsh points out, 'The family is the immediate context in which his sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for able subtlety and conviction with which family relationships are treated'—that of son and parents and brother and brother in *The Bachelor of Arts*, of husband and wife and father and daughter in *The English Teacher*, of father and son in *The Financial Expert*, and of grandmother and grandson in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. The closeness of relationship between the adults and children, and the absence of watertight compartments between the worlds of the two, constitute the basis of these novels. However, the action is developed through the conflict between the ego-centricity of an individual member and the family's claim on him.

Narayan's presentation of characters and their relationships with one another achieve a philosophic overtone. He presents the characters in the light of the most contemplated universal theory of *Karma* as devised by The Bhagvad Gita, a Hindu epic. Narayan's characters achieve a synthesis of flesh and spirit through the philosophic interpretation of their own mundane activities.

R.K. Narayan: A Comparative Analysis

The literary achievements of R.K. Narayan have been a matter of great research. Many have compared his work to different writers. For instance, amongst his contemporaries, Narayan was one of the first Indians to have his work published outside India with the exception of Arundhati Roy and Salman Rushdie. Before we analyse and compare Narayan's work, it would be apt to describe the unique features of his writing style. His writing was considered to be simple and unpretentious with a dash of humour. Narayan mainly focussed on ordinary people and his writings usually remind the reader of people who are a part of their daily life, such as the next-door neighbour, cousins, friends, postman, etc. It was this focus on ordinary people that the readers are able to relate to the story as it unfolds. Narayan had a very different approach from his contemporaries and was able to give a detailed version of the Indian society without making changes in his characteristics or the simplicity of his subject. His writings seem to be devoid of the current trends in fiction writing and therefore are unique in its own sense. Narayan's work is said to have gentle Tamil overtones and he also employed the use of nuanced dialogic prose. Critics who have evaluated Narayan's work consider it to be descriptive and less analytical. They point out that his objective style is rooted in a detached spirit which provides a more authentic and realistic narration. His experience

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of life coupled with his attitude provided a unique blend of characters and actions, thus creating a connection with the readers. The reference of Malgudi, a fictional town in his writings has been described as a stereotypical small town, where the basic norms of tradition and superstition still apply.

Comparative Analysis of R.K. Narayan's work

Anton Chekhov: He was of Russian physician, dramatist and author and is considered one of the greatest short story writers of his time. Chekhov was a practicing doctor throughout his literary career. In the initial stages of his literary career, Chekhov wrote merely for financial gains and it was not until his creativity and literary ambition took hold of him that he began to produce quality work. Chekhov is known to have made some formal innovations in the evolution of modern short story writing. His work represents the stream-of-consciousness technique which lacked the moral bearings of traditional story structure, which is sometimes difficult for the readers to comprehend.

R.K. Narayan has been considered the Indian Chekhov due to similarities in the writing styles which comes out in the simplicity, beauty and humour of tragic situation. Greene in an earlier introduction in *The Bachelor of Arts* somewhat underscores the bittersweet flavour of Narayan's humour when he comments that 'Sadness and humour in the later books go hand in hand like twins, as they do in the comedies of Chekhov.' In support of Greene's view, William Walsh gives a similar response as he says, 'Narayan novels are comedies of sadness, calling up the name of Chekhov rather than anything in English literature as Graham Greene pointed out.' The stark difference comes out in the form of comprehension as Chekhov's writings were sometimes difficult for the reader to understand, however readers could easily relate to Narayan's work as his stories were based on the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala: She was born to Jewish parents in Germany in 1927. Her family immigrated to Britain to escape the Nazi regime. She later married an Indian Parsi in 1951, and settled in Delhi. It was here that she started her literary career, writing mostly about her new life in India. Jhabvala's writings were considered to be of high quality and she penned numerous novels, such as *To Whom She Will* (1955), *Nature's Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1957), *The Householder* (1960) and *Get Ready for the Battle* (1962). With the Merchant-Ivory Productions, she penned numerous hits like *The Householder*, *Shakespeare Wallah*, *Heat and Dust*, etc.

Jhabvala and Narayan have very different themes and styles running through their novels. Though Jhabvala was born in Germany, yet both authors wrote about Indian life and tradition Indian lifestyle whereas Narayan based most of his stories in a fictional town called Malgudi with his experience in life running as the central theme. The distinct themes are evident in their novels. For instance, in *The Interview*, Jhabvala tells the story of a man who is trying to decide whether he really wants a job that pays well but is boring and strict. Similarly, Narayan in the short story *A Horse and Two Goats* describes an old man from the village Malgudi who is poor. While sitting on the pedestal of a statue of a horse, the old man meets a foreign tourist who wants to buy the statue and tries to negotiate with the old man. But due to miscommunication the old man thought that the tourist wanted to buy his two goats.

Nikolai Gogol: He was a Ukrainian-born Russian dramatist and novelist. Gogol's writings are considered to be influenced by surrealism. Another characteristic of Gogol's writings was his impressionist vision of people and reality. He was well-read and

travelled and this is evident from his books. His literary achievements make him one of the preeminent figures of the natural school of Russian literary realism. Some of his well-known works 'The Portrait', 'The Carriage', 'The Overcoat', *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* and *Taras Bulba*.

The only similarity in Narayan's work and Gogol's work is the factor of realism. Anthony West of *The New Yorker* considered Narayan's writings to be of the realism variety of Nikolai Gogol. Another similarity is seen in their writings is their experience in life which they have subtly placed in their works. For instance, Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* is influenced by his Ukrainian upbringing, whereas, Narayan's work is very reflective of his South Indian roots. Since they were a century apart, their viewpoint and perception on the mundane occurrences in life differ to a great extent.

William Faulkner: He was an American writer and a Nobel Prize laureate who worked in different fields of media as he wrote novels, short stories, play, poetry, essays and screenplays. Most of his stories are set in a fictional town Yoknapatawpha County, based on Lafayette County, where he spent most of his childhood. He is considered one of the most important writers of Southern literature in the United States with the likes of Tennessee Williams, Mark Twain, Harper Lee, and so on. According to some, Faulkner was known for his experimental style with meticulous attention to diction and cadence. The 'stream of consciousness' is evident in his writings along with the presence of emotional, complex and sometimes even grotesque characters like slaves, slave descendants working class, poor agrarian class, etc. Two of his works, *A Fable* (1954) and his last novel *The Reivers* (1962) won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

The most striking similarity between Narayan and Faulkner is the use of a fictional town in Narayan's case Malgudi and the creation of Yoknapatawpha County in Faulkner's work. Faulkner's Southern American roots are evident in his writings as are Narayan's South Indian roots in his writings.

Guy de Maupassant: He was a famous 19th century French writer and was considered one of fathers of modern short story. He was born to a prosperous bourgeois family and lived with his mother after his parents separated. Maupassant's literary works were marked by objectivity, a highly-controlled style and to some extent by sheer comedy. Most of the times, his stories were built around simple episodes from day-to-day life which revealed the hidden sides of people.

Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri who compares Narayan to Guy de Maupassant says that both authors possessed the ability to compress the narrative without losing the general theme of the story. She also points that both Narayan and Maupassant have a common theme of middle-class life running through their stories. Their writings reflect their own experiences with life on the whole. Due to his ability to captivate readers, Jhumpa adds that Narayan provides the readers something novelists struggle to achieve in hundred or more pages, i.e., a complete insight to the lives of his characters. It is due to this reason that she also classifies Narayan in the same league as O. Henry, Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor.

Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao: Along with R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao complete the trilogy of leading figures of early Indian literature in the English language. M.K. Naik in the book *Critical Essays on R.K. Narayan's the Guide: with an introduction to Narayan's novel* says that Narayan is a novelist of individual man whereas Mulk Raj is the novelist of a social man and Raja Rao is a novelist of the metaphysical man. According to Naik, man's relationship with reality is the main theme running in Raja Rao's novel, while man's nexus with other men in an established social,

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economic and political order is the chief concern of Mulk Raj. However, Narayan's writings are primarily preoccupied with man's fillings of the life role assigned to him by tradition and environment. Though all of them deal with man and his surrounding, these authors differ in the treatment of their characters.

2.3 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY IN THE NOVEL

Let us now discuss some of the social aspects of the Indian society as seen in *The Guide*.

Unforgettable Characters

Narayan has been repeatedly compared to Dickens and Chekhov. The comparison with Dickens stems from the creation of a vast gallery of unforgettable characters; with Chekhov for the structure of the stories. Interestingly, both these writers have often been accused of being sentimental. However, Narayan's works could hardly be described as sentimental. It is his ability to convey the idiosyncrasies of his characters that belonged to all walks of life that places him in the Dickensian tradition. The most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world is that it comprises small-time cheats, street vendors, small businessmen and drifters, who together form a gallery of Indian characters. These are characters who are far from the stereotypes of extreme poverty or spiritual exoticism attached to the subcontinent.

Borderline figures like Raju in *The Guide*, for example, make the reader aware of this down-to-earth aspect of life that pervades his work. In most of his novels and short-stories, Narayan showed a special ability to make the rhythms and intricacies of South Indian life accessible to people of other cultures not only within India, but across the globe. Central to this achievement was the creation of Malgudi, the fictional South Indian town, full of ordinary men and women made memorable by his writing.

Indianness

The novel is an essentially Western art form, but Narayan has successfully used it to express Indian sensibilities. Narayan's works are a curious blend of Western method and Eastern material. Narayan's Indianness is seen in various ways. It is seen in his simple and traditional mode of narration, which is straightforward and chronological, even in *The Guide*, where part of the story is narrated by Raju and a part by the novelist. It is also seen in his exploitation of such Indian motifs as cobras, *devdasis*, Bharata Natyam, gurus, sadhus and swamis. It is also seen in the setting of the novel. Malgudi is a typical Indian town gradually and steadily transforming from a semi-agricultural town to a big city. This transformation is a symbolic one; representing the change that was taking place in India as a whole. Malgudi has its own distinct individuality. It is but a small representative of the Indian social system, the Indian way of life and also of the Indian values cherished and followed through the ages. The residents of Malgudi despite their local trappings - are essentially human. Therefore, they are related to humanity. In this sense, Malgudi is everywhere.

Malgudi is a territory Narayan was fond of. Nobody has succeeded in identifying or locating it yet, although several attempts have been made to identify and locate it. More than one critic has regarded Malgudi as one of the characters in Narayan's novels.

Check Your Progress

1. What was R.K. Narayan's first published work?
2. When was *Malgudi Days* published?
3. List some of the prominent novels of R.K. Narayan.

Self-Instructional
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It is essentially a lower middle-class town with its schools, temples, hotels, printing shops and the neighbouring Mampi Hills, with its usual beggars, conmen, confident tricksters, bogus sadhus and others. It is indeed, a microcosm of India, and not a regional town. William Walsh calls it, 'an image of India and a metaphor for everywhere else'.

In the words of A. Hariprasanna: 'Narayan creates his fictional world of Malgudi as an essentially Indian society or town. The Indianness and Indian sensibility pervaded the whole place. Narayan's Malgudi is also a microcosm of India. It grows and develops and expands and changes, and is full of humanity, drawing its sustenance from the human drama and is enacted in it.'

Indianness is seen in R.K. Narayan's stress on the family which is assigned a place of central importance in each of the novels. As William Walsh points out, 'The family is the immediate context in which his sensibility operates, and his novels are remarkable for able subtlety and conviction with which family-relationships are treated—that of son and parents and brother and brother in *The Bachelor of Arts*, of husband and wife and father and daughter in *The English Teacher*, of father and son in *The Financial Expert*, and of grandmother and grandson in *Waiting for the Mahatma*. The closeness of relationship between the adults and children, and the absence of watertight compartments between the worlds of the two, constitute the basis of these novels. But the action is developed through the conflict between the egocentricity of an individual member and the family's claim on him.

Indianness is seen in the way Rosie, despite being in an unhappy marriage, tries to make up for her momentary infidelity by owning up to her mistakes and asking for pardon. The importance given to marriage in India is brought out in Rosie's relationship with Marco. The Indianness is seen in the way Raju's mother depends on her brother to put some sense into Raju. She does not mind her brother coming and scolding her son because in the absence of her husband, she gives him the respect due to an elder male. The Indianness is seen in the way Velan is eager to take advice from an unknown Swami because learned men or Swamis are considered highly respected in society. He laps up everything that Raju tells him ignoring the fact that he has served a sentence in prison. Indianness is seen in the fact that Marco is educated and progressive enough to marry Rosie who belongs to a family of Devadasis. However, his is still the true Indian male who cannot tolerate his wife pursuing dance or being unfaithful to him. He does not pardon his wife even though she confesses her mistake.

Indian Economy

Narayan studies the Indian economic problem very clearly and thereby gives us several economic groups. While Marco and Rosie represent the well-to-do class, Gaffur and Joseph denote the low wage earner. In the character of Sait, the money-lender, we find a wealthy person, one who amasses and hoards wealth thriving upon the troubles of other persons. Then there are the rich lawyers, who make pots of money at the expense of the clients. This class is shown through the character of the star lawyer who represents Raju in the case instituted by Marco against him. Further, the whole episode in which Raju is taken to be the saint is set on the axis of economic life. The poverty of the masses gathering about the hero in the pillared-hall is shown threadbare. These people are so poor that they do not have the advantage of education and that invariably leads them to live a life of superstition and misery. Narayan, in one way, mocks at the prosperity of Raju by making him fall and deceive even his beloved Rosie.

Self-Instructional
Material

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Superstition

There are several typical Indian scenes in *The Guide*. Raju goes to a *pyol* school; Rosie dances to the tune of a gourd flute imitating the movements of a king-cobra; the scene of a fasting swami brings thousands of superstitious visitors who believe that the fast will bring rains to the drought-infested region. They combine pilgrimage with a picnic. There are also typical Indian situations like the one between Raju and his mother on the question of his marriage, and the attempt of his uncle to bully and brow-beat the young man. Another such situation is the reluctant swami's phenomenal popularity when the decision of his fast to bring the rains is announced. All these scenes and situations build up the colour and atmosphere and evidence not only of the author's Indian sensibility but also his intimate knowledge of the life the middle class Indians lead.

The Indianness of Narayan is again seen in his treatment of the credulous and superstitious villagers of India. They believe in sadhus and any fraud can easily cheat them and make them worship him as a Guru or Mahatma. Raju is able to deceive them quite easily; they worship him, heap food and other offering upon him. They accept him as their spiritual guide and mentor. When there is drought and famine, their reaction is typically Indian. The continued absence of rains evokes fantastic speculations from the villagers. One villager wants to know if the 'rains fail' because, 'the movement of aeroplanes disturbs the clouds', while the other seeks to know if 'the atom bombs are responsible for the drying up of the clouds'. This reveals a peculiar aspect of Indian life, the remarkable co-existence of science and superstition, knowledge and ignorance, mythology and weather prediction. When cattle stop yielding milk and fail to drag the plough through the furrows, when sheep look scurvy and bony and when wells and earth dry up, the harmony of human relationships is acutely disturbed. 'They quarrelled over the water-hole for priorities, and there was fear, desperation and lamentation in their voices.' In all these matters, their responses are entirely Indian.

We also witness another instance of superstition when Rosie is referred to as the 'snake-woman' in the novel. Rosie's role as 'Mohini' in Raju's life is confirmed by her obsession with snakes. The role of snake-women as enchantresses is common in the Indian mind-frame. The conversation between Rosie and Raju's mother—a traditional Indian woman steeped in religious and folk beliefs—reinforces this notion: 'Everything was so good and quite - until you came in like a viper. . . . On the very day I heard him mention the 'serpent girl' my heart sank.'

Simplicity of Rural Population

In *The Guide*, we have many references to rural India and the defects that characterize rural population. The rural population is simple and unsophisticated. Even a casual and commonplace remark by Raju is enough to make them wonder about his profound wisdom. Velan is a typical representative of rural India. The main cause of their sufferings is their illiteracy.

In India, a significant section is still influenced by the Western culture. Marco belongs to this section and is different from say an Indian businessman. His thoughts, attire, perspective and mind-set are different from that of the average middle class person or the average rural folk. To quote from the novel: 'He dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition—with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket and a thick helmet over which perpetually stretched a green, sheeny, waterproof cover giving him the appearance of a space traveller.' Through Raju's father, Narayan presents the picture

of an Indian shopkeeper of low standing. This typical Indian businessman is uneducated and cannot give proper education to his children.

Illiteracy

Narayan portrays the heart-rending plight of the illiterate and superstitious villagers of India who have blind faith in holy men and saints whom they worship. The villagers at Mangala consider a former convict, Raju, their mentor and guide and, they are convinced that if he fasts for them, they will be blessed with rains. They are agriculturists who entirely depend upon the rains for irrigating their fields. There can be no worse disaster for them than the failure of rains leading to drought and famine. Streams and rivers dry up, animals and people start dying for lack of water and food. Merchants start hoarding the essential commodities and later sell them at inflated prices, leading to clashes. Discontentment and resentment are the natural consequences of such a situation, this is followed by rioting. Not regarding the drought as a natural phenomenon, people turn to holy men who take recourse to penance, fasts and *yagnas* to propitiate the rain god. In all these respects, *The Guide* is a faithful and vivid picture of Indian life in both its theme and atmosphere.

Narayan never forgets to allot considerable space for discussing the eternal problem—the system of education in India. In *The Guide* we have references to the rural schools at two different places. First Raju gets his education at the hands of his poor schoolmaster who uses outdated methods. He says: 'I had to go over the contours of the letters with my pencil endlessly until they become bloated and distorted beyond recognition.' Next, under the guidance of Raju, the people of Mangala start a school. In the beginning, very few boys come to the school as it is a 'crocodile place.' Here Narayan delineates the unworthy schoolmaster with his characteristic bad manners very realistically.

The Fast that Transforms

Raju, the inhuman monster, and an ex-convict, is readily accepted as a Swami, and when he undertakes the fast they hail him as their saviour. Their reaction to the fast itself is typically Indian. In India, every event and situation, even the grimmest, is turned into an occasion for feasting and merrymaking. They organize feasts to celebrate a death. As the person fasting is on the verge of death, a large crowd gathers on the banks of the river—women, children and men—and they eat, drink and make merry. The temples with their holy men present a strange sight in India. Indians, especially the rural folk, are so credulous that they take a man with a long beard to be a Sadhu and worship him intensely. Raju, the ex-convict, faces a similar problem. First, in order to make both ends meet, he feigns the role of a saint. But at the end, owing to the play of circumstances, Raju becomes a true saint by sacrificing his life for a noble cause. Even this transformation from pusillanimity to magnanimity is also not abrupt and unreal. Gradually, he develops a peculiar strength in him and begins to think: 'if by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly? Thus, he climbs the ladder, slowly, step by step; reaches the stage of a Mahatma and then sags down. Here, Narayan is evidently making use of the Indian myth of a sinner becoming a saint. Valmiki, Pundarika, Vemana and Bilvamangala are only a few well-known examples. Raju is an admirable version of the same Indian myth.

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Order-Disorder-Order

As mentioned earlier, Narayan renders Indian sensibilities in a western form. However, his Indianness is best seen in his theme. According to Indian belief, if custom, convention and traditional modes are violated there comes disorder and chaos. Any deviation from the traditional norms results in disorder. Order and normalcy are restored only when there is a return to the normal, which is also the traditional. The story of the novel is used to illustrate the rhythm of order-disorder-order. There is a lot of disorder in Raju's life when Rosie walks in. As a result of his involvement with a married woman, who is also a dancer, his mother leaves him and he is shunned by his Uncle and society. Though Raju and Rosie manage to amass wealth, they are unable to live in peace. Rosie pays for being unfaithful to her husband and Raju pays for getting involved with a married woman for disrespecting his mother and for getting into bad company and habits. He ends up doing the unthinkable, gets arrested for forgery and spends two years in prison. He attains some peace only when he leads a simple life.

Love, Sex and Marriage

Love, sex and marriage play a significant role in the life of any individual and so they are present in *The Guide* also. Like a drama, Raju's love also has a beginning, a middle and an end. In the beginning, Raju pines for the embrace of his beloved, Rosie. In the middle, his love looks intense for a time and then to a certain extent the motive of monetary gain prompts him to commit forgery—a terrible felony. That is almost the end of his love. Like a typical Indian, Narayan touches 'sex' and never goes deep into the psychology of sex like D. H. Lawrence. He only brings the lover and the beloved together and his job ends there. Regarding marriage, the novelist has taken a radical view of the subject. Rosie and Marco's marriage is flawed by incompatibility. Though both are artists in their own spheres, due to lack of understanding, this catastrophe takes place. Although, Marco's educated and progressive outlook is seen in the fact that he marries Rosie, his first love is his work. He seems to be keeping a wife only for his personal comfort. He is oblivious to her feelings, interests and desires and remains busy with his academic pursuits. The woman in Rosie is insulted and hence she reacts in this manner.

Corruption

Narayan has depicted the problem of corruption which is so much a part of India. Even a school teacher is shown to be corrupt. Raju's father sends him to a *pyol* school so that his son's bad manners are eradicated but the teacher, an old man, is very abusive. The boys are unruly and make a lot of noise. Once, they even enter the master's kitchen and make fun of him. They are then forbidden to enter his house. The old teacher is paid one rupee per month for each boy. However, the boys frequently bring some eatables for him, and in this way, he is able to make both ends meet. At another point of time in the novel, Raju, due to his greed for money, forges Rosie's signature and violates the code of conduct for which he has to suffer a lot. His greed leads him to corruption. He spends Rosie's hard-earned money on gambling and drinking.

In order to save him from court, Rosie has to hire the services of a lawyer who is corrupt. He charges very high for Raju's case. The lawyer she engages to defend Raju has 'his own star-value' and is expensive. 'His name spelt magic in all the court halls of this part of the country'; he has saved many hardened criminals and lawless hooligans by setting at naught the laboriously prepared case by the prosecution. He takes up Raju's case 'as a concession from one star to another—for Nalini's case' But he has

be paid in cash for every court appearance and put up in the best hotel in Malgudi when he comes there to defend Raju. In his own way, he is an 'adjournment lawyer'. He could split a case into minutes and demand as many days for microscopic examination. He would keep the court fidgeting without being able to rise for lunch, because he could talk without completing a sentence; he has a knack of telescoping sentence into sentence without pausing for breath. He arrives by the morning train and leaves by the evening one, and until that time, he neither moves off the court floor nor lets the case progress even an inch for the day—so that a judge has to wonder how the day has spent itself.

2.4 MAJOR THEMES

Let us now examine the major themes of the novel.

Family Relationships

Narayan's novels are studies in human relationships, particularly family relationships. Of relationships within the family, the father-son relationship is most frequently studied. In *The Guide*, Narayan has studied the relationship between Raju and his father. When Raju gets into bad company at the constructions site, his father is concerned and enrolls him in a school. On this issue, there is a clash of ideologies. Raju wants to study at the Albert Mission School. His father feels that in this school, Christianity is imposed on the students and they are forced to convert. So, against Raju's wishes, he decides to send Raju to the *pyol* School. The headmaster of that school is a very abusive man and his language is no better than the labourers at the construction site. Soon Raju discontinues school and helps his father in running the stall at the Malgudi railway station. After his father's death, Raju is left to manage the stall alone. He now also has to look after his widowed mother.

All goes well until Raju's involvement with Rosie. When Rosie comes to live in his house, Raju's mother is against keeping a woman who has left her husband. Raju disregards his mother's feelings and ultimately she has to leave the house and go to live with her brother. Here, it can be seen that Raju gives more importance to Rosie than his old, widowed mother.

He is even ready to go against his uncle to whom his mother turns for advice and help in the absence of a senior male member in the family. In traditional Indian households, the children never went against the word of the father or anybody old enough to take the place of the father. Raju decides to stand up against anyone who opposed his relationship with Rosie.

As his art matured, Narayan's study of human relationships became more complex and intricate. Such complex relationships which he explores, are those which centre around sex or money. These relationships are of particular importance in *The Financial Expert*, *The Guide*, *Man-Eater of Malgudi* and *The Sweet-Vendor*. In these novels money and sex appear in different guises, and are explored and studied from different angles. Excessive preoccupation with either money or sex is an aberration which results in discord and disharmony—in the disruption of normal family life, for instance—but peace and harmony ultimately return and normalcy is restored. This is so much so the case that the disruption of the accepted order and the ultimate restoration of normalcy may be said to be the central theme of the novels. In fact, Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships—relationships within

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Check Your Progress

4. What is the most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world?
5. List some of the social aspects of Indian society that can be seen in *The Guide*.

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the family circle, and relationships centering round sex and money—are his ever-recurring themes, and we can learn from them how to establish right-relationships. Life must be accepted and lived, despite its many shortcomings, follies and foibles. This may be said to be the Narayan message, but it has to be gleaned by each reader according to the light that is in him.

Narayan's fictional characters have their mooring in Malgudi. This town of Malgudi is a traditional one visited by Lord Rama, Laxmana, Sita, Hanuman and Goddess Parvati—the mythical gods and goddesses to Buddha, Sankara and Gandhi—from the mythical to the real. According to P.S. Ramana, Narayan has studied a character first on the test of social order, i.e., in the context of his community, set up and social environment; secondly, he studies a character in relation to himself. An analysis of their life reiterates the claims of their foregrounding in Indian moral and social value system. Narayan's vision illuminates numerous significant themes, which are discussed in this unit as follows:

- The place of woman in a traditional society
- The moral limitations of a materialistic way of life
- The consequences of flouting accepted codes
- The psychological and ethical implications of some Hindu concepts as ascetic purification, *Yoga*, renunciation, non-attachment, *Maya* and the cyclic progressions of life and death
- The great Indian theory of *Karma* and the various paths of achieving *Moksha* or self-realization

Rejection of Traditional Norms: Its Consequences

In *The Guide*, Narayan develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins. The corruption-by-outsiders theme is this time initiated by the tourists, Marco and his glamorous wife, the dancer Rosie. Raju's love for Rosie is delineated as a consuming obsessive passion, fundamentally destructive and terrible. We find that Raju comes into conflict with traditional morality as he seeks to realize his aspirations. The result is that the accepted order is disturbed, and there is chaos and disorder. He seduces Rosie and thus is guilty of immorality and corruption. When she comes to live with him, conventional morality is violated, and there is displeasure all around. The neighbours are annoyed, and his widowed mother is obliged to leave the home of her husband and go away with her brother. Raju does not attend to work, has to give up the railway stall and soon is in financial trouble. He is unable to pay his debts and has to face prosecution in the law courts. He is an egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. We must not act as Raju acts, we must not be over-possessive, self-centred, extravagant or jealous. Thus, the violation of conventional norms creates chaos and disorder in his own life and in the life of his social environment.

In R.K. Narayan's novels, there is a rebellion in the characters who violate the social norms, but this rebellion is followed by a return, a renewal and a conformity to the social set-up. Violation of traditional norms leads to disruption, misery and unhappiness. In *The Guide*, Marco snaps his conjugal tie with Rosie when he comes to know of her intimacy with Raju. It is nothing short of infidelity. He says to her:

'But you are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics.'

The traditional world of Malgudi has its own custom of arranged marriage which is settled by parents after negotiations and matching of horoscopes. In Indian society, marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and a spiritual union. It has been sanctified by society and sanctioned by tradition. Men and women living together as husband and wife outside wedlock are regarded as sinners and hence do not enjoy or receive any social acceptance or recognition. It is therefore sacrilegious to violate the sanctity of sex. Illicit relationship is considered to be a stigma on those who are engaged in this kind of relationship. In *The Guide*, Rosie, after separation from her husband, lives with Raju as his wife under the assumed name Nalini, without marrying him. Raju's mother who is an orthodox woman is dead against her son's way of life with Rosie. She says to Raju:

Why can't she go to her husband and fall at his feet? You know, living with a husband is no joke, as these modern girls imagine.

She doesn't want the tainted woman to stay in her house. It is a moral as well as social sin. But Raju has no regards for his mother's sentiments. So she leaves the house forever. In course of time, Raju's love for Rosie is replaced by love for money which leads him to forge her signature resulting in his arrest. Their relationship is finally severed. Thus, their romantic love not only causes miseries and sufferings to them but also to their families.

From Selfishness to Selflessness

Raju's evolution from a tour guide to a spiritual guide forms the central theme of the novel. The title of the novel, *The Guide*, has two implications. It brings out the two roles played by Raju. One, as a tourist guide, where he is impulsive, undisciplined and given to self-indulgence; and the other, after serving a sentence and converting to a holy man who thinks over life philosophically, is careful and self-disciplined. There are two stories in the novel. One is Raju's relationship with Rosie and the other is his relationship with the villagers. In the opening scene, Raju is sitting by the temple talking to Velan, one of the villagers who mistakes him to be a holy man. The novel then moves back and forth with accounts of Raju's life as a holy man told in third person, and Raju's account to Velan of his previous career as a tour guide and lover, which is told in the first-person. Raju plays a dual role, that of a saint and a sinner. But it should be noted that he is at no point in the story a complete sinner, nor a complete saint. Raju's character strikes a chord of sympathy in us. The title leads us to the question of who is the guide and how does he guide people. Raju is first a tour guide as he shows the interesting sights of Malgudi to people who come to visit the town. He also plays guide to Rosie as he is instrumental in helping her find a way to fulfil her dreams. We should not, however, mistake Raju as a political or moral guide who leads a community. All his actions are self-centred and while guiding people he keeps his interest in mind all the time.

It is now that spiritual regeneration takes place. Raju rises above his self. He recognizes the claims of humanity and learns to live and die for others. He may die, but his very death is his spiritual re-birth. Raju has matured, has achieved self-realization and self-fulfilment and has died into a new birth. His example shows that salvation and regeneration, the realization of one's highest aspirations, comes not through self-seeking but through self-negation and self-effacement. One must learn to live and die for others, before really noble and worthwhile achievement becomes possible.

The major theme of transmigration of the human soul from the clutches of 'maya' or ordinary desires to attain 'nirvana' or self-realization is amply demonstrated by the

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author in the novel. Raju embarks on life's journey as a man who is self-centred and attracted only to material things. He is fascinated by the world of 'maya' and would do anything to achieve it. In the end, self-realization is achieved as he sacrifices his life for a moral duty which he believes is ordained for him from God.

Emancipation of Women

Rosie is a complex character and Narayan uses her to talk about women liberation.

Rosie feels suffocated in her marriage and tries her utmost to emerge in her own right as a woman who is talented and artistically inclined. She is married to Marco, an archaeologist, whose only interest is the academic research he is pursuing. He has come to Malgudi to study some caves. He is busy in stone statues but does not value human relations. Rosie is not at all interested in the 'Cold, old stone walls' that so excite her husband. Rosie meets Raju, a local tourist guide and it is in his company that Rosie finds happiness and reasons to laugh and enjoy life. Rosie and Marco are incompatible; they never see eye-to-eye on any subject. Marco has no interest in Rosie's love for classical dance. It is Raju, who later encourages her to emerge from her shell and bring forth her talent.

According to Narasimaiah, she is the only character in the novel who changes and grows and recovers from folly as the novel progresses. To quote his own words, 'It is strange that Rosie is completely free from Narayan's ironic handling. Considering she was a highly educated woman—a Master of Arts—and a married woman at that, and in the Hindu society too, and considering, above all, that Narayan is operating within the framework of traditional Hindu society whose code of conduct he largely endorses, it is curious that Rosie's departure from that code invites no adverse comment. In all fairness to Rosie though, R.K. Narayan tries to show how the instincts of a faithful wife were not dead in her. Quickly realizing her mistake, a represent Rosie tries to mend fences with Marco. 'I realized I had committed an enormous sin..... My mind was greatly troubled. I didn't want anything more in life than to make my peace with him. I did not want to dance. I felt lost...'

After studying Rosie's character, we can conclude that women have a fixed place in society. They have to be economically dependent on their husbands and silently tolerate the treatment meted out to them. This situation prevails in all levels of society in India. Such is the practice of gender inequality. As long as Rosie allowed herself to be confined within the walls of her husband's existence, she suffered silently. But when she emerged from its confines, she was able to prove her worth as a classical dancer. Though R.K. Narayan had to face controversy for dealing with an issue like extra marital relations, his attempt to portray emancipation and empowerment of women, through the character of Rosie, was indeed a brave effort.

Rosie is the one character in the novel who seems to offer a singular example of recovering from folly as the novel progresses. In fact, she has always been dignified, noble and the very picture of ideal womanhood in spite of her loss of chastity—there is enough atonement for it and that is what matters. And significantly, this has been achieved by as serious a treatment of the character as any novelist in the tragic mode may have done. This seems to be that of almost all the women characters of Narayan—they are not many, though, in all his novels taken together. But especially in the way he takes care to preserve Rosie from inner taint, Narayan seems to be affirming what has been hailed in the Indian tradition as the feminine principle in life—the primary process of a woman's life as it incorporates the rules and values of natural law.

Crime Does Not Pay

Raju is an egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie both sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts, but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and self-centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. It is, as if, Raju were being held up as an example of the disorder which follows quick upon the heels of any violation of the accepted order.

Raju's self-confidence and nonchalance enable him to be quite comfortable in jail. But nemesis overtakes him soon after. He plays the role of a Swami, exploits the credulity of the simple people of Mangala who bring to him rich offerings of food. He lives on them as a parasite, and expects food from them even when they themselves are victims of famine and drought.

This is certainly inhuman and monstrous. He is a fraud who deceives himself as well as the people of Mangala. But he is soon caught in his own trap. He is compelled to undertake a fast to bring down the rains. It is during the course of his fast that Raju achieves a measure of self-awareness and identifies himself with the community at large: 'For the first time in his life, he was making an effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested. He felt a new strength to go through the ordeal.'

Transition from Illusion to Reality

Does Raju finally manage to transform himself into a true 'swami'? Perhaps this passage suggests an answer:

The sky was clear. Having nothing else to do, he started counting the stars. He said to himself, 'I shall be rewarded for this profound service to humanity. People will say, "There is the man who knows the exact number of stars in the sky. If you have any trouble on that account consult him. He will be your night guide for the skies."' He told himself, 'the thing to do is to start from a corner and go on patch by patch. Never work from the top to the horizon, but always the other way.' He was evolving a theory. He started the count from above a fringe of the Palmyra trees on his left-hand side up the course of the river, over to the other side. 'One.... two.... fifty-five....' He suddenly realized that if he looked deeper a new cluster of stars came into view; by the time he assimilated it into his reckoning, he realized he had lost sight of his starting point and found himself entangled in hopeless figures. He felt exhausted.

This passage is very important as we see how slowly Raju progresses from a regular guide to someone who guides the progress of souls. The title of the story now assumes a far deeper meaning. The novel moves on from being the story of an ordinary guide known as 'Railway Raju', to the story of someone who has more significance. The above paragraph also shows Raju's transition from fantasy to actuality. In the act of counting the stars, or trying to assess what is intangible, Raju is trying to work out the vastness of life. For once in his life, Raju is thinking about something so deeply knowing that there is no material gain to be had from this. His life now goes beyond its personal limitations and encompasses a wider sphere.

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Moksha/Freedom

The Guide, in essence, is the story of a man's travels through the trials and tribulations of life. He goes through all the complexities life has to offer. He has to face various illusions before he can achieve universal truth. The concept of moksha, or freedom, then applies here.

According to the Hindu philosopher and theologian Shankara, existence is a struggle for the 'Atman' (the individual self) to become a 'Brahman' (the pure being). It is where the atman is prevented from reaching the ideal state of Brahman because of 'avidya' or ignorance, which drives us into the arms of maya (illusion) where we blindly seek our true self. Through the proper knowledge of Vedanta, however, the individual soul recognizes the limitless reality forever existing behind the cosmic veil of maya, realizes that its own true nature is identical with Brahman, and through this self-realization achieves moksha. This freedom is vast and knows no bounds and can eventually unify us with the cosmos.

Class Difference

Narayan achieves the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide* mainly through the symbolism of Rosie's name. The non-traditional name is the marker of Rosie's social hybridity, through which the novelist gives a realistic and truthful representation of the social norms and prejudices in India. In this respect, Rosie's failure to give the name of her father locates her social identity as belonging to a family of devadasis—'I belonged to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers... we are viewed as public women... we are not considered respectable, we are not considered civilized.' It may seem ironic that both Raju's mother and uncle seek to view Rosie in terms of social class:

Are you of our caste? No. Our class? No.... After all, you are a dancing girl. We do not admit them in our families.

They judge her according to their social norms, instead of examining her individual merits. It is shocking that in their prejudice they completely ignore Rosie's other identity as an educated woman with an M.A. in economics. Rosie's Westernised name and her association with the symbol of snake mark her social exclusion; Marco's satiric name and appearances also symbolizes his detachment from reality; and various other personality traits also symbolize a move from the time-honoured orthodox Hindu belief to a modern urbanized society. The use of symbolism, when combined with realism of the novel, unfolds a wide spectrum of walks of life in a modern society of India through Narayan's meticulous attentions to details of characterization.

Theory of Karma

R.K. Narayan upholds the old traditional values of life prescribed by the ancient Indian culture and embodied in Indian epics 'Shastras', 'Puranas', myths and mythologies. He presents his concepts of traditionalism through the middle class life of Malgudi an imaginary small town in South India, which forms the background to all his novels. Narayan's novels show that success and happiness in life lie in the acceptance of the Shastras and the Vedic values. The main purpose of human life is suggested as a journey in quest of self-identity or emancipation from the miseries of life.

The theory of Karma is enunciated in the life of Raju the protagonist. According to Hinduism, it is a foregone conclusion that an individual lives and dies in accordance

with his karma and vasanas (impressions the personality has gathered from its own thoughts and actions of the past or previous lives). Desires and thoughts which spring forth from one's vasanas make it appear inevitable. John Updike observed in the *New Yorker*, 'As a Hindu, Narayan believes in reincarnation — a universe, infinite rebirths... He surveys his teeming scene from the perspective of this most ancient of practiced religions' (134).

The theory of karma holds the view that the present existence of an individual is the effect of the past and its future would be the effect of its present existence. Raju, in *The Guide*, attempts several possible explanations for the movement of events in his life. What he says with a painful self-awareness shows his faith is pre-ordained fate. 'It's written on the brow of some that they shall not be left alone. I am such one....', Rosie in *The Guide* believe in Karmic laws according to which everyone has to bear the consequence of his deeds. She thinks that she has led a religious life and she has not deliberately committed any sin. So she will not be punished in the other world. This should be her strong faith in the theory of 'karma'. When Raju in *The Guide* is arrested on charge of forgery, Rosie [Nalini] tells him 'I felt all along, you were not doing right things. This is 'karma' what can we do?' Joy and sorrow, reward and punishment are all the results of one's deeds done in the past. The 'karmas' of human beings influence, control and condition their lives. Every action good or bad has its reaction.

Narayan says that wisdom is gained by going through the experiences life has to offer. Meditation or spiritual reflection cannot be the cause of that wisdom. There is a law that life follows and this becomes operational the moment we are born. This law affects all our actions, whether we struggle or are miserable or try to avoid being hurt by it. Loneliness is the absolute truth. Attachments are our undoing. They affect our rational thinking. Raju tries not to let this law affect him. He holds great value to attachments, whether it is love for a woman or material comforts. In the end, however, realization strikes him and he gives up attachment or worldly comforts and finds that in doing so, he is a happier person.

The Bhagvad Gita and its *Karma* philosophy regard self-realization or enlightenment as the ultimate goal in a man's life, although the methods for the attainment of this goal may vary from man to man. Soul, i.e., Atman acquires unanimity with the Supreme Soul or Almighty who is *Paramatma* or God. *Moksha* is a state of moral and intellectual perfection transcending the distinction between good and evil, between doubt and faith, between being and non-being. This goal is attainable in present life as per the teachings, sayings of the Upanishads and *Jivan Mukti* or liberation. In the end, when the individual who has reached this stage, dissociates himself from physical accomplishments, he becomes *Brahman* itself; that is final release or *Videha - Mukti*.

Narayan has very artistically interwoven various thoughts of the Bhagwad Gita in his novels. He has presented the theory of renunciation, and liberation or *Moksha* in *The Guide*. Raju, the tourist guide is initially entrapped in the illusory world when the materialistic *Charvaka* philosophy—an atheistic, materialistic and hedonistic thought, named after *Charu* or *Brhaspati*, which admits the existence of this world (*loka*) alone—guides and governs his life. He commits the crime of forging Rosie's signature and is accordingly punished and sent to the prison. His foul deeds pay him. He receives his ill fate as per his evil *Karma*. But landing into prison, he finds time for his moral and social transgression. The prison accrues to him an ideal opportunity to journey into the innermost regions of his soul and shake off his material and social illusions. Thereafter, evolution in the character of Raju is a ceaseless and ongoing process.

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Narayan's presentation of characters and their relationships with one another achieve a philosophic overtone. He presents the characters in the light of the most contemplated universal theory of *Karma* as devised by the Bhagwad Gita, a Hindu epic. Almost all Narayan's characters demonstrate the growing pains arising from the dissatisfaction with their mundane lives. Narayan's characters achieve a synthesis of flesh and spirit through the philosophic interpretation of their own mundane activities.

Life is full of twists and turns and one never knows what may happen. Raju's life takes an unexpected turn when, after his release from prison, he is forced to become a saint for the people of Mangala. This happens when he takes shelter in an old temple a little out of the town. Velan becomes his disciple. Raju keeps up the pretence of being a swami and speaks to the villagers on various issues. He talks to them about religion and tells them about teachings of the Ramayana. He talks to them of cleanliness. He even prescribes medicines and settles disputes and quarrels involving property. He sees to it that the school is reopened in the temple premises. He plays the role of the Swami to the best possible extent, but once again he is overtaken by the inexplicable eventualities.

When he tells Velan's brother to convey the message that he will not eat till they stop fighting over a minor matter of selling and buying, it is misinterpreted that he will not eat until it rains. This now becomes a turning point in Raju's life and events are not in his control anymore. He is expected to bring rain. People expect that his penance would appease the rain god and bring relief to the drought-stricken countryside. Raju tries to shake off this responsibility but is caught in a trap. Eventually, the fake swami turns into a real one.

It is in times like this that one realizes it is 'divinity that shapes our ends.' As said by Emerson in a memorable poem named *Brahma*, it is the 'One behind the many' that is responsible for one's life:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass and turn again.

The resolution to chase away the thoughts of food gives him 'a peculiar strength.' It further forges his thoughts towards keeping a genuine fast.

Salvation

Raju, the swami, has been fasting for many days. On the twelfth day, he stands in the water with Velan's assistance. He feels very weak. He tells Velan that he hears 'rain in the hills'. Saying this, he falls down. Narayan leaves the reader to wonder at the significance of this. Does Raju really die or does he simply collapse due to weakness. Does it actually rain or is it his delusion. But the end is not important. What is important is that only when Raju gives up thinking about himself, that he becomes detached with worldly things. 'Maya' does not affect him anymore; he has no use for material pleasures. He has done something noble for a valid cause and by this he has achieved self-actualization. He is now well and truly a 'guide', albeit one of a far superior kind than before.

When the mirror of understanding is cleansed of the dust of desire, the life of pure consciousness is reflected on it. When all seems lost, light from heaven breaks, enriching our human life more than words can tell.

V. S. Naipaul in his book, *A Wounded Civilization*, remarks: 'Narayan's novels are less purely social comedies I had once taken them to be than religious books, at times religious fables, and intensively Hindu.'

Theme of Marital Disharmony

The relationship between Rosie and her husband Marco in *The Guide* is strained because they live on different planes. Rosie is devoted to the art of dancing while Marco looks at it as mere 'street acrobatics'. He is obsessed with his archaeological surveys and studies. He is stern, self-centred and self-righteous. Rosie's longing for sharing of ideas and ambitions is dismissed by Marco as a foolish woman's sentiments. He is more interested in the carvings on the walls, stone figures and caves but neglects the throbbing, pulsating heart of his wife. Raju wonders how Marco could be uninterested in a woman like Rosie. He observes 'dead and decaying things seem to unloosen his tongue and fire his imagination rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs'. The longing for companionship and communication brings her close to Raju. She is starved of affection and yearns for recognition and acknowledgement of her artistic talent. Her first obsession is dancing. Raja wins her by appreciating her art, by praising her talent and by encouraging her.

In spite of Marco's indifference and cold behaviour Rosie tries to be a dutiful wife. She becomes all the more solicitous towards her husband after her new intimacy with Raju. That she is pricked by guilty conscience is evident in her frequent mention of her duty to her husband.

For Marco, life is nothing but a serious intellectual pursuit. He fails to perceive Rosie's passionate attachment to the art of dancing. He is totally prosaic in his approach to life. This attitude of Marco has a stifling effect on Rosie. It is at this time that chance brings her the companionship of Raju.

In the Marco-Rosie relationship, one gets a feeling that Marco is not given fair treatment. It is either through the eyes of Rosie or Raju that the reader views and understands Marco. His creator did not give him an identity. It is Raju who nick names him Marco Polo. It is true that Marco fails to live up to Rosie's expectation and desires. But one wonders why Rosie should complain when she was neither forced to marry, nor tricked into giving up dancing.

Theme of Separation and Loneliness/Pattern of Order and Disorder

Almost all Narayan's principle characters experience loneliness and alienation. This oneliness and alienation comes in their lives because they are dissatisfied with their lives. However, the period which they spend in loneliness and alienation is fruitful. Marco and Rosie in *The Guide* suffer from separation and loneliness which teach them to face the bitter truths of life. Raju, the guide denounces the material life and turns spiritual and introspective during his lonely hours in the jail. Narayan has projected the theme of separation in his novels in order to incorporate the philosophic vision of India. This vision has been preached by most of the Indian scriptures through the theory of self-realization.

Moreover, Narayan strongly believes in the life which is lived in correlation with tradition and philosophy and deviation from it brings suffering and dissatisfaction. The human relationships presented by Narayan in his novels have originated from Indian tradition and philosophy. The severing of relationships and the emotional trauma that follows is delicately and realistically handled in the novel. The novel manages to convey how delicate the husband-wife relationship is. The relationship between Marco and

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Rosie in *The Guide* is not based on traditional philosophic values as devised by Manu Smriti – devotion, submission, mutual respect and proper understanding. The couple does not share this kind of bond and therefore, their relationship does not become everlasting. Narayan presents the characters passing through a period of struggle and transition but towards the end, they attain a new vitality which provides them with a new interpretation of ordinary situations.

In his presentation of human relationship between two human beings, there is an order in the beginning, an order that does not last. The order is replaced with chaos when his characters come in conflict with other characters in some unexpected situations and under certain circumstances. However, at the end they attain the life full of spiritual and mental peace as they learn a lesson that human and social values preached by Indian philosophy are mandatory for any human being to achieve salvation and self-realization. It is these values that help one to maintain his/her equilibrium in times of disorder, clash of motives and conflict.

2.5 MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE GUIDE

Let us discuss some of the characters in R.K. Narayan's novel *The Guide*.

Narayan is the creator of a whole picture-gallery of the immortals of literature. A number of life-like memorable figures move in and out of his novels, and once we have been acquainted with them, we can never forget them. In his novels, he focuses on the instincts of people of from all classes and all walks of life. His characters indulge in various professions and are leading their lives in their simple and quaint ways.

Raju

In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity. Raju's career from a railway guide to a Mahatma brings out the truth of the statement that, 'Raju never did anything; things always happened to him. His entire career illustrates the drill of a passive character from one role to another'.

Raju has apparently nothing heroic about him. In fact, he is an anti-hero, a common man with just a tinge of the uncommon in him. He is a simple, very ordinary and extraordinarily smart character. A transformed, shapeless character who easily picks up the suggestions of others; his personality is in fact a product of other people's convictions. He is extremely susceptible to the suggestions of others, and this plasticity of response determines his career and ultimate destiny. Raju's character is a mixture of many traits, some of which are even contradictory.

From a stall-keeper, Raju turns into a tourist guide. He is shrewd, intelligent and observant, and he soon acquires little bits of knowledge by reading the old magazines and books which he stocks, and by talking to the passengers who come to his stall. He is a fraud who does not know much about Malgudi and its environs, but he pretends to know everything. He never says 'no' to any customer. He freely changes and distorts facts to please the tourists. The result is that his fame spreads and he comes to be known as 'Railway Raju'. His self-confidence and nonchalance pay him rich dividends and he never worries about the many distortions in which he has indulged and the untrue he has told. He deceives, lies and adopts crooked ways to fleece the unknowing tourists. Raju would have remained a successful tourist guide all his life but for the arrival of Marco and Rosie in Malgudi. Raju is fascinated by 'the divine creature' that

perceives Rosie to be and wins her heart by his sympathy and consideration, as well as showing keen interest in her art. Both of them are born romancers and the novel celebrates the coming together of two similar temperaments.

Raju is a typical confident man of Indian tales; he betrays those who confide in him. Thus he seduces Rosie, even though Marco has great faith in him, is kind and generous to him, and leaves him to look after his wife as he pursues his archaeological studies. He does not hesitate to ruin the domestic life and happiness of a man who has confided in him, paid him handsomely and has treated him as a family member. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily.

Raju is so despicable that he appears almost to be the antagonist of the novel until its concluding pages. Raju is arbitrarily cruel, hypocritical, and manipulative from his earliest recounted youth. He manipulates his father into taking him into town; he abuses a local cattle-boy for entering his private play-area; he lies to and takes advantage of tourists; he steals Rosie from Marco; he makes Rosie miserable, chasing away her friends, and becoming pretentious (even forging her signature on a legal document, rather than let her have any contact with Marco); finally, he takes advantage of the villagers in order to get food. These are hardly traits one would ascribe to a 'hero'. He displays greed and materialism matched only by narcissism and hypocrisy, so that he loses even his closest friends; only sudden money saves him, and he soon loses that as well.

In the third stage of his career, he becomes a convict, and even this role he performs with enthusiasm, becoming an ideal prisoner. This was the one act that Raju did voluntarily and deliberately, it did not happen to him. But Raju was bewildered that such a trivial action should bring down such frightful consequences on his head. When out of jail, we find him playing the role of a Swami or Mahatma. He plays this role to perfection, for basically there is not much difference between the role of a railway guide and that of a spiritual guide. The same eloquence, the same ability to make grand, mystifying statements, the air of knowingness, enables him to play his new role with such success. Although he is a fraud and a rogue in reality, he appears every inch a Mahatma. He sits on slab of stone as if it were a throne. Raju felt he was attaining the stature of a saint and later he felt he was growing wings.

Not once does he deliberately try to pass himself off for a holy man, but when he finds that people want to believe in his spiritual power, he cannot disappoint them. It is the public reposition of faith that compels him to act and die a holy man even though he had no inclination towards either option. Raju is both an Indian enigma and a key to the mystery and myth. Here a man has lesser claim to his privacy. He lives more for others and is guided by external considerations and compulsions and is defined in spite of his disinclination and indifference.

It is not clear to the reader whether it rains due to Raju's penance. Also, the change of heart that Raju undergoes has not been given much importance by Narayan. He makes it seem as if that is the least he could do to atone for his sins. He doesn't give more than a few lines to mention this. It is a moment of great disturbing beauty, in which we know something larger and more affecting than the working out of an individual destiny in an inhospitable world.

Why, then, does Raju almost fail to be the hero of *The Guide*? It seems impossible for any character such as Raju to redeem himself and earn our respect. In order to do so, he must display a fundamental change of heart regarding the villagers, and must take dramatic steps to prove his devotion to this new philosophy. We finally see these changes

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Check Your Progress

6. List the significant themes of *The Guide*.
7. How has Narayan achieved the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide*?

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only eight pages before the end of the book. It is not, in fact, until the last page of the book that Raju displays the characteristic that confirms his heroism, courage.

The Guide has an element of the picaresque, but it is not a picaresque novel in which there is no such transformation and spiritual rebirth. Raju is redeemed by becoming a martyr for the sake of others; there is no such redemption in the ease of the picaresque novel. The most interesting character in the novel, Raju is a hero who is not heroic, except at the very end. He is a mixture of good and bad qualities, but he is not a villain except, perhaps, in one instance when he forges Rosie's signature on a legal document sent to her by Marco. Raju is potentially a tragic figure and, given his character, there is perfect inevitability in what happens to him.

Rosie

Rosie, in the novel, overshadows Raju whereas Raju remains the pivot for the whole part of the novel. Rosie is a very complex character. She is moody, impulsive and ambitious. These frail aspects of her character have been glossed over in the novel. It was because the character of Rosie was ahead of its times. To imagine a woman leaving her uncaring and impotent husband and live with her lover in his house was impossible in the era of sixties. Though she has been represented as a rebellious woman, her rebellion has been justified in such a way that it finds consonance with the novel. To humanize her and get the sympathy of the viewers with her, Marco has been demonized. This is the reason why it is difficult to understand her in the novel but still easy to comprehend.

She is the heroine of the novel. She has a charming and fascinating personality. Raju falls in love with her at first sight and says, 'she was not very glamorous, if that is what you expect, but she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice'. Her arrival at Malgudi, with her husband Marco, plays havoc with the life and career of Raju, the popular Railway guide.

Born in a family of dancing girls, she knew who her mother was but not her father. She is given a college education and is an M.A. in Economics. She is flattered that a man like Marco should wish to marry her, and is devoted to him in spite of his impotence and priggishness. But her inherited feeling for dance cannot be suppressed and when she gets a chance to perfect the art, she seizes it. Her giving way to Raju is understandable. She might have resisted her physical urge if her husband had been at least kind and considerate: but his inhuman coldness, Raju's evident admiration and the opportunity so conveniently provided by her husband, result in what seems a foregone conclusion. When that husband throws her out and she has no other place to go to, she comes to Raju. More than the attraction of sex is the desire to perfect her and realize herself fully in her God-given gift. She does not take long to achieve eminence. When Raju wants her to give performances she is not unwilling. But with fame come unceasing demands on her time and energy. She has to fall into a routine and go round and round like a bull yoked to an oil-crusher. Her weariness of it all is like that of any film star: She is being exploited but sticks it out.

It is through the character of Rosie in *The Guide*, that Narayan truly takes up and treats the concept of women's emancipation. Rosie attempts to break free of the restrictions that her husband has imposed on her. Her husband, an archaeologist, is busy with his research and exploration and has no value for living beings. Rosie's encounter with the enthusiastic tourist guide Raju, at Malgudi railway station proves to be the turning point of her life. Rosie and her husband, Marco are two very different individuals

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and function on different planes. In the initial stage, he aggressively defies the wishes of his wife who desires to see a king-cobra. He snubs her. 'Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake-your interests are morbid.' On the other hand, Rosie has a distaste for 'Cold, old stone walls'. Marco was not interested at all in Rosie's talent of classical dance which was encouraged by Raju.

In all fairness to Rosie though, R.K. Narayan tries to show how the instincts of a faithful wife were not dead in her. When she finds that her husband has produced a masterpiece, she cuts out his picture from the *Illustrated Weekly* and puts it on her dressing mirror.

She is surprised by Raju's behaviour in the matter of the book, and later by the forgery. But she does not walk out on him. To get him out of the mess into which he has got, she dances day and night and is willing to go round like a parrot in a cage, or a performing monkey.

Raju exploits Rosie for his own advantage and narrow, selfish ends. He says: 'I had monopoly of her and nobody had anything to do with her She was my property.' And a little later, 'I did not like to see her enjoy other people's company. I liked to keep her in a citadel.' Raju takes all the credit for her success, and is of the view that she would not be able to do without him. But he is soon disillusioned. She rises to new heights of popularity and stardom without him. He is amazed at her extraordinary vitality. He realizes that neither he nor her husband matters at all to her.

The rift is cemented when Raju is arrested for forging Rosie's signature on a legal document sent by Marco's solicitors over the custody of a jewellery box. Rosie is hurt. She promises to pawn the last of her possessions to defend Raju in court, but tells him categorically that she won't have to do anything with him after that. Rosie proves to be true to her word. She engages the best lawyer from Madras to defend Raju and has to undertake numerous dance engagements to pay the star lawyer. When Raju is sentenced to two years' imprisonment, she closes down the establishment at Malgudi and moves over to Madras, where Marco lives. But she will have nothing to do with him also. Her career is on the up swing, as Raju learns from newspaper reports that he reads in jail. He wonders how she can manage without him. But Rosie is managing her career on her own admirably because she has found her *métier* at last.

Rosie's behaviour is always dignified and noble despite her nightlong bickering behind the closed bedroom doors with Marco or altercations with Raju later when she cautions him not to discuss anything in the presence of servants. She doesn't react when Raju's boorish uncle shouts at her, calls her names and orders her to get out of the house where she has come, and is staying, uninvited. There is enough atonement for her adulterous liaison with Raju which is there primarily because he helps her realize her ambition of displaying her art in public. Rosie's delineation is in keeping with Narayan's delineation of female characters in general. Rosie may have succumbed to circumstances but she remains free from inward taint. That is why she makes such a complete and miraculous recovery, though the novelist, quite wisely, does not restore her to her earlier dubious marital status. Rosie is a strong minded woman who is unwilling to sacrifice her happiness or ambition for the sake of keeping up appearances and staying with an appalling husband.

According to Narasimaiah, 'she is the only character in the novel who changes and grows and recovers from folly as the novel progresses.' To quote his own words, 'It is strange that Rosie is completely free from Narayan's ironic handling. Considering she was a highly educated woman—a Master of Arts and a married Hindu woman at that

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time, it is surprising that Rosie's departure from that code invites no adverse comment from the novelist. In fact she has always been dignified, noble and a true picture of ideal womanhood. Despite losing her chastity, she confesses to her husband and tries to seek pardon. This is highlighted as the biggest virtue. And significantly, this has been achieved by as serious a treatment of the character as any novelist in the tragic mode may have done. He takes special care to protect the character of Rosie from being tainted internally. Narayan seems to be affirming what has been hailed in the tradition as the Feminine Principle in life.'

Marco

Marco is one of those densely enigmatic characters, who frequently appear in Narayan's novels and are assigned minor roles. They are odd, eccentric characters, like knots in wood, who keep away from the mainstream of human life. Marco comes to Malgudi with his wife Rosie, and with 'water diviner's' instinct, Raju at once realizes that he is his permanent customer: He is dressed like a spaceman. We don't know his real name. Raju calls him Marco, for he looks like an 'eternal tourist'. Marco and Rosie are not able to pull on together, for in his zeal for, and devotion to, his archaeological studies, he takes no interest in his young fascinating wife. Raju thinks of Marco in relation to Rosie as 'a monkey's picking up a rose garland'. He is unable to understand Marco's obsessive interest in ancient relics, and says, 'Dead and decaying things seemed to loosen his tongue and fire his imagination, rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs.'

He is bored with Marco's ruin collecting activities. Rosie, too doesn't like to see the 'cold, old stone walls'. She finds that her wealthy husband is more interested in books, papers, painting than in being a 'real, live husband'. When Marco decides to stay on to explore the cave painting more fully, Raju takes charge of Rosie and soon becomes her ardent lover. Analysing the causes of Marco's failure with Rosie, Raju says: 'Marco was just impractical, an absolutely helpless man. All that he could do was to copy ancient things and write about them Perhaps he married out of a desire to have someone to care for his practical life, but unfortunately his choice was wrong—this girl herself was a dreamer if ever there was one.'

Marco has nothing in common with an average tourist as he doesn't wish to visit the traditional tourist spots in and around Malgudi. He has come there with a purpose to study and decipher carvings in temples and to visit the ancient caves near Mempi Hills. And he is single minded in the pursuit of his goal. In the same manner as his wife, Rosie is devoted to dance. They are a mismatch as they fiercely hate each other's hobby and this leads to frequent arguments and quarrels between the two. There are a few ugly scenes in the hotel at Malgudi and the guesthouse on Mempi Hills.

Marco's satirical name and the descriptions of his appearance are also symbolic in *The Guide*. 'Marco' is a name that Raju invents because the man's weird attire somehow reminds him of Marco Polo. Certainly, the name resembles the potential strangeness in him, and his appearance reinforces this: 'He dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition, with his thick coloured glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet over which was perpetually stretched a green, shiny, water proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller.' This idiosyncratic outfit, so inappropriate for the hot climate of Malgudi, symbolizes his lack of connection with the reality and the emotions of this world, which ultimately explains his failure to understand Rosie. The presentation of Marco's desire to control every aspect of his environment seems to stem from his

distaste for the unpredictable vitality and wilfulness of living things: 'dead and decaying things seemed to... fire his imagination, rather than things that lived and moved and swung their limbs.' This obviously creates a symbolical contrast between him and Rosie—while Rosie is projected as a symbol of life, Marco is anti-life.

What takes Rosie away from Marco is his aversion to dance; he hates the very word. While Raju says, 'I could almost hear the ripple of water around it' when Rosie indicates the lotus with her fingers. Marco calls dance a monkey trick or street acrobatics. What interests Rosie irritates Marco and she confesses to Raju 'I could have preferred any kind of mother in law, if it has meant one real, live husband.'

According to C.D. Narasimaiah, 'Raju-Rosie relationship becomes credible and acceptable only because of the neglect Rosie suffers at the hands of her husband.'

Marco strikes us as uncommonly eccentric. For example, 'He would not part with an anna without a voucher, whereas if you gave him a slip of paper could probably get him to write off his entire fortune'. Stern, self-centred and self-righteous, Marco thinks he has acquired his wife's body and soul, and he thinks that his rights over his 'property' are unlimited. Dancing to him, is another form of prostitution, especially when Rosie belongs to a Devadasi family of temple girls who have no respect in society and are considered public property. One of the conditions of his marriage to Rosie was she would give up dancing, and now that she mentions it, he is furious; he accuses her of breaking the covenant of marriage. Her confession of infidelity stuns him and he stops talking to her. He fails to understand that a wife can be unfaithful to her husband even once and can still be in love with him. To Rosie's passionate appeal, 'I want to be with you. I want you to forget everything, I want you to forgive me.' He replies, 'Yes, I'm trying to forget even the earlier fact that I ever took a wife. I want to go out from here too—but I want to complete my work; and I am here for that. You are free to go and do what you please.' When he leaves for Madras he buys only one railway ticket, leaving Rosie behind in Malgudi to fend for herself.

Marco leaves for Madras, but even though he is physically not there in Malgudi, he seems to be an ominous, overhanging presence. Rosie never forgets him, 'for after all he is my husband', she tells Raju. She sees his picture in the *Illustrated Weekly* cuts it and places it on her dressing table. She wants to see his book but Raju has hidden it in his liquor cabinet. Rosie is grateful to him for letting her go, any other man in his place would have throttled her when he learnt of her adulterous liaison with Raju. This induces a feeling of insecurity in Raju. Yet Marco is full of honesty and integrity in his own way. In spite of the fact that Raju has insulted him and seduced his wife, he acknowledges Raju's help in his book; 'This author is obliged to acknowledge his debt to Sri Raju of Malgudi Railway Station for his help.'

He is scrupulous towards Rosie also as he tries to restore a box of jewellery to her. We have no reason to believe Raju (who forges Rosie's signature in the legal document and lands in jail on a forgery charge) that it is a plot to entrap Rosie and force her to return to him. Nor must we blame him for pressing his charge of forgery against Raju. It is not an instance of vindictiveness but a desire to let the man who has wronged him have his just deserts. Marco wishes to restore the box of jewellery to his wife and when he finds that her paramour is trying to grab it through fraud, he is perfectly justified in taking the measure that he takes. In this way, he has revenge on the man who has seduced his wife.

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Check Your Progress

8. Who is the central figure in the novel *The Guide*?
9. Name the minor character in *The Guide*.

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2.6 NARAYAN'S TECHNIQUE OF WRITING

The narration moves forward chronologically, each succeeding event being linked causally with the previous one. There is no looking backward or forward, no probing of the subconscious or even the unconscious as is the case with novelists like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and others. As Paul Verghese points out, 'Narayan's is the most simple form of prose fiction—the story which records a succession of events. There is no *hiatus* between character and plot; both are inseparably knit together. The qualities the novelist attributes to these characters determine the action, and the action in turn progressively changes the characters and thus the story is carried forward to the end. In other words, as a good story-teller, Narayan sees to it that his story has a beginning, middle and an end. The end of his novel is a solution of the problem which sets the events moving; the end achieves that completeness towards which the action has been moving and beyond which the action cannot progress. This end very often consists either, in a balance of forces and counter-forces or in death or both.' However, *The Guide* is an exception in this respect. The narrative technique Narayan has followed in this novel is different from that of the other novels.

In the story *The Guide*, we see the narration moving back and forth, from the present to the past and again to the present. The story is told by two people; the narrator tells the story in its present context, and in the third person. Raju, the main character, tells his story in the first person. His narration takes the reader to the past. Cinematic elements like flashbacks and jump cuts have been extensively used.

Narayan deviates from the traditional mode of narration; part of the story is told by the author and part in the first person by the hero himself. This is certainly an improvement in Narayan's narrative technique; here however it is necessitated by the nature of the story. The novel begins with the release of Raju from prison. Whatever happens to Raju after his release is told by the narrator—the novelist; whereas whatever had happened to Raju before he was imprisoned is told in a series of flashbacks in Raju's own words, in the form of a confession to Velan who has come to think of him as a saint. Then Raju takes over the narrative chores and relates his progress from sweetmeat seller to jailbird to Velan. In between, the omniscient narrator punctuates Raju's narrative by showing him dealing with the villagers as a holy man.

The Guide divided into two parts, narrates Raju's childhood, love affair, imprisonment (first part) and growth into a swami (second part). Though the streams move simultaneously, the first part is set in Malgudi, Raju's past and the second part is set in Mangla, Raju's present. While Raju's past in Malgudi is narrated by Raju himself, his present in Mangla is narrated by the author. R.K. Narayan is a novelist of common people and common situations. His plot of *The Guide* is built of material and incidents that are neither extraordinary nor heroic. *The Guide* is a story of Raju's romance, his greed for money, his sin and repentance. It is also the story of everyman's growth from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the railway guide to the spiritual guide.

A Comprehensive Note on Flashback in the Novel

Raju frequently remembers his childhood when he has just been released from prison and stops to rest near an abandoned shrine. He remembers that his father ran a shop in a village where he also used to help him every day. A crowd of peasants and drivers of bullock wagons always gather in front of his shop. Every afternoon his father asks him to take charge of the shop and gives him all necessary instructions. Sitting at the shop

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and selling peppermints is no trouble for Raju, but he does not like his father's habit of waking him up with the crowing of the cock and then teaching him alphabets and arithmetic. Sometimes, his father takes him to the town when he goes there to make his purchase. Raju is fascinated by the changing scene, men, women, children and carts moving around him, till he feels drowsy and goes to sleep. Through the first flashback we come to know about Raju's early life.

Raju also remembers the time when there is news of railway tracks and a railway train. There is great excitement and the main question being asked is the time it would take for the railway to arrive at Malgudi. Red earth is brought in a number of trucks, and soon a small mountain is raised in front of Raju's house. Raju spends most of his time playing, listening to the gossip of the labourers working on the truck, laughing at their jokes, and picking up their coarse vulgar abuses which they freely hurl at each other. One day, as he plays on the mound of earth, a boy, who is rearing his cows nearby, also comes there to play. Raju asks him to go away and shouts vulgar abuses. The boy complains to his father and repeats the exact words Raju has used. Raju's father becomes angry, and decides that he must go to school from the very next day.

Raju recalls his school days. He is sent not to the Albert Mission School, for his father believes that boys are converted to Christianity there, but to another school called Pyol School. All the classes have been held there at the same time and Raju belongs to the youngest and most elementary set. He has learnt the alphabets and numbers. But the teacher, an old man is a very abusive man. The boys make a lot of noise. Once they even enter the master's kitchen and make fun of him. They are forbidden to enter his house again. The old teacher is been paid one rupee per month for each boy. However, the boys frequently have been bringing some eatables for him, and in this way he has been able to make his both ends meet. Raju has proved himself to be an intelligent student after a year at this school; he makes sufficient progress to be admitted to the local Board High School. The old teacher himself leaves him there and blesses him. This act of his teacher surprises Raju.

Through flashback, Raju continues with the story of his past. The laying of the railway track is finally complete and a railway station is established at Malgudi. The coming of the railway train to Malgudi is a turning point in Raju's career. Raju's father is given a shop on the platform and Raju is asked to run this shop. After his father's sudden death, the burden of managing both the shops falls on Raju's shoulders. Raju comes into contact with the passengers, sits with them and learns things from them, gives them information and helps them. Gradually he becomes a famous tourist guide. The shop is then entrusted to a boy as Raju cannot spare enough time for the shop. Raju becomes very popular as a guide and soon comes to be known as 'Railway Raju'. Travellers visiting Malgudi would straightway ask for him as he is shrewd enough to give the right type of help to each tourist.

Now Raju remembers his first meeting with Rosie. She was not very glamorous, but she had a beautiful figure, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky. Raju nicknamed her husband Marco because the man dresses in thick jacket and helmet as if undertaking an expedition like Marco Polo. Marco is a man of academic interest and he is deeply interested in research relating to the history of art and culture. Marco is more interested in his research than his wife or her needs, desires and wishes. Raju gets the opportunity of spending considerable time in the company of Rosie and excites her liking. Later, he pleases her by appreciating her beauty and her skill as a dancer. Raju comes into close contact with Rosie.

Raju was a conman and could manoeuvre people to suit his needs. In the novel, he goes beyond limits and does something casually without thinking of the repercussions. Raju's working life starts when he looks after his father's shop at the railway station in Malgudi, a town that has become a popular tourist attraction. His ability to convey information in an interesting and convincing way make him take up the profession of a tourist guide. Rosie and her husband Marco, come to Malgudi and Raju meets them at the station. He is immediately attracted to Rosie who is a charming young woman, a sharp contrast to her surly husband. Rosie is obsessed with dancing and wants to take it up seriously but Marco does not endorse her interests. Rosie is prodded by Raju to go ahead and fulfil her desire so she does this at the cost of angering and losing her husband. She, however, gains success as a dancer and has a huge fan following. All this she is able to achieve through Raju who becomes her stage manager. Raju assumes too

She, however, gains success as a dancer and has a huge fan following. All this she is able to achieve through Raju who becomes her stage manager. Raju assumes too

R.K. Narayan, like another Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh, masterfully handled the complex flow of time through the flashbacks/ memory. The novel unfolds through flashbacks, then progresses occasionally in the present. His use of the flashbacks, which present the past events during the present events, bridge the gap between the past and present. In this way the flashbacks provide the background for the current narration. Moreover, from this back and forth movement of the plot the readers get an insight into the protagonist's motivation and personality. This makes the narration of the novel captivating to the reader. In this regard his *The Guide* can only be compared with Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, which was also narrated through a series of flashbacks/ from memory.

Self-Instructional Material

Comic Vision

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In Narayan's plot, there is a mixture of the comic and serious, the real and the fantastic. So is the case with *The Guide*. Narayan's vision is essentially comic. His comedies are comedies of sadness; he is the practitioner of the serious comedy, a very difficult art-form. He has achieved in his comedies what is generally achieved in the tragedies. The theme of his comedies is essentially tragic. A tragedy is concerned with inner illumination, with spiritual cleansing and regeneration. It results in a better apprehension of the mystery of life. All this Narayan does through his comedies, only the big comedies, are pitched in a lower key.

The hero is no exceptional individual, no man of high rank and social status, but like Raju, 'just ordinary, not so great,' and the comedies display his rather bumbling attempts at realizing his potential for greatness, and the spectacle of his struggle towards maturity is spiritually illuminating and morally uplifting. Thus emotionally, Narayan's serious comedies are as rewarding as a tragedy. In *The Guide*, we see Raju maturing before us by stages, over a length of time. His self-awareness is hard-earned but not in the way in which a tragic character earns it, self-wrung, self-strung. The cleansing takes place no doubt but not in the heroic strain. For the central character is a kind of anti-hero, Narayan's common man with potential for the uncommon.

Narayan has developed Raju's personality in an elaborative way in the long line of fake swamis and the third person narrative strand deflates Raju's phony sagacity with gentle mockery. The third person narrative also juxtaposes incongruities in order to ridicule Raju's pretensions. Raju appears as a comic opera figure in the narrator's account of the swami's musings. Raju recounts his rise and fall in the first person narrative which is marked by humour. He has a quick sense of absurd and laugh at himself. However, what endears him to readers who regard him as a lovable rogue when they are not sympathising with his vicissitudes, is Raju's own self-deprecating sense of humour.

Imagery and Symbolism

Another technique Narayan uses is imagery and symbolism which is rooted in Indian culture, but has universal appeal. The animal imagery has been well used by Narayan when we see Rosie's role as 'Mohini' in Raju's life is confirmed by her obsession with snakes. The role of snake-women as enchantresses is common in the Indian mind-frame. Moreover, the conversation between Rosie and Raju's mother (a traditional Indian woman steeped in religious and folk beliefs) reinforces this notion:

'Everything was so good and quiet - until you came in like a viper. . . . On the very day I heard him mention the 'serpent girl' my heart sank.'

Moreover, the almost animal-like passion lurking within Rosie and Raju is symbolically projected when they are waiting in Peak House on the veranda to watch the animals come out. Narayan is very subtle in his use of language, giving freedom to the reader to read beyond the text:

'On the way she said to me (Raju), "Have you documents to see too?"

"No, no," I said, hesitating midway between my room and hers.

"Come along then. Surely you aren't going to leave me to the mercy of prowling beasts?"'

Furthermore, at the end of the novel, Raju's counting of the stars or measuring the immeasurable is a symbolic portrayal of Raju trying to understand the enormity of life.

'The sky was clear. Having nothing else to do, he started counting the stars. He said to himself, "I shall be rewarded for this profound service to humanity. People will say, 'there is the man who knows the exact number of stars in the sky. If you have any trouble on that account, consult him. He will be your night guide for the skies.'"

At the end of the story, where Raju is drowning, his eyes are fixed on the mountains as a brilliant sun rises and villagers look on. By juxtaposing the simple background of the Indian village at sunrise with the suicide scene, Narayan effectively communicates Raju's death as an image of hope, consistent with the Indian belief in death and rebirth. Narayan's has a gift of sketching pen pictures that bring scenes and characters vividly to life without taking recourse to ornate or excessive description. Narayan's simplicity of language conceals a sophisticated level of art. Narayan handles language like an immensely flexible tool that effortlessly conveys both the specific as well as symbolic and the universal. The tone of *The Guide* is quiet and subdued.

Thus the use of flashback, common lifestyle, comedy, language and the double perspective—Raju's and the novelist's—make the novel fresh stimulating, provocative and interesting.

2.7 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE NOVEL

R. K. Narayan's *The Guide* is often considered a realistic depiction of the Indian society at the time of independence. The novel incorporates symbolism as one of its major stylistic features: Raju, Rosie, Marco and various other characters are symbolically presented to give a vivid and realistic description of Indian society and its classes. R.K. Narayan upholds the old traditional values of life prescribed by the ancient Indian culture and embodied in the Indian epics, the shastras, puranas, myths and mythologies. He presents his concepts of traditionalism through the middle class life of Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India, which forms the background to all his novels. Narayan's novels show that success and happiness in life lie in the acceptance of the shastras and Vedic values. The main purpose of human life is suggested as a journey in search of self-identity or emancipation from the miseries of life. The main purpose of life is to know the purpose of life.

Raju, Rosie and Marco become symbols of India's culture. While Marco's aspirations seek their fulfilment in unearthing the buried treasures of the rich cultural past of India, Rosie seeks satisfaction in the creative channels of classical dancing in the midst of an ever-present live audience. Raju constantly dreams of an elusive future, until a time comes when he is committed to a definite future by undertaking a fast in the hope of bringing rain.

Narayan's Malgudi

Like Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan has created his own imaginary town of Malgudi, a city in South India. His short story collection, *Malgudi Days*, is set in this imaginary town full of lively, colourful people. His true to life characters are similar to Dickens' characters. About how he thought of Malgudi, Narayan says that

'Malgudi was an earth-shaking discovery for me, because I had no mind for facts and things like that, which would be necessary in writing about Malgudi or any real place. I first pictured not my town but just the railway station, which was a small platform with a banyan tree, a stationmaster, and two trains a day, one coming and one going. On

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Check Your Progress

10. What is the tone of *The Guide*?
11. Mention any two narrative techniques that are used in *The Guide*?

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Vijayadasami I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town: The train had just arrived in Malgudi Station.'

Narayan is a great regional novelist, but he is never parochial. It is against the backdrop of Malgudi scenes and sights that Narayan studies life's little ironies, which have always been the same in all corners of the world, in every age. His novels are tragic comedies of mischance and misdirection, studies in the human predicament which, essentially, has always been the same. From the particular, Narayan rises to the general, and intensity and universality are achieved by concentration. He has a way of making the reader believe whatever happens in Malgudi happens everywhere. Against the background of a single place, and amid the utter variety of human kind, the single individual engages with the one, universal problem: the effort not just to be, but to become, human.'

Many critics have speculated about the location of this imaginary town. According to Iyengar, it might be Lalgudi on the river Cauvery or Yadavgi in Mysore. Many take it to be Coimbatore which has many of the landmarks mentioned in Malgudi, like a river on one side and forests on the other. It also has the Mission School and College. But no one has been able to provide a definite answer because Narayan has not given any hint of its geographical location.

Narayan discusses some reasons why Malgudi can be a south Indian city in an interview:

'I must be absolutely certain about the psychology of the character I am writing about, and I must be equally sure of the background. I know the Tamil and Kannada speaking people most. I know their background. I know how their minds work and almost as if it is happening to me, I know exactly what will happen to them in certain circumstances. And I know how they will react.'

Structure/Plot

The framework of a Narayan novel, as also of *the Guide*, is not mechanical or external. There are no thrills and sensations, no long lost heirs, no accidental discoveries. The action flows out of character, and also influences and moulds character. The hero is just ordinary, the common, the average, the great, but not so great, and the action illustrates his ordinariness as well as brings out his potentialities for greatness. Thus, Raju is just ordinary; the action flows out of his character, and shows his attainment of maturity. All the events are organized round this central theme and this imparts unity and coherence to the plot. There is nothing superfluous or external, every event that takes place has a bearing on the hero's character takes him a step forward towards maturity. There are also comic elements which provide dramatic relief, sustain interest, give additional emphasis on action, and also serve as a sort of subplot without, in reality, being one. As the events follow each other logically, and are causally linked together, the end is implicit in the beginning. In the beginning there is disorder, usually a conflict between traditional morality and individual aspiration and by the end, the conflict is resolved, either by death or by the acceptance of the existing order. All these remarks are applicable to *The Guide* and can easily be illustrated from the novel.

The action of the novel flows out in two streams or currents, and two threads have been knit into a single whole by the presence of Raju in both of them, and by an intricate pattern of parallelism and contrast. One stream flows in the legendary Malgudi with its rich tradition of classical dances offered by Rosie-Nalini and the breath-taking cave—paintings that Marco uses in his book, *The Cultural History of South India*. Another stream flows in the neighbouring town of Mangal, when the spiritual aspect of

Indian culture is presented through Raju's growth into a Swami. Raju's presence in both the strains indicates the close affinity between art and spirituality in India.

Growth and maturity of Raju is paralleled in the growth of Malgudi from a small town to a big city. There are no railways and no railway station in the beginning, but as Raju grows, Malgudi also grows. Raju plays on sand and gravel heaped for the construction of the station, and learns vulgar abuses from the labourers. The rails are laid and the station is built, and Malgudi is connected with the outside world. Raju also grows from a school boy into a railway stall keeper, and acquires bits of knowledge by reading magazines, newspapers and books which he stocks. As Malgudi grows, Raju also grows into 'Railway Raju', the popular tourist guide.

Further, as Raju is the creator of Nalini, the dancer, Velan is the creator of Raju, the swami and martyr. Further, just as Raju narrates to Velan the story of his past, Rosie narrates to Raju the story of her own experiences with Marco from the time Raju left her with Marco in the cave to the time she came to stay with Raju. While narrating this part of the story Raju allows Rosie to speak for herself in the same way as Narayan has allowed Raju to narrate the first part of his life that ended with his lock-up. This story within the story reminds one of the inset story of 'The Man on the Hill' in Fielding's *Tom Jones*. In this way, both Raju and Rosie present themselves as they wanted to be seen by their admirers, in the first case Raju and in the second case, Velan. Thus, we find a number of parallels used in the construction of plot.

The plot of the novel is made up of commonplace ordinary events. There is nothing extraordinary, thrilling or sensational either in character or event. But the interest of the readers is sustained by Narayan's humour, irony and wit which envelop the entire action from the beginning to the end. Irony and wit are woven into the very texture of Narayan's admirable prose. Narayan looks, with a merry twinkle in his eyes at the spectacle of Railway Raju as he moves through life, making ridiculous, absurd and bumbling attempts at maturity and self-fulfilment. This hilarious comedy, enacted against the backdrop of Malgudi and its environs, forms a kind of comic sub-plot to the serious main plot of the novel. It contributes to the entertainment value of the novel, and makes even the ordinary and commonplace interesting and amusing. The end of the novel is characterized by ambiguity, and has naturally attracted much critical attention.

The novel is a realistic art form; it is its realism which distinguishes it from romance. But in Narayan's plots there is usually a mixture of real and fantasy. The action begins realistically with commonplace events and characters but soon there is an intrusion of much that is improbable, unreal and fantastic. These two elements—the realistic and the fantastic—are fused into a single whole. There is no 'organic compound' but mere 'mechanical mixture'. This intrusion of the improbable and the fantastic is regarded as a serious fault of Narayan's plots, but the plot of *The Guide* is to a great extent free from this fault.

Narayan's is an art which conceals art. His plots are a delightful mixture of realism, fantasy, poetry and perception and gaiety. In this respect, he stands alone among Indians writing in English, none else has the like distinction.

Significance of the Title

The Guide is one of R.K. Narayan's most interesting books. It focusses on the life of a happy, carefree person who is all out to use people to suit his needs. The story is set in Malgudi whose inhabitants consist of a mix of people of different cultures and traditions. These people, with their beliefs and values, represent Indian society overall.

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The title of the story, *The Guide*, is quite apt and suggestive, for it deals with the life and career of Raju, popularly known as 'Railway Raju', who becomes 'a full-blown' tourist guide in his hometown Malgudi and still later the spiritual guide and mentor of the people of the drought-infested village, Mangala. In the interim, he is the guide of Rosie, the classical dancer with aspirations; Raju helps her realize her aspirations when he promotes her as her business manager. This proves to be his nemesis and he lands in jail on a forgery charge.

Narayan's novel is a non-political story that has been acclaimed by many as his finest work though it stands apart in stark relief from his other novels. *The Guide* develops a theme touched on in *The Bachelor of Arts*; that of a bogus sanyasi.

Raju begins his career as a stall-keeper. He looks after the shop his father has been given at the railway station. He loves to read and picks up bits of information by going through old journals and magazines, etc. He is intelligent, observant, and a shrewd judge of human character. He has the gift of the gab and soon gets popular with tourists coming to Malgudi. He acquires detailed knowledge about Malgudi and its whereabouts by talking with the tourists, and uses the knowledge to great advantage. He has a rare knack of sizing up his customers, their means and their tastes. His understanding of human psychology is profound, he never says no, and makes vague, ambiguous statements so that he is never 'caught' even when talking about things he does not know. Soon he engages a boy to look after his stall, and himself sets up as a full-fledged tourist-guide. Raju is a model guide, and those who intend to take up the vocation of a tourist guide can learn much from his example. Raju, the guide is fated to be a guide by chance and temperament. He becomes a tourist guide by chance when he is given charge of the railway shop, he buys papers and old books to wrap articles, he reads book and papers to while away his time, gathers information about Malgudi, never says 'no', gives false information, cheats the tourists successfully and becomes famous as a tourist guide. In fact he tells Velan 'It was not because I wanted to utter a falsehood, but only because I wanted to be pleasant.'

Soon, there is a slight change in Raju's role. From the tourist guide he becomes the guide to one single family. This change takes place as soon as Marco and Rosie come to Malgudi. Marco is immensely pleased with him and engages him as a whole time guide. Raju takes Rosie by storm, as it were, and is able to win her heart and seduce her within no time. He shows himself to be an adept lady-killer, one who can play havoc with the female heart with his bold compliments, smooth talk and flattery. In this respect also, he is a model guide and valuable lessons in the art of lovemaking may be learned from his example.

The next role which Raju plays is that of a theatre-manager or impresario or the guide and manager of a dancer. He launches Rosie as a dancer and manages her affairs so ably that soon her fame spreads and contracts pour in. They earn a lot of money and begin to live lavishly. With his shrewd business sense, he tactfully handles Rosie's career. They can learn much from Raju. They can also learn from him that whether out of jealousy or a feeling of insecurity, a man should not commit forgery, for it is sure to land him in jail. One should beware of mysterious enigmatic people like Marco, for all the time they may be plotting and laying traps.

Raju is an exemplary prisoner in jail. He is well-mannered, hard-working and helpful. It is for this reason that he is quite comfortable in jail and wonders why people dread the life they have to spend there. He does not look forward to going out and facing the world.

Raju can be looked upon as a role model for all prisoners. In this respect, he is a 'guide' too.

On leaving prison, Raju goes off into isolation, a totally broken and embittered man when he is unwillingly mistaken for a sanyasi or a holy man. He cynically decides to go along with credulous villagers who feed him and offer him gifts. He finds his common place observations taken for words of wisdom and soon learns the trick of imposing his spurious holiness upon them. But the joke gets out of his hand. To keep up his imposture, Raju agrees to fast to death, if necessary, to end a drought. In despair and near death, at the end of his ordeal, he confesses to a village leader who, however, instead of repudiating Raju with scorn, sees his past life as a fated preparation for this ultimate moment of truth, when he will become a holy man indeed. Raju, seeing the logic as well as irony of the gesture, insists on going on with the fast against medical warnings and dies as the rains begin.

His example shows that the same qualities make a man successful both as a tourist guide and a spiritual guide. There is an unbroken connection between Raju, the guide who lives for others whose character and activity were a reflection of otherness, and Raju, the prophet surrounded by devout villagers waiting for a message or a miracle. In each case, he is a projection of what people need. His audience in its relation with him never runs into any hard, final refusal. He is there to be used, a tractable form prompt to assume any shape that maybe required. So extreme a degree of accommodation means that Raju's sincerity consists in being false, and his positive existence in being a vacancy filled by others. The events leading from the beginning to the conclusion of Raju's career, the links between the guide in the railway station and the swami in the temple, make up a natural, realistic sequence. As biographical events in a particular life, they display that convincing combination of logic and absurdity we are familiar with in our own lives, when from a certain point in time we look back on the whole and see the logic of the complete pattern together with the queerness of the connections that bind one part to another. But the events in the novel also have a thematic significance in that the apparently hopeless struggle of Raju's submerged individuality to achieve an independent identity. This is why, we are aware so often of a rather frantic quality in Raju's actions and meditations, for all that he keeps up throughout his off-hand, youthfully cheerful manner. Everything that happens to him, even when it is one of the several comic calamities that fall on him, is suffused by Raju's vague anxiety, his not quite conscious uncertainty about his own nature.

The Guide is a tragic treatment of the theme of innocence betrayed, leading to corruption and redemption but in this book Raju can never return to his job as Railway Raju, the tourist guide. Instead, he becomes a 'spiritual' guide and, ambiguously, a fraud-turned-holy, whose impersonation turns into a genuine act of self-sacrificial virtue.

In short, the title is apt and suggestive, for its central figure plays the role of a 'guide' during the successive stages of his career. The novel is a guide to life also, for it tells us both how to achieve success in life and how to avoid the various pitfalls which were Raju's undoing. It is also a guide to conduct, for it teaches us what to do and what not to do.

Narayan's Use of Humour, Irony and Wit

Narayan is the greatest humourist among the Indo-Anglican writers of fiction. His humour is immensely varied and all pervasive. We get in him humour of character, humour of situation or farcical humour, irony, wit and satire. His humour mingles with pathos and

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tragedy, there is a Shakespearean interpenetration of the comic and the tragic. Every shade and variety of humour is to be met with in *The Guide* also.

In *The Guide*, there is a judicious blend of seriousness and comedy, which is well-balanced. T.D. Brunton calls it 'sympathetic comedy'. It is a sort of 'amused detachment' which sharply distinguishes Narayan from Jane Austen, with whom he has often been compared. Narayan's humour is immensely varied and all-pervasive. Here we have the humour of character, humour of situation or farcical humour, irony, wit and satire.

To begin with, there is the farcical humour of the *pyol* school that Raju is first admitted to. Raju's father sends him to school because he does not want him to pick up abusive words from the construction workers at the site of the railway station, but the school master himself is more abusive than the labourers could be. He is also henpecked. Besides teaching his young wards by making them shout at the top of their voices, he cooks for his domineering wife. The boys peep into the house when the master is called inside; they find him cooking in the kitchen. His wife stands close by and giggles when she sees the amazed boys. Then, Raju's discomfiture when he is thrown out of his shop at the railway station and looks at the whole scene from his doorway is more comic than tragic. Again, when towards the end of the novel, a 'fasting' Raju is starving and he goes into the sanctum to have some food, finds the vessel empty and throws it away in anger. Coming out, he explains the noise to his followers and devotees, saying: 'Empty vessels make much noise.'

Even the most trivial details and situations are used by the novelist as sources of hilarious comedy. For example, there is the teacher of the *pyol* school who, 'gathered a score of young boys of my age every morning on *pyol*, reclined on a cushion in a corner, and shouted at the little fellows flourishing a rattan cane all the time, and habitually addressed his pupils 'donkeys' and traced their genealogy on either side with thoroughness.'

There are many other instances of humour in the novel. For example, the efforts of Raju's uncle to bully and browbeat him and Rosie by getting on their nerves as well as Raju's description of Marco and his eccentric attitude to making payments, for he is so obsessed with receipts and vouchers that Raju has the notion that one could make Marco part with all his possessions if one gave a proper receipt for everything.

There is also an attempt to create humour at the expense of lawyers, one of whom is an 'adjournment expert' and the other is a 'star lawyer' who makes it his business to impede the work of the court as much as he can. The lawyer Rosie engaged to defend Raju had 'his own star-value' and he was expensive 'His name spelt magic in all the court halls of this part of the country'; he had saved many hardened criminals and lawless hooligans by setting at nought the laboriously prepared case by the prosecution. He took up Raju's case 'as a concession from one star to another—for Nalini's case'. But he had to be paid in cash for every court appearance and put up in the best hotel in Malgudi when he came there to defend Raju. In his own way, he was an 'adjournment lawyer'. He could split a case into minutes and demanded as many days for microscopic examination. He would keep the court fidgeting without being able to rise for lunch, because he could talk without completing a sentence; he had a knack of telescoping sentence into sentence without pausing for breath. He arrived by the morning train and left by the evening one, and until that time he neither moved off the court floor nor let the case progress even an inch for the day—so that a judge had to wonder how the day had spent itself.

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From this, one gathers the impression that neither the business of running the shop at the railway station nor that of working as a tourist guide is congenial to Raju's nature. He accepts them because he is in search of new roles. It is a challenge that he gladly accepts. It is this attempt to play all roles successfully, whether they are in keeping with his nature or not, which is the major source of comedy in the life and career of Raju, the Guide.

There is humour of character, too, in ample measure. Marco is a queer man, 'He would not yield an anna without a voucher whereas you give him a slip of paper, you could probably get him to write off his entire fortune.'

He 'dressed like a man about to undertake an expedition with his thick colour glasses, thick jacket, and a thick helmet over which was perpetually stretched a green, shiny, water-proof cover, giving him the appearance of a space-traveller.' He is an odd, out of the way character, like a knot in wood. The central figure in a Narayan's novel is an ordinary man with a potential for the extraordinary, and in one novel after another he shows him going about in a bumbling, ridiculous way to realize that potential. He is thus presented in a comic light. Raju in *The Guide* is also such a character, and many are the comic discomfitures he has to undergo in his progression from a stall-keeper to a Mahatma. To give a few examples chosen at random: Rosie returns to him when he was getting used to life without her and sees him in all his nakedness and poverty; the tall, giant-like uncle arrives and he has to eat the humble pie in the presence of Rosie; the idiot brother of Velan involves him in difficulties by misreporting him to the villagers. On all these occasions we are much amused at his discomfiture. The entire interior monologue of Raju shows him in a comic light, as when he realizes that he was expected to fast to bring down the rains.

He muses,

'Did they expect him to starve for twelve days and stand in knee deep water eight hours? He sat up. He regretted having given them the idea. It had sounded picturesque. But he had known that it would be applied to him, he might probably have given a different formula: that all villagers should combine to help him eat 'bonda' for fifteen days without a break. Upto them to see that the supply was kept up. And then the saintly man would stand in the river for two minutes a day; and it should bring down the rain, sooner or later.'

Irony and wit are woven into the very texture of Narayan's prose. At every step we get fine, sparkling things which startle and delight. Narayan has full command over verbal irony. To quote a few examples: (1) 'His interest in us was one-rupee a month and anything else in kind we cared to carry.' (2) 'The essence of sainthood seemed to lie in one's ability to utter mystifying statements.' (3) When Velan prostrates himself before Raju he says, 'God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us, if we attempt to usurp his rights.' (4) Velan says to Raju, 'your penance is similar to that of Mahatma Gandhi, He has left a disciple in you to save us.'

Narayan is the master of irony, and his irony is the instrument of his satire. And Narayan's satire is mild and gentle. In *The Guide*, he has satirized lawyers, government officials, fake holy men and their credulous disciples. He has cast his net wide and roped in all aspects of Indian life. For instance, we are told about the adjournment lawyer that 'a case in his hand was like dough, he could knead and draw it up and down'. Regarding obtaining a drinking permit on health grounds in a state where prohibition is in vogue, Raju says: 'More powerful than the once almighty dollar is the almighty permit.'

Narayan's irony is like shot silk showing different colours as it catches the light at different angles. Narayan is above all a master of irony. Irony is the instrument of his

satire. Narayan's satire is mild and gentle; he exposes and ridicules, but his primary aim is entertainment, and not social reform. Raju's career provides the novelist an excellent opportunity to satirize the government officers of post-independence India.

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New wealth leads Raju to vicious company, drinking and gambling:

'Although I myself cared very little for drink, I hugged a glass of whisky for hours, 'Permit holder' became a social title in our land and attracted men of importance around me I could get a train reservation at a moment's notice, relieve a man summoned to jury work, reinstate a dismissed official, get a vote for a co-operative election, nominate a committee man, get a man employed get a boy admitted to a school and get an unpopular official shifted elsewhere, all of which seemed to me important social services, an influence worth buying at the current market price.'

But these friends of Raju desert him as soon as he is arrested for forgery. However, the fake sadhus attract Narayan's most biting satire. Raju is a criminal, an inhuman monster who could think: 'Personally, he felt that the best thing for them would be to blow each other's brains out. That'd keep them from bothering too much about the drought.' He is merely one of the countless frauds posing as sadhus and living on the credulous people as parasites. Sainthood is reduced to a matter merely of external appearance when Raju thinks of growing a beard to enhance his spiritual status, 'Raju soon realized that his spiritual status would be enhanced if he grew a beard and long hair to fall on his nape. A clean-shaven, close-haired saint was an anomaly. He bore the various stages of his make up with fortitude, not minding the prickly phase he had to pass through before a well authenticated beard could cover his face and come down his chest.'

However, playing the role of a swami and basking in the adoration of the villagers makes Raju's personality undergo a sea change: 'His eyes shone with softness and compassion, the light of wisdom emanated from them, and he felt like shaking the dust off his own feet and placing it on his head and forehead, as was done by the simple folk of Mangala.'

Narayan's irony is at its sharpest when Raju relates 'some principle of living with a particularly variety of delicious food,' and he mentions it to his followers 'with an air of seriousness so that his listeners took it as a spiritual need, something of the man's inner discipline to keep his soul in shape and his understanding with the Heavens in order'.

Humour inter-penetrates tragedy towards the end of the novel. As the fasting Raju is on the verge of collapse, a whole crowd of men, women and children gathers on the riverbank; they indulge in eating, drinking and merrymaking. The whole scene wears the appearance of a village fair with the fasting Raju as the centre of attraction. Then comes the American reporter and he interviews the fasting fake swami. The entire interview is a brilliant piece of sustained irony:

'Tell me how do you like it here?'

'I am only doing what I have to do, that's all. My likes and dislikes do not count.'

'How long have you been without food now?'

'Ten days.'

'Do you feel weak?'

'When will you break your fast?'

'Twelfth day.'

'Do you expect to have the rains by then?'

'Why not?'

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It is not a yogi but a bhogi that is being interviewed; a fraud and a 'cheat' is being asked to express his views on a number of questions. It is a devastating exposure of 'swamihood' and the credulity of Indian masses. In short, Narayan is a great humourist. His characteristic humour does not result from distortion, exaggeration or caricature. It results from an observation of the common human weaknesses, follies and foibles, and irony is the weapon he uses to expose and ridicule such weaknesses and absurdities.

His eyes take on a merry twinkle as he surveys the panorama of common humanity on the march.

Raju and Velan

As the novel opens, we find Raju sitting lonely and bored in crossed-legged position on a granite slab, waiting for someone's company. A gullible villager, Velan, comes and sits two steps below Raju's granite slab. When asked, the stranger tells Raju that he is from Mangala, 'not very far from here'. He is returning from a visit to his daughter who lives nearby. Raju likes his 'rambling talk' and remembers how he met the loquacious barber just outside the prison gate soon after his release. Raju was not ready to talk about his conviction and sentence but barber guessed that Raju had not committed any serious crime. After he had finished, he told Raju that he looked 'like a maharaja'.

Velan mistakes him for a holy man and entreats him to solve his domestic problem. His half-sister has run away from the house on the day fixed for her marriage and was traced in a fair in a distant village three days later. The girl locked herself in a room the whole day and Velan wondered whether she was possessed by an evil spirit. As is his wont, Raju makes light of the whole thing saying that such things are a common part of life. Then he remembers his troubles started when Rosie came into his life.

Velan is a native of the Mangala village and he is Raju's first disciple. A simple man, he mistakes Raju for a holy man as Raju takes shelter in the old, dilapidated temple situated on the other side of the river Sarayu. He is credulous as he is easily impressed by the platitudes that Raju utters. As it happens, Velan arrives as a godsend to the convict and tourist guide Raju as it relieves the tedium of his loneliness. Raju on seeing him, asks him to sit down if he likes. But Velan is too polite to open a conversation till Raju asks him where he is from. And then Velan opens up and gives the history of his whole family—his father's three marriages, his idiotic brother and the rebellious and sullen half-sister who is his present concern. All the while, Raju keeps adding a little comment in the form of general observation here and there.

Velan mistakes Raju for a holy man and wants him to solve the problem of his errant half-sister. Raju is amused and he readily takes up the role that he is expected to play. Raju has a long habit of solving other people's problems. Velan's step-sister won't accept the family's plans for her marriage. When the wedding day was fixed, she ran away from home and was found in a fair in a distant village three days later. Now the girl sulks in her room all day, and Velan wonders whether she is possessed by an evil spirit. As is his wont, Raju makes light of the whole thing saying that such things are common part of life. He then suggests to the worried Velan that he might bring his sister to him. Before departure, Velan tries to touch Raju's feet but the latter recoils from the attempt: 'I will not permit anyone to do this. God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp His rights.'

Raju feels that he is 'attaining the stature of a saint'. Next morning, Velan brings his sister there. He also brings some food and other offerings for Raju. The girl has

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braided her hair and decorated herself with jewellery. Raju sits up rubbing his eyes: 'He was as yet unprepared to take charge of the world's affairs. His immediate need was privacy for his morning ablutions.' He asks them to go a certain distance away and wait for him. Raju starts telling them the story of Devaka which he cannot complete. Velan and his sister keep following him as he strides across the temple majestically; they also keep listening to him mutely. Velan is of the stuff disciples are made of: an unfinished story or an incomplete moral never bothers him; it is all 'in the scheme of life'.

At first, Raju is not decided to solve Velan's problems as he says to the latter: 'I am not going to think of your problems, not now.' He would do it 'when the time is ripe for it'. Velan meekly accepts. He starts telling Velan a story but forgets it midway as he had heard it from his mother long ago. When he lapses into silence, Velan patiently waits for the continuation. They gaze on the river as if the clue to their problems lies there, and leave. The role of the holy man has now been forced upon him and Raju tries to live up to it.

Another day, Velan is happy because he is 'bursting with news of a miracle'. He stands before Raju and tells him with folded hands that 'things have turned out well'. His sister has admitted her folly before a family gathering and accepted her marriage as arranged already by the elders. They have also lined a day for her marriage because they do not want to delay it any further. And he has come to invite Raju to the wedding.

'For fear that she may change her mind once again?' Raju interjects. He knows why Velan is rushing it through at this pace. It is easy to guess but Velan takes it to be an evidence of Raju's divine powers to anticipate what his disciples have in mind. Raju misses the marriage as he does not want to be seen in a crowd, and 'he did not want to gather a crowd around him as a man who had worked a change in an obstinate girl.' Still at the earliest possible opportunity, Velan comes to see him and seek his blessings along with his sister, the groom and other relatives as well as villagers. They all bring gifts and food for him. The girl herself seems to have spoken of Raju as her saviour and has told everyone: 'He doesn't speak to anyone, but if he looks at you are changed.'

Thus, initially we can visualize that Velan is behind Raju's transformation. By playing the role of a swami, he starts thinking like a swami. But this is not the end of Raju and Velan relationship. It is strengthened when the village is struck by drought.

Velan comes and sits with him at the end of his work in the field every day. Raju speaks and he listens. He is distinctly uncomfortable in his new role and he decides to leave the place but where can he possibly go? He can't go back to Malgudi for fear that people would make fun of him and avoid him. He can't go back to the village where his mother lives with her brother. Nor can he go back to Rosie who has broken all bonds with him since the day he was imprisoned by the court. He hasn't done a day's hard work in life and here he is getting food, clothes and veneration without asking for it and in return he has to involve in a glib talk. People have started attributing divine powers and miracles to him. Their domestic and work-related problems have been solved to their entire satisfaction since the swami's arrival in the temple on the banks of the Sarayu. Raju therefore, decides to stay there and bask in his new found glory.

Velan plays a crucial role in the swami's fast to propitiate the rain gods when there is drought in the region. There is starvation and the prices of essential commodities rise, leading to a clash between Velan and the villagers and a local shopkeeper and his men. Many, including Velan, are hurt. When Raju comes to know of this, he tells Velan's half-wit brother that he won't have any food till the fighting stops. The situation is bad already with no rains and Velan's brother mixes up the two things and informs the

villagers that the swami won't eat till the rains come. Velan and the villagers are overwhelmed. They hail Raju as another Mahatma.

During fast of twelve days, Velan did not part from Raju. He is a true disciple of Raju to whom Raju reveals his secrets of imprisonment and the entire life story of Rosie and his relationship. The narration of the story of his past took Raju all the night. He had mentioned every detail of his career, without a single omission, till the moment of his coming out of the gates of the jail. Velan listened to him with rapt attention. Raju had thought that, 'Velan would rise with disgust and swear,' And we took you for such a noble soul all along; if one like you does penance, it'll drive the little rain that we may hope for. Begone before we feel tempted to throw you out, you have fooled us. But the irony was that Velan still addressed him as 'Swami', still considered him a great man, and promising to keep it all a secret went away for the time being. Rather Velan feels grateful to Raju for choosing someone like him to share his past with. He says: 'I don't know why you tell me all this, Swami. It's very kind of you to address at such length your humble servant.'

The 'picaro turned Swami' had become a world figure. It is all a fine piece of satire on the credulity of the Indians, and on the techniques of sainthood. As the fast progressed, Raju grew weaker and weaker. On the tenth day of the fast, a couple of doctors, deputed by the government to watch and report, went to the Swami, felt his pulse and heart. They helped him to stretch himself on the mat. A big hush fell upon the crowd. Velan plied his fan more vigorously than ever. He looked distraught and unhappy. Raju is desperate. His daily ritual consists of going to the riverbed, standing there deep in water for a couple of hours while chanting mantras, returning to the temple and lying down to be gawked at by people. He feels weak. He wants to make a desperate appeal to Velan to bring him some food. He is one man responsible for Raju's plight. But Velan wouldn't leave Raju's side even for a moment.

Raju's life had become important for the nation and it was to be saved at all costs. It was with difficulty that Raju was carried to the place in the river where he was to stand in the river in knee-deep water. He entered the water, shut his eyes, and muttered his prayers. He opened his eyes and looked towards the distant mountains, and said, 'Velan, it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs—'. He sagged down. The end is shrouded in malignity. Was it really raining, or was it merely the hallucination of a starving man? Did Raju die, or did he merely fall down unconscious? Who can say?

Raju is all along doubtful about the efficacy of his fast to bring rains in the parched land. He longs for food and even thinks of running away from the place. But the people's faith holds him back. He resigns himself to his fate and resolves to fast unto death. The news of Raju's fast brings crowds from far and near, and the place hums with activity; it has never seen such crowds before. His fast is an unqualified success, but the ending of the novel is quite ambiguous.

Thus Raju and Velan's relationship is very strong. Even in bad days of drought, it does not weaken, rather it strengthens into a fruitful bond.

Raju and Rosie

In *The Guide*, Raju, Rosie and Marco—all the three are remarkable characters. A host of other minor characters contribute to the tapestry of middle class life in Malgudi—Velan, Raju's parents, Gaffur; Joseph and others. In the very beginning of the novel when Velan tells Raju about his troubles in life due to his half-sister, Raju also remembers

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that troubles in his life also started with Rosie. Raju remembers his first meeting with Rosie. She was not very glamorous, but she had a beautiful figure, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky. Raju is fascinated by 'the divine creature' that he perceives Rosie to be and wins her heart by his sympathy and consideration, as well as showing keen interest in her art. Both of them are born romancers and Raju are two of a kind and they fall in love at once. Rosie is the essence of Indian womanhood. Her husband's indifference and callousness to her aspirations make her go astray while Marco is a totally self-absorbed art historian with strong likes and dislikes.

He is a lady killer. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily. When Marco permits him to go and persuade Rosie to come with them to Mempo Hills, 'he has the audacity to tell her to come out as she was, without changing her dress and added, 'who would decorate a rainbow?' Later, he makes further advances to her, continues to play bold and flattering compliments, and so is able to seduce her.

Both fall in love with each other. Raju and Rosie fully enjoy the beauty and surroundings of Malgudi. They amuse each other; entertain each other and their days pass very smoothly. They pass together one night in the hotel and Rosie becomes Raju's mistress.

Rosie, in the novel, overshadows Raju whereas Raju remains the pivot for the whole part of the novel. Hers is a very complex character. As they say women are the most difficult creatures to understand on this earth, it is very difficult to understand her. She is moody, impulsive and ambitious. These frail aspects of her character have been glossed over in the novel. It was because the character of Rosie was ahead of its times. To imagine a woman leave her uncaring and impotent husband and live with her lover in his house was impossible in the era of sixties. Though she has been represented as a rebellious woman her rebellion has been justified in such a way that it does not find consonance with the novel. To humanize her and get the sympathy of the viewers with her, Marco has been demonized. This is the reason why it is difficult to understand her in the novel but still easy to comprehend.

Rosie is the heroine of the novel. She has a charming and fascinating personality. Raju falls in love with her at first sight and says, 'she was not very glamorous, if that is what you expect, but she did have a figure, a slight and slender one, beautifully fashioned eyes that sparkled, a complexion not white, but dusky, which made her only half visible as if you saw her through a film of tender coconut juice?' Her arrival at Malgudi, with her husband Marco, plays havoc with the life and career of Raju, the popular Railway guide. As soon as Rosie arrived at the Malgudi railway station along with her husband Marco, she asked Raju: 'Can you show me a cobra—a king cobra it must be, which can dance to the music of a flute'. Her husband, Marco, told her that they had other things to think of and Rosie was apologetic: 'I'm not asking this gentleman to produce at once. I am not demanding it. I'm just mentioning it that's all.' The husband, however, lost his temper and told her to go and find the king cobra in Raju's company without bothering him: 'Don't expect me to go with you. I can't stand the sight of a snake—your interests are morbid.'

The marriage of Rosie and Marco is flawed by incompatibility. Though both are artists in their own spheres, due to lack of understanding, this catastrophe takes place. Marco marries Rosie only for his personal comfort and remains busy day in and day out with his pursuits. In this way he has insulted womanhood.

Even after being in relationship with Raju, Rosie wants to fulfil her wifely duties to her husband. There was a gradual change in Rosie's attitude, noticed Raju: 'In other ways too I found it difficult to understand the girl. I found as I went on that she was gradually losing the free and easier manners of her earlier days. She allowed me to make love to her, of course but she was beginning to show excessive consideration for her husband on the hill.

When that husband throws her out and she has no other place to go to, she comes to Raju. More than the attraction of sex is the desire to perfect her and realize herself fully in her God-given gift. She does not take long to achieve eminence. When Raju wants her to give performances she is not unwilling. But with fame come unceasing demands on her time and energy. She has to fall in to a routine and go round and round like a bull yoked to an oil-crusher. Her weariness of it all is like that of any film star: She is being exploited but sticks it out.

Raju recollects the evening when Rosie comes back to him. He becomes very happy getting Rosie back. Raju is obsessed with Rosie to the extent that, in giving her attention, he neglects everything else. He loses his job and shop, gets into heavy debt, and falls in his mother's eyes too. She cannot bear his living with a married woman, abandoned by her husband.

Raju fans Rosie's passion for classical dance and encourages her to start dancing again. This thrills Rosie for her husband, Marco, had forbidden her to dance. Under Raju's guidance and management, Rosie is on the path to a successful dance career. She gains name and fame and soon they become rich. But Raju starts spending the earned money recklessly. In order to keep control over Rosie, and out of greed, he even forges her signature. Marco has sent some documents for Rosie's signature. After signing the document, Rosie would be able to get a jewellery box which Marco has deposited in a bank.

When Rosie comes to live with him in his house, he takes her in without caring for the sentiments of his mother. Rosie practices in their home, the environment echoes with the sound of her dancing. But if we consider from other side, we find that Raju exploits Rosie for his own advantage and narrow, selfish ends. He says: 'I had monopoly of her and nobody had anything to do with her She was my property.' And a little later, 'I did not like to see her enjoy other people's company. I liked to keep her in a citadel.' Raju takes all the credit for her success, and is of the view that she would not be able to do without him. But he is soon disillusioned. She rises to new heights of popularity and stardom without him. He is amazed at her extraordinary vitality. He realizes that neither he nor her husband matters at all to her.

With Raju's co-operation and her own untiring efforts Rosie manages to build up a dancing career for herself. Soon she rose phenomenally, reaching new heights and became a public heart throb. What Raju newly discovers about Rosie is also a tribute to the emancipated 'new woman'. He realizes 'Neither Marco nor I had any place in her life, which had its own sustaining vitality and which she herself had underestimated all along.'

Rosie is hurt when Raju gets arrested for forging her signature. She promises to pawn the last of her possessions to defend Raju in court, but tells him categorically that she won't have to do anything with him after that. Rosie proves to be true to her word. She engages the best lawyer from Madras to defend Raju and has to undertake numerous dance engagements to pay the star lawyer. When Raju is sentenced to two years' imprisonment, she closes down the establishment at Malgudi and moves over to Madras,

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where Marco lives. But she will have nothing to do with him also. Her career is on the upswing, as Raju learns from newspaper reports that he reads in jail. He wonders how she can manage without him. But Rosie is managing her career on her own admirably because she has found her *métier* at last.

Rosie's behaviour is always dignified and noble despite her nightlong bickering behind the closed bedroom doors with Marco or altercations with Raju later when she cautions him not to discuss anything in the presence of servants. She doesn't react when Raju's boorish uncle shouts at her, calls her names and orders her to get out of the house where she has come, and is staying, uninvited.

There is enough atonement for her adulterous liaison with Raju which is there primarily because he helps her realize her ambition of displaying her art in public. Rosie's delineation is in keeping with Narayan's delineation of female characters in general.

Rosie may have succumbed to circumstances but she remains free from inward taint. That is why she makes such a complete and miraculous recovery, though the novelist, quite wisely, does not restore her to her earlier dubious marital status. Rosie is a strong minded woman who is unwilling to sacrifice her happiness or ambition for the sake of keeping up appearances and staying with an appalling husband.

Thus, both Rosie and Raju are romancers. Rosie believes in 'karma', whereas Raju is a lethargic personality who doesn't want to work at all. Raju's irresponsibility, recklessness and evil deeds become the cause of their separation otherwise, they flourished and managed their profession well. Moreover, Rosie's spoiled relations with Marco brought them close together. According to C.D. Narasimaiah, 'Raju-Rosie relationship becomes credible and acceptable only because of the neglect Rosie suffers at the hands of her husband.' But still Raju and Rosie cannot be called soul mates. Rosie's soul mate is her art, which is dance. She will remain happy until she stops dancing because she gets real satisfaction from it. Thus it is only dance which sustains her even after betrayal by two males.

Theme of Morality versus Spiritual Motivation and Aspiration

Narayan is no didactic novelist; he is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct. Human relationships, relationships within the family circle, and relationships centering on sex and money are his ever recurring themes. Whatever disturbs the norms is an aberration, a disorder and sanity lies in return to, and acceptance of the normal. Life must be practical and lived despite its many shortcomings, follies and foibles.

In *The Guide*, acclaimed by many to be Narayan's finest novel, he develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins. The corruption-by-outsiders theme is this time initiated by the tourists. Marco and his glamorous wife, the dancer Rosie. Raju's love for Rosie is delineated as a consuming obsessive passion, fundamentally destructive and terrible. We find that Raju comes into conflict with traditional morality as he seeks to realize his aspirations. The result is the accepted order is disturbed, and there is chaos and disorder. He seduces Rosie and thus is guilty of immorality and corruption. When she comes to live with him, conventional morality is violated, and there is displeasure all around. The neighbours are annoyed, and his widowed mother is obliged to leave the home of her husband and go away with her brother. Raju does not attend to work, has to give up the railway stall and soon is in financial trouble. He is unable to pay his debts and has to face prosecution in the law courts. He is an

egotist, an individualist, a self-seeker who exploits Rosie sexually and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and self-centred and forges Rosie's signatures to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act, and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of conduct, and his example shows that crime does not pay. We must not act as Raju acts, we must not be over-possessive, so self-centred, and so extravagant and jealous. Thus the violation of conventional norms creates chaos and disorder in his own life and in the life of his social environment.

In the novels of R. K. Narayan, there is a rebellion in the characters who violate the social norms but this rebellion is followed by a return, a renewal and a conformity to the social set-up. Violation of traditional norms leads to disruption, misery and unhappiness. In *The Guide*, Marco snaps his conjugal tie with Rosie when he comes to know of her intimacy with Raju. It is nothing short of infidelity. He says to her:

'But you are not my wife. You are a woman who will go to bed with anyone that flatters your antics.'

The traditional world of Malgudi has its own custom of arranged marriage which is settled by parents after negotiations and matching of horoscopes. In Indian society marriage is looked upon as a sacrament and a spiritual union. It has been sanctified by society and sanctioned by tradition. Men and women living together as husband and wife outside wedlock are regarded as sinners and hence do not enjoy or receive any social acceptance or recognition. It is therefore sacrilegious to violate the sanctity of sex. Illicit relationship is considered to be a stigma on those who are engaged in this kind of relationship. In *The Guide*, Rosie, after separation from her husband, lives with Raju as his wife under the assumed name Nalini, without marrying him. Raju's mother who is an orthodox woman is dead against her son's way of life with Rosie. She says to Raju:

'Why can't she go to her husband and fall at his feet? You know, living with a husband is no joke, as these modern girls imagine.'

She doesn't want the tainted woman to stay in her house. It is a moral as well as social sin. But Raju has no regards for his mother's sentiments. So she leaves the house forever. In course of time Raju's love for Rosie is replaced by love for money which leads him to forge her signature resulting in his arrest. Their relationship is finally severed. Thus, their romantic love not only causes miseries and sufferings to them but also to their families.

Raju's self-confidence and nonchalance enable him to make him quite comfortable in jail. But nemesis overtakes him soon after. He plays the role of a Swami, exploits the credulity of the simple people of Mangala who bring to him rich offerings of food. He lives on them as a parasite, and expects food from them even when they themselves are victims of famine and drought. This is certainly inhuman and monstrous. He is a fraud who deceives himself as well as the people of Mangal. But he is soon caught in his own trap. He is compelled to undertake a fast to bring down the rains. It is during the course of his fast that Raju achieves a measure of self-awareness and identifies himself with the community at large: 'For the first time in his life, he was making an effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing which he was not personally interested. He felt a new strength to go through the ordeal.'

The Bhagvad Gita and its *Karma* philosophy regard self-realization or enlightenment as the ultimate goal in a man's life, although the methods for the attainment of this goal may vary from man to man. Soul i.e. *Atman* acquires unanimity with the

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He is a lady killer. It is his confidence, his nonchalance which enables him to win Rosie so very easily. When Marco permits him to go and persuade Rosie to come with them to Mempi Hills, he has the audacity to tell her to come out as she was, without changing her dress and added, 'who would decorate a rainbow?' Later, he makes further advances to her, continues to play bold and flattering compliments, and so is able to seduce her.

In the third stage of his career, he becomes a convict, and even this role he performs with enthusiasm, becoming an ideal prisoner. 'Raju did not drill into jail of course; he was taken there for a deliberate act of forgery. This was the one act that Raju did voluntarily and deliberately, it did not happen to him. But Raju was bewildered that such a trivial action should bring down such frightful consequences on his head. 'Once out of jail Raju finds himself drifting into the role of a sadhu. When out of jail, we find him playing the role of a Swami or Mahatma. He plays this role to perfection, for basically there is not much difference between the role of a railway guide and that of a

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spiritual guide. The same eloquence, the same ability to make grand, mystifying statements, the air of knowingness, enable him to play his new role with such success. He is a fraud and a rogue in reality, but he appears every inch a Mahatma. He sits on slab of stone as if it were a throne, and when Velan comes to him and consults him about his sister, the old habit of adorning guidance asserts itself, and when Velan prostrates before him he can speak pontifically 'I do not permit any one to do this, God alone is entitled to such a prostration. He will destroy us if we attempt to usurp his rights.' Raju felt he was attaining the stature of a saint and later he felt he was growing wings.

Not once does he deliberately try to pass himself off for a holy man, but when he finds that people want to believe in his spiritual power, he cannot disappoint them.' He wants to tell the villagers of his shady past, of his stay in the jail, but he cannot: It looked as though he would be hurting the others' deepest sentiments. It is the public reposition of faith that compels him to act and die a holy man even though he had no inclination towards either option. Raju is both an Indian enigma and a key to the mystery and myth. Thus, Narayan has always been a student.

Thus, Narayan has always been a student of human-relationships. In his early novels, he dealt with such simple relationships as the relations between students and teachers, between friends and classmates, or relationships within the family between father and son, husband and wife, etc. His powers gradually matured and in his later novels, beginning with *Mr. Sampath*, he studies characters and relationships of a more complex kind. These relationships usually revolve round sex and money. This is also the case with *The Guide*- Rosie-Raju relationship is the most important relationship studied in the novel, and it revolves upon sex and money.

The Guide is a Study of Life's Little Ironies
Like Hardy's Woes...

Like Hardy's Wessex novels, Narayan's Malgudi novels are also studies in life's little ironies. The irony of life may be defined as happening of the undesired and the unexpected; in life we expect something and get the exact opposite, and what we get is not only unexpected, it is all the undesired. Life's little ironies make Narayan's novels, tragicomedies and *The Guide* is no exception to this genre. It is also a study of life's little ironies enacted against the backdrop of Malgudi.

The operation of life's little ironies is best seen in the life and career of Raju. In his life, the unexpected and the undesired always happens, and his discomfiture is sometimes comic, and sometimes more serious. As a tourist guide, he is very popular, and Marco treats him almost as a family member but he seduces his wife Rosie and has a good time with her. He takes pains to dress himself properly so that he may be able to impress her as a well to-do young man of taste and culture. But what happens, she decides to live with her husband who leaves her alone on the station and returns to Madras. When they were enjoying togetherness, she suddenly remembers her wifely duties and responsibilities. Later on, on seeing a picture in a magazine of a woman who has left her alone at the railway station, she thinks of her own situation and husband...

At every turn, we find that Raju is a victim of the irony of life or circumstance. He forges Rosie's signature to get the box of jewellery lying with Marco, and everyday waits for the arrival of the box and makes eager inquiries. But the unexpected and the undesired happens. Instead of the box of jewellery, the warrant for his arrest arrives, and he is arrested in the midst of a show before a packed house. He had tried to conceal the facts from Rosie, but now she, as well as others, know about the generosity of Marco, as well as about his own villainy and depravity. He had always believed that

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Marco was interested only in dead and decaying objects, but now, contrary to his expectation, he finds that he is quite capable of laying a trap and outwitting him. He had always been of the view that Rosie would never be able to pull on without him, but, quite to the contrary, she does well without him and so convincingly establishes that Raju is a mere parasite who had all along been living a life of luxury on her earnings.

Raju continues to be a victim of the irony of life up to the very end. On his release from jail he takes shelter in a ruined temple, hoping that there none would notice him, but soon he becomes the object of worship of the people of Mangala. The unexpected happens, and the fraud is now called upon to play the role of a swami or Mahatma. He lives comfortably in the temple, grows a beard, light of wisdom shines from his eyes, and wisdom flows out of his lips. He talks big and looks big, the people are impressed, and he is supposed to have magical powers and the ability to cure and heal.

He tells the simple credulous villagers that rains can be brought down if someone fasts for twelve days, and stands in water for a few hours every day. He had never expected that soon he himself would have to undergo this ordeal. But soon there is drought and famine, and he is called upon to undertake the fast. Ironically enough, this suffering and ultimate death is brought about by an idiot. He had told this idiot brother of Velan to tell his brother that the swami will not eat, unless they end their quarrel. But he told them that the Swami will not eat till the rains come. While he had been expecting foodstuff for preparing *bonda*, his favourite dish, the unexpected and the undesired happens. The people come to him with no food at all, for they believe that the swami is on fast, and so does not need any food. He is thus compelled to undertake the fast. In a desperate bid to save himself he narrates the story of his past to Velan. In this way, he expected to make him realize that he is no swami, no Mahatma, but a fraud, and no useful purpose can be served by his fasting. He expected that the people will call him a villain, stone him, and turn him out. Thus, his life would be saved. But the contrary happens. The narration of his past, further confirms Velan's faith in his goodness and nobility; he promises not to disclose his history to anybody, and contrary to his expectations, poor Raju has to go on with the fast.

Thus, we can say that whole text is full of ironies.

2.7.1 Brief Overview of Other Works by R.K. Narayan

R.K. Narayan was one among the three authors who shaped Indian writing in English, especially in fiction. The other two writers were Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. The trio defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established the suppositions, the manner, the idiom, the concept of character, and the nature of the themes which were to give the Indian novel its distinctiveness. R.K. Narayan introduced realism and psychology into Indian writing. He was a close associate of Graham Greene and a person who believed in promoting regional novels like Thomas Hardy. He created an imaginary town of Malgudi and set his works using it as a background. While Hardy is known for his tragic novels, Narayan's Malgudi novels are humorous. Let us now get an idea of what his other popular works were about.

Swami and Friends

Swami and Friends was Narayan's first novel published in 1935. It describes the life of boys in a south Indian school. Narayan's personal experience works in the making of the novel. The plot revolves around the hero, Swami, and his friends. The novel is remarkable for Narayan's understanding of child psychology.

The Bachelor of Arts

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His next novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* deals with a later stage in a young man's career, when he is about to leave college and enter life. Within the next few months of his becoming a graduate, Chandran is faced with the problem of finding a job for himself. Unable to find a job, he passes the time by sleeping for long hours or walking on the banks of the river. During one of his walks, he sees Malathi, a beautiful girl of about fifteen years, who he wants to marry but due to horoscopes not matching, the proposal is ultimately dropped.

On recovering from this severe blow, part III describes his aimless wandering; in Madras and other parts of south India. He then visits several South Indian villages and after eight months of these purposeless wanderings, he gets tired of this role and returns to his parents. Part IV deals with Chandran's marriage and his settling down in life. Thus, the novel ends on an optimistic note and gives us the message of the continuity of life.

The Dark Room

The Dark Room, Narayan's third novel, was published in 1938. It is a tale of a tormented wife of a secretary, Ramani who due to his irritable behaviour is cynical and makes the atmosphere of the house always gloomy and bleak. His wife, Savitri, is a true symbol of traditional Indian womanhood. She is very beautiful and deeply devoted to her husband. Ramani, however, does not respond to her sentiments even with ordinary warmth. Though they have been married for fifteen years, his wife has received nothing from her husband except rebukes and abuses. Even his children get more of his rebukes than of his fatherly love. All goes well, until there arrives on the scene a beautiful lady, Shanta Bai who has deserted her husband and joined Engladia Insurance Company. Ramani succumbs to her beauty and coquettish ways. This upsets the peace of his domestic life still more. Seeing no way of correcting her arrogant and erring husband, Savitri revolts against him and in despair leaves the house to commit suicide.

She goes to the river and throws herself into it. The timely arrival of Mari, the blacksmith and burglar, who, while crossing the river on his way to his village sees her body floating on the river and at once rescues her, saves her life. Persuaded by Mari's wife Ponni, she goes to their village and embarks upon an independent living of her own by working in a temple. The feelings of homesickness and a tormenting anxiety for her children, however, soon make her restless. She realizes the futility of her attempt to escape from her bonds with the temporal world and returns home.

Such is this simple novel dealing with the sorry fate of Indian womanhood. It suggests no solutions to the problem, still it clearly brings out Narayan's concern for the Savitris of our country. Its plot is more coherent and well-knit than that of the earlier novels, the characterization is excellent, and there is a skilful blending of humour and pathos. Narayan has not preached any sermons, but has vividly and realistically presented a slice of life as he saw it. Despite the view of critics, one feels on reading it that it is quite a successful novel, and deserves much greater attention than has been usually awarded to it.

The English Teacher

The English Teacher, his next novel, was published in 1945, seven years after the *Dark Room*. Probably it was the shattering blow that he (Narayan) received in the death of his wife, which made him incapable of sustained artistic effort, and during this interval,

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he could compose only short stories or sketches. Much of Narayan's personal suffering has gone into the making of this novel. It tells a love story, but a love-story entirely different from the conventional love-stories. It narrates the story of the domestic life of Krishna, a lecturer in English, in the Albert Mission College, Malgudi. Though he is only thirty years old, he feels bored with life in the absence of his wife and baby daughter. They arrive after a few months, along with his mother. Krishna and Sushila, his wife, lead a happy contended life for several months. But then their house is not up to the mark, and so on an ill-fated day they go out house hunting, and as ill-luck would have it, Sushila is stung by a flea, develops typhoid and dies after a few days.

It is a great shock to Krishna. He is much upset, and loses all interest in life and in his work. The only comfort to him is his little daughter, Leela, who now takes up much of his time and attention. He frequently wanders about a lotus-pond, where he meets a sanyasi who can communicate with the spirits of the dead. Through him, Krishna is able to communicate with the spirit of his dead wife, is thrilled, and regains his interest in life. This is the weakest part of the novel, it contains long, philosophical discussions on Para-psychology and the mysteries of the spirit-world. Krishna now meets the head-master of a new children's school. He is very much impressed by his educational theories and gives up his job in the college to serve the new institution. That very night he can commune with the wife directly, for the first time, and an ineffable bliss descends upon his soul.

Mr. Sampath

Mr. Sampath was first published in 1949 in London, and in 1956 in India. It has been filmed both in Tamil and Hindi, and despite some weaknesses, ranks very high in the world of Indo-Anglican fiction. The novel is called Mr. Sampath but in the first 64 pages out of a total of 219, his name is not mentioned, though the man exists and is going in and out of the pages. A rather clumsy flashback lets us know the dramatic manner in which Srinivas, who seems till now to be the hero of the story, got acquainted with his future printer. Coming from Talapur to Malgudi, he had wasted nearly a week looking for someone who would print his journal, the *Banner*. He had dropped into the Bombay Anand Bhavan for a cup of coffee and was struck by the personality of a man with a scarf and a cap genially ordering everybody around and getting from the proprietor's V.I.P. treatment. 'Who is that man?' asks Srinivas, and is told, 'He is our proprietor's friend. He prints all our bill-books and invoices'.

It is in this way that Srinivasa, the hero of the novel, meets Mr. Sampath, who starts printing his weekly, the *Banner*. The editing and publishing of the *Banner* absorbs all his attention, and he has no time left to think of his wife and his little son. When they suddenly arrive at Malgudi from the village, his surprise knows no bounds. Srinivasa neglected his domestic duties with the result that frequent are the domestic quarrels, which, however, are soon patched up, and they continue to live together, their routine humdrum life. The publication has soon to be suspended because of a strike in the press, largely the result of Srinivas' own mismanagement. The resourceful Mr. Sampath now decides to turn film producer, sets up the Sunrise Picture Studio with Srinivasa as the script-writer, his friend Somer as the financier, and a young man, Ravi, as the accountant of the company. *The Burning of Kama* is the first film to be produced with Mr. Sampath acting the role of Shiva, and a beautiful actress, Shanthi, that of Parvathi. Ravi idolizes her and when he discovers that she is acting the role of Parvathi, he runs on the stage, embraces her and takes her off. 'I here is an uproar in the studio, much equipment is damaged, and so the film producing venture also comes to an end.'

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Ravi turns mad and has to be sent to the police lock-up. Srinivasa is disgusted, severs all connections with the film-world, and revives the publication of the *Banner*. Mr. Sampath carries on for some time with Shanthi who then leaves him for good. Mr. Sampath himself has to leave Malgudi to escape the notice of his creditors, Somu and others. The novel ends as Mr. Sampath bids farewell to Srinivasa. In short, the novel is the story of Mr. Sampath, a clever and enterprising rogue, who can face even the most difficult situations with composure. He is one of the most memorable characters in the annals of Indo-Anglican fiction.

The Financial Expert

Narayan's sixth novel, *The Financial Expert*, (1952), is his masterpiece. *The Financial Expert* tells the story of the rise and fall of Margayya, the financial expert. Margayya begins his career as a petty moneylender doing his business under a banyan tree, in front of the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi. He helps the shareholders of the bank to borrow money at a small interest and lends it to the needy at a higher interest. In the process he makes some money for himself. The secretary of the bank and Arul Doss, the peon, seize from his box the loan application forms he has managed to get from the bank through its share-holders; treat him with contempt; and threaten to take action against him. This sets him on the path of improving his position.

When Balu, his spoilt child, throws his account book, containing all the entries of his transactions with his clients, into the gutter, it becomes impossible for Margayya to resume his old practice. He shows his horoscope to an astrologer and is assured that a good time is coming for him, if only he did puja to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. The puja is done for forty days, with ash from a red lotus and ghee made out of milk from a grey cow. Margayya goes through the puja and at the end of it is full of hopes of a prosperous career. Old Dr. Pal, who sells him the MS of a book on Bed Lye, for whatever ready cash Margayya's purse contains, assures him that the book renamed Domestic Harmony, will sell in tens of thousands if only he can find a publisher. Madan Lal, 'a man from the North', reads the MS and agrees to print and publish it on a 50-50 partnership basis. The book is at once popular and Margayya's fortune is made. Margayya is again ruined through his son, Balu. He had put him to school in great style, getting the blessings of his brother and sister-in-law next door. His wealth had enabled him to become the Secretary of the School Managing Committee, with all that this meant in terms of power vis-a-vis the Headmaster and the school staff. He had engaged a private tutor for his son and instructed him to thrash the boy whenever necessary. But Balu is not good in his studies. He cannot pass his S.S.L.C. He attempts to persuade him to take the examination a second time. The result is that Balu seizes the school leaving certificate which closed its dark waters over Margayya's red account book and carries away the School Certificate book. Then he runs away from home. A few days later, there is a letter from Madan Lal telling Margayya that his son is dead. The brother's family immediately comes to his help, though Margayya feels he can do without their help and wonders whether this will change the existing relationship between them. Thus, the theme of the novel is just money, but Margayya is no monster of greed and wickedness.

Waiting for Mahatma

Waiting for Mahatma published in London in 1955 is not a political novel, though Mahatma figures in it frequently. It narrates the love story of Sriram and Bharati against

the political background of India during the years which immediately preceded the independence of country in 1947.

Sriram, a young man of twenty, lost his parents at an early age. He is looked after by his grandmother who deposited over thirty-eight thousand rupees for her pampered and worthless grandson out of the pension his father. Bharati is the daughter of a patriot who died at the hands of a policeman. She was adopted by the local Sevak Sangh and was brought and educated on Gandhian principles. She is a true follower and devotee of Gandhi. Sriram meets Bharati when one day she approaches him for contribution to the fund which is being collected for the reception of Mahatma Gandhi in Malgudi. Driven by his love for her, he joins Gandhiji's group of followers of which she is a member. He accompanies Mahatmaji in his tour of poverty-stricken villages and acquires first-hand knowledge of the miserable condition of the poor peasants who are suffering from the scarcity and hardships caused by the Second World War and are also the victims of the ruthlessness of the profiteers and hoarders. When the historic movement of 1942 breaks out and Mahatmaji is arrested, he retires to a deserted temple on the slope of Mempi Hill to escape the police. From here, he carries on the propaganda of the 'Quit India' movement. He meets Jagdish, a terrorist and zealous national worker. He joins his new friend in his terrorist activities and helps him first in noting down the messages and speeches of Subhas Chander Bose from Tokyo and Berlin and circulating cyclostyled copies of them among the Indian soldiers and afterwards in overturning and derailing trains, cutting telegraph wires, setting fire to the records in law courts, exploding crude bombs, and indulging in such other acts of violence. The result is he is arrested and sent to jail.

On being released from jail after independence, he goes to meet Bharati in Delhi where she is staying with Mahatma Gandhi in Birla Bhavan. He begs her to marry him and when she gives her consent, goes to Mahatmaji for his approval. Mahatmaji approves and on the occasion of their marriage, but on a mysterious premonition expresses his unwillingness to do so. After a brief talk with Mahatmaji, Sriram and Bharati accompany him to the prayer ground in Birla Bhavan and witness the ghastly scene of his murder by a misguided youth. The novel is remarkable for its characterization and its study of life's little ironies.

The Man Eater of Malgudi

The Man Eater of Malgudi came out in 1961, and is considered by competent critics to be his finest work. It is an allegory or fable showing that evil is self-destructive. The title is ironic for the man-eater in the novel is no tiger, but a mighty man, Vasu, who not only kills a large number of wild animals in Mempi forests, but can also kill a man with a single blow of his hammer fist. The story is narrated in the first person by its tragic-comic hero, Nataraj, a printer of Malgudi. In his printing work he is assisted by Mr. Sastri who is a compositor, proof-reader and a machine-man all combined in one. Among his constant companions are a poet who is engaged in writing the life of god Krishna, and Mr. Sen, the journalist, who is always criticizing Nehru. The smooth and congenial life of this small group is disturbed when, H. Vasu, M.A., taxidermist, comes to stay with them as a tenant in a room in the upper storey of the printing press. This tall man of about six feet bull neck, hammer fist and rough and aggressive behaviour arouses fear in the hearts of Nataraj and his friends. Nataraj, tolerates him in his room upstairs till he makes himself unbearable by robbing Mempi forest of its wild life and collecting

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dead animals in his room for stuffing them. When even Nataraj's neighbours complain to him about the insanitary conditions he requests Vasu to find a new house for himself. The taxidermist treats this as an insult and sues him for harassing him and trying to evict him by unlawful means. The timely help from one of his clients, an old lawyer, his ability to prolong a case beyond the wildest dream of a litigant, saves Nataraj from the clutches of the law.

Soon after Vasu starts bringing Rangi, a notorious dancing woman and some other women like her, to his room, to the great annoyance of others in the house. But Vasu does not care for their feelings. The crisis, however, comes to a head when the pitiless taxidermist, threatens to kill Kumar, a temple elephant who, is to be taken in a festival procession organized to celebrate the poet's completion of a portion of his religious epic. Nataraj is very fond of the animal. He naturally gets very upset the moment he learns from Rangi, that Vasu intends to shoot it on the night of the proposed celebrations. Nataraj immediately acquaints his friend, the poet, the lawyer, and other important people of the town with taxidermist's wicked intentions. The matter is reported to the police authorities but they express their inability to take any action against him until the crime has been actually committed.

The very thought of Kumar's murder, however, drives Nataraj crazy. Even while compelled to stay in his house owing to the agitated condition of his mind, he continues thinking of Kumar. As the procession passes in front of his printing press, his heart begins to beat with fear. He waits every moment to hear the noise of gun shots and cries of panic-stricken people. He is surprised when the procession passes away without any untoward incident. Relieved of a great worry, Nataraj goes to his office as usual in the morning and to his great shock and dismay, he learns that Vasu is dead. The police authorities of the town soon start investigations. Murder is suspected and the police interrogate Nataraj, his friends, and Rangi, the temple dancer. From the medical report, it is gathered that Vasu has died of a concussion received on his right temple from a blunt instrument. When the police fail to find any clue of the culprit, the matter is dropped. Rangi, later, tells them that while striking a mosquito settled on his forehead, Vasu slapped his temple and died instantaneously. He thus died of a blow from his own hammer-fist. The novel has a well-knit coherent plot, and a fine gallery of vivid, life-like characters. The character of Vasu, the central figure, is a masterpiece. The narration is enlivened by Narayan's comic vision which frequently fuses and mingles with pathos.

The Sweet-Vendor

The Sweet-Vendor, the latest of Narayan's novels came out in 1967. It is the story of Jagan, a sweet vendor. He is religious-minded and has been considerably influenced by the Gita. He is also a staunch follower of Gandhi and tries to live up to the Gandhian way of life. He wears khadi and spins a charkha. However, he is very careful about money and keeps two account books to avoid paying income tax. He is devoted to money, and he is also devoted to his twenty year old son, Mali. Indeed, it is Mali who is the cause of his undoing. He is a spoiled young man, who does not care much for his doting father. One fine morning he quietly announces his decision to give up his studies so that he may write a novel for a novel-competition and win a prize of twenty five thousand rupees. However, the father soon discovers that no novel is being written, his darling son is merely wasting his time. Further, he comes to know from a cousin that he intends to go to America to learn short-story writing there, and that he has already got a passport and booked his seat. To his great shock, he discovers that this has been done by stealing ten thousand rupees which he had so painstakingly saved.

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Jagan makes the best of a bad bargain, and proudly tells the people that his son is in America. He fondly shows them his letters. But he receives another shock of his life, when in one of his letters his son tells him that he has started taking beef, and that they, in India, should follow his example. He receives a further shock when Mali returns home, not alone, but with his American wife, Grace. Later, Jagan learns to his great grief that they are not actually married, but have been leading an immoral, sinful life. Mali now wants to set up a factory for manufacturing story-writing machines. This is to be done with American collaboration, and as his share he needs two and a half lakh rupees. He presses his father to give him the money, for he is sure he has earned that much money by selling sweets at exorbitant rates, and avoiding the payment of income-tax. The idea that stories can be manufactured by electronic devices is a fine piece of satire on the modern craze for machines.

Jagan is now a frustrated man. First, he brings down the price of sweets and thus offends other sweet-vendors of Malgudi. Then he decides to hand over his business to his son, and himself to lead a retired life in an ashram across the river.

In addition to being a front ranked Indian English Novelist, Narayan was a prolific short-story writer. At some stage in his life after the death of his wife Rajam, he wrote nothing but short stories. He has half-a-dozen collections of short stories to his credit—*Malgudi Days*, *Dadu and Other Stories*, *An Astrologer's Day*, *Lawely Road*, *A Horse and Two Goats* and *Gods, Demons and Others*.

Malgudi Days is a collection of short stories involving incidents and experiences in the life of the people of this fictional city named Malgudi that remains central to all of Narayan's works. These stories, very delightfully convey experiences that form an intrinsic part of Indian life.

My Days: A memoir, is an autobiography of R.K. Narayan. Unlike his other texts which normally utilize a fictional setting with fictional characters, the book involves true characters that Narayan met in his lifetime, his perspective on these people and how it influenced his writing styles. It is Narayan's life story depicting people he met and experiences of his childhood. Many experiences we have may seem unimportant as we go along life but in retrospect, when we view these at a later stage in life, we can appreciate how these actually influenced us and made us the person we are today.

Another important work of R.K. Narayan was the translation into English of the Indian epic Ramayana, in 1972. The minute details and subtleties of this epic are narrated in Narayan's simple style. He has also given contemporariness to his translation in order to draw on its similarities and dissimilarities with modern Indian society.

2.8 SUMMARY

- Among the Indian writers in English, R.K. Narayan has a special place in Indian history.
- Narayan studied at his father's school and disappointed his family's emerging middle-class aspirations as he failed his first attempt to qualify for the graduate course in Arts.
- Narayan is unusual among Indian authors writing in English in that he has stayed contentedly in his home country venturing abroad only rarely.
- Narayan is the great artist who has achieved greatness by recognizing the limitations of his range, and keeping within them.

Check Your Progress

12. What is the major stylistic feature of *The Guide*?
13. When was *The Dark Room* published?

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- Narayan is a penetrating analyst of human passions and human motives—the springs of human action—and this makes him a great critic of human conduct.
- Borderline figures like Raju in *The Guide*, for example, make the reader aware of this down-to-earth aspect of life that pervades his work.
- The novel is an essentially Western art form, but Narayan has successfully used it to express Indian sensibilities.
- Love, sex and marriage play a significant role in the life of any individual and so they are present in *The Guide* also.
- Narayan has depicted the problem of corruption which is so much a part of India. Even a school teacher is shown to be corrupt.
- Narayan's novels are studies in human relationships, particularly family relationships. Of relationships within the family, the father-son relationship is most frequently studied.
- In *The Guide*, Narayan develops a theme touched in *The Bachelor of Arts*, that of a bogus sanyasi. Raju, a restless, attractive youngster, acts as a guide to the tourists who come to visit the Malgudi ruins.
- Rosie is a complex character and Narayan uses her to talk about women liberation.
- In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles, till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity.
- In *The Guide*, Raju, Rosie and Marco—all the three are remarkable characters. A host of other minor characters contribute to the tapestry of middle class life in Malgudi—Velan, Raju's parents, Gaffur, Joseph and others.

2.9 KEY TERMS

- **Mythology:** Mythology refers variously to the collected myths of a group of people or to the study of such myths. Myth is a feature of every culture.
- **Metaphor:** Metaphor is a word or phrase used to describe somebody/something else, in a way that is different from its normal use, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful.
- **Moksha:** Moksha is a term in Hinduism and Hindu philosophy which refers to various forms of emancipation, liberation, and release.
- **Symbolism:** Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities, by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense.

2.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. R.K. Narayan's first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*.
2. *Malgudi Days*, his first collection of short stories, was published in November 1942.
3. Some of the prominent novels of R.K. Narayan are *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher*

(1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952) and *The Printer of Malgudi* (1957).

4. The most characteristic feature of Narayan's literary world is that it comprises small-time cheats, street vendors, small businessmen and drifters, who together form a gallery of Indian characters. These are characters who are far from the stereotypes of extreme poverty or spiritual exoticism attached to the subcontinent.
5. Some of the social aspects of Indian society that can be seen in *The Guide* are as follows:
 - Indianness
 - Indian Economy
 - Superstition
 - Simplicity of Rural Population
 - Illiteracy
 - Love, Sex and Marriage
 - Corruption
6. The significant themes of *The Guide* are as follows:
 - The place of woman in a traditional society
 - The moral limitations of a materialistic way of life
 - The consequences of flouting accepted codes
 - The psychological and ethical implications of some Hindu concepts as ascetic purification, *Yoga*, renunciation, non-attachment, *Maya* and the cyclic progressions of life and death
 - The great Indian theory of *Karma* and the various paths of achieving *Moksha* or self-realization
7. Narayan has achieved the presentation of the social norms and class distinctions in *The Guide* mainly through the symbolism of Rosie's name. The non-traditional name is the marker of Rosie's social hybridity, through which the novelist gives a realistic and truthful representation of the social norms and prejudices in India.
8. In *The Guide*, Raju is the central figure—a rogue and fraud who plays different roles, till, finally, he comes to be regarded as a Mahatma, and falls a martyr to his own ingenuity. Raju's career from a railway guide to a Mahatma brings out the truth of the statement that, 'Raju never did anything; things always happened to him. His entire career illustrates the drill of a passive character from one role to another'.
9. Marco is the minor character in *The Guide*.
10. The tone of *The Guide* is quiet and subdued.
11. The two narrative techniques that are used in *The Guide* are comic vision and imagery and symbolism.
12. The novel incorporates symbolism as one of its major stylistic features: Raju, Rosie, Marco and various other characters are symbolically presented to give a vivid and realistic description of Indian society and its classes.
13. *The Dark Room*, Narayan's third novel, was published in 1938.

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2.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did R.K. Narayan start his writing career?
2. What are the different economic groups mentioned in the story and who are they represented by?
3. Trace the events in Raju's life which take him from a path of selfishness to one of selflessness.
4. How does Narayan use Rosie to raise the subject of women's emancipation?
5. Who according to you, is the central figure in the novel? Give reasons in support of your answer.
6. Do you think Rosie is justified in her relationship with Raju?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss R.K. Narayan's childhood and education.
2. Elaborate on R.K. Narayan's vision of life.
3. Explain how the Guide is a typical picture of Indian Society?
4. Violation of set norms and traditional values leads to destruction. Discuss it with reference to The Guide.
5. Discuss Narayan's concept of Moksha and theory of Karma.
6. Is Marco an ideal husband? Comment.

2.12 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 NOVEL - II: AUSTEN AND DESAI

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Jane Austen: About the Author
 - 3.2.1 *Pride and Prejudice*: An Overview
 - 3.2.2 Important Characters
 - 3.2.3 First Impressions to *Pride and Prejudice*
 - 3.2.4 *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel
- 3.3 Anita Desai: About the Author
 - 3.3.1 *Fire on the Mountain*: Critical Appreciation
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Key Terms
- 3.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.7 Questions and Exercises
- 3.8 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit studies the work of two prominent authors—Jane Austen and Anita Desai; particularly their novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Fire on the Mountain*, respectively.

Jane Austen was one of the greatest woman novelists of the nineteenth century. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living at Stevenson, a little village among the Chalk hills of South England. Her full length novels are *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*. This unit deals with Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in particular.

Pride and Prejudice is a novel of manners by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The story follows the main character, Elizabeth Bennet, as she deals with issues of manners, upbringing, morality, education, and marriage in the society of the landed gentry of the British Regency. Elizabeth is the second of five daughters of a country gentleman living near the fictional town of Meryton in Hertfordshire, near London.

Anita Desai is an Indian novelist born on 24 June 1937. She has received Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*.

Fire on the Mountain is a superbly constructed novel, known for its rich symbolic imagery and psychological insights. A winner of two prestigious awards, it tells the story of two older women and a young girl.

3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse Jane Austen as a novelist
- Discuss her art of characterization

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- Analyse the features of domestic novels
- Describe the major themes and events of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Fire on the Mountain*
- Critically appreciate *Fire on the Mountain*

3.2 JANE AUSTEN: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.' Her experience was meagre and insignificant, but from it sprang an art finished in every detail, filled with life, and meaning. She possessed the magic touch and a talent for miniature painting. No doubt her range was limited, but her touch was firm and true. She used a 'little bit two inches wide of ivory' and she worked on it 'with no fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour.'

Jane Austen was a very careful artist. She wrote her novels with care, constantly revising them. There was nothing in her novels that did not have a clearly defined reason, and did not contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings of the moral structure. She knew precisely what she wanted to do, and she did it in the way that suited best.

Her Limited Range

The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience. She never went outside her experience, with the result that all her scenes belonged to South England where she had spent a considerable period of her life. Austen exploited with unrivalled expertness the potentialities of a seemingly narrow mode of existence. From the outset she limited her view of the world that she knew and the influences that she saw at work.

Jane Austen defined her own boundaries and never stepped beyond them. These limitations were self-imposed and she always remained within the range of her imaginative inspiration and personal experience. The characters of the novel are neither of very high nor of very low estate, and they have no great adventures. A picnic, a dance, amateur events are told from a woman's point of view and deals only with such persons and events that naturally come within the range of her novels. Lord David Cecil, a British biographer and historian remarks, 'Jane Austen obeys the rule of all imagination composition; that she stays within the range of her imaginative inspiration. A work of art is born of the union of the artist's experience and imagination. It is his first obligation, therefore, to choose themes within the range of this experience. Now Jane Austen's imaginative range was in some respect a very limited one. It was, in the first place, condoned to human beings in their personal relations. Man in relation to god, to politics, to abstract ideas, passed her by. It was only when she saw him with his family and his neighbours that her creative impulse began to stir to activity.'

Jane Austen was finely alive to her limitations 'and out of these unpromising materials, Jane Austen composed novels that came near to artistic perfection. No other writer of fiction has ever achieved such great results by such insignificant means; none other has, upon material so severely limited, expanded such beauty, imaginary and precision of workmanship.'

Lack of Passion

Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life. But with her very mental makeup she was incapable of writing a tragedy or romance. Jane Austen was absolutely incapable of writing adventurous tales dealing with romantic reveries and death scenes.

Austen chose a limited background for her novels. Her novels are recognized as 'domestic' or 'the tea-table' novels and the reader seeking anything like high romance in her works would be disappointed. There is hardly any feeling for external nature in her stories and there is little passion in her pictures of life. Whatever language of emotion is used, is forced and conventional. The kind of life that she has depicted is the one which she had put in the mouth of Mr Bennet in '*Pride and Prejudice*'. 'For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbours and to laugh at them in our turn?'

Her Realism

Jane Austen was a supreme realist. Her stories are all drawn from the life that she knew. Emma tells us of a delightful girl who is as she was in the years when Napoleon was emperor. The ordinary commonplace incidents and the day-to-day experience formed the warp and woof of her novels. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his diary that the talent of the warp and woof of her novels. 'That young Jane Austen as a realist was the 'most wonderful' he had ever met with. 'That young lady had a talent for describing involvements, feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I have ever met with.'

Jane Austen described the English country scene with skill and fidelity. She gives a vivid and glowing picture of the social manners and customs of the eighteenth century. She created numerous realistic characters. Jane Austen is nearer to life than any of the earlier novelists. Speaking of Jane Austen's age, the critic G.E. Milton wrote: 'Jane Austen was the first to draw exactly what she saw around her in a humdrum country life, and to discard all incidents, all adventures, all grotesque types, for perfect simplicity.'

Plot Construction

Austen's great skill lies in plot-construction. Her skilfully constructed plots are really the highest objects of artistic perfection. Her novels have an exactness of structure and symmetry of form. All the incidents that are introduced have their particular meanings.

Jane Austen's plots are not simple but compound. They do not compromise barely the story of the hero and the heroine. In *Pride and Prejudice* for instance, there are several pairs of lovers and their stories form the component parts of the plot. In the novels of Jane Austen the parts are so skilfully fused together as to form one compact whole.

In the plots of Jane Austen action is more or less eliminated. Action in her novels consists in little visits, morning calls, weddings, shopping expeditions, or the quizzing of new arrivals. These small actions and incidents go to make up the plots of Jane Austen's novels. Her novels are not novels of action, but of conversation. The place of action is taken up by conversation and scene after scene is built up by the power of conversations. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, dialogues form the bulk of the novel.

Referring to the great skill of Jane Austen's plot-construction, W.L. Cross remarks in *The Development of the English Novel*: 'No novelist since Fielding has been master

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of structure. Fielding constructed the novel after the analogy of the ancient drama. *Pride and Prejudice* has not only the humour of Shakespearean comedy, but also its technique.'

Characterization

Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals. She portrays human characters with great precision and exactness. Her male characters are almost perfect. She creates living characters both male and female, and draws them in their private aspects.

Jane Austen has an unerring eye for the surface of personality and records accurately the manners, charms and tricks of speech of her characters. Nothing escapes her notice. In this respect she can be compared with her great successor Dickens, who is unique in drawing surface peculiarities. Dickens does not go below the surface while Jane Austen does. She penetrates to the psychological organism underlying speech and manner, and presents the external relation to the internal. In *Pride and Prejudice* the scene wherein Darcy proposes to Elizabeth at Hunsford Parsonage is a fine psychological study. Darcy, if outwardly composed and taciturn, is driven within by a conflict between his love for Elizabeth and hatred for her stupid relations which prevent him from marrying her.

Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of Jane Austen, 'She has a great sympathy for all her characters and their follies and foibles do not annoy her. Jane Austen is never angry with her characters. In *Pride and Prejudice* Mr Collins and Lady de Bourgh are figures of fun, monstrous puppets of silliness and snobbery, to be elaborated and laughed at.'

As a Satirist and Moralist

Jane Austen is a satirist as well as moralist. Satire is an element in which Jane Austen lives but there is no trace of the savage indignation in her writings. Her attitude as a satirist is best expressed in the words of Elizabeth when she says: 'I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can.' It is evident that her satire was sympathetic. Walter Allen, literary critic and novelist rightly points out, 'Jane Austen was a moralist—an eighteenth-century moralist. In some respects, she was the last and finest flower of that century at its quintessential.'

Dramatic Nature of Her Art

Jane Austen developed the dramatic method both in the presentation of her plots and characters. Instead of describing and analyzing the characters, she makes them reveal themselves in their action and dialogues. The plot is also carried forward through a succession of short scenes in dialogues. Though keeping the right to comment, she relies more on dialogue and that is her main forte. The plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is dramatic. Baker points out that both the theme and the plot-structure of *Pride and Prejudice* are remarkably dramatic. He divides the novel into five acts of high comedy.

Her Humour

Jane Austen's attitude towards life, presented in her novels, is that of a humourist, 'I dearly love a laugh', says Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, and this statement equally applies to the novelist. She laughs at follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies.

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Folly is the chief source of laughter in the novels of Jane Austen and she creates comic characters who provoke nothing but laughter. Her comic characters are Mrs Bennet, Sir Walter Eliot, Mrs Norris, Mr Collins and Mr Woodhouse. She laughs at each one of them because of their foolishness and foolish actions. Irony is a conspicuous aspect of Jane Austen's humour. There is enough of verbal irony in her novels.

Style

Jane Austen rendered a great service to the English novel by developing a flexible, smooth-flowing prose style. She is sometimes a shade artificial. But at her best her prose moves nimbly and easily and enables her narrative to proceed onward without any obstruction. 'It does not rise to very great heights, being almost monotonous in its pedestrian obstruction. It does not rise to very great heights, being almost monotonous in its pedestrian obstruction. It achieves its greatest triumphs in dialogue. It is not a prose of enthusiasm or exaltation. But it is wonderfully suited to dry satiric unfolding of the hopes and disappointments of the human heart.'

W.L. Cross aptly remarks, 'The style of Jane Austen cannot be separated from herself or her method. It is the natural easy flowing garment of her mind, delighting herself or her method. It is the natural easy flowing garment of her mind, delighting herself or her method. It is so peculiarly her own that one cannot trace in it inconsistencies and infinite detail. It is so peculiarly her own that one cannot trace in it with any degree of certainty of the course of her reading.'

Jane Austen is undoubtedly the greatest woman novelist as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist. Faithful observation, personal detachment, and fine sense of ironic comedy are among Jane Austen's chief characteristics as a writer. Austen's novels mark a big step forward in the development of English novel. Her range is limited but her touch is firm and true. Her stories may not be exciting and thrilling, but the picture of life that she presents has all the charm of vivid narration. Dialogues form a prominent feature of the narrative of Jane Austen. Her stories are dramatic in nature. Her characters are taken mostly from the aristocracy and upper middle class of the English village and its vicinity. She created numerous realistic characters. She presents remarkable psychological studies of men and women, avoiding passion and prejudice. Her novels have a distinct moral purpose. She is the greatest English novelist because of her craftsmanship, purity and simplicity of her style and themes.

3.2.1 *Pride and Prejudice*: An Overview

Mr and Mrs Bennet live in the village of Longbourn which is situated in the County of Hertfordshire. They have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia. The youngest is fifteen years old. Mrs Bennet's chief desire in life is to see all her daughters suitably married and happily settled. In fact, the marriages of her daughters have become an obsession with her.

Mrs Bennet's Expectation

A rich young man by the name of Mr Charles Bingley takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent. This country house is situated at a distance of about three miles from the village of Longbourn. Mr Bingley begins to live in this house with his sister, Caroline Bingley, as his housekeeper. He has a friend by the name of Mr Darcy who joins him at Netherfield Park for a short stay, but continues to stay there for a couple of months. Mrs Hurst, a married sister of Mr Bingley, also comes with her husband to stay at Netherfield Park. Mrs Bennet feels very glad to know that the new occupant of Netherfield Park is a rich bachelor. She tells her husband that there is every

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possibility that Mr Bingley would choose one of their daughters as his would-be wife. Mr Bennet does not share his wife's enthusiasm though he too would like Mr Bingley to choose one of his daughters as his future wife. As Mrs Bennet is a woman of a mean intelligence, and as her talk is very often foolish, Mr Bennet had got into the habit of making sarcastic remarks to her and about her. In other words, he often pokes fun at her.

Mr Darcy, a Very Proud Man; Elizabeth's Prejudice against Him

An assembly is held periodically in the town of Meryton which is situated at a distance of about one mile from Longbourn. This assembly is a kind of social gathering which is attended by all the respectable families of the town and the neighbouring villages. At the first assembly, which is attended by Mr Bingley and the other inmates of Netherfield Park, Mr Bingley feels greatly attracted to Jane Bennet who is the prettiest of the Bennet sisters. He asks Jane for a dance, and she gladly accepts his request. In fact, he dances with her a second time also. Mr Bingley suggests to his friend Mr Darcy that the latter should not stand idle but should dance. He suggests that Mr Darcy should dance with Elizabeth Bennet who is sitting nearby. Mr Darcy, however, replies that this girl is not attractive enough to tempt him to dance with her. Elizabeth overhears this remark and conceives a dislike for the man who has made such a disparaging remark about her in her hearing. In fact, from this time onwards, she becomes prejudiced against him. Darcy, on his part, is a very proud man. Like Mr Bingley, Darcy is also a very rich and handsome bachelor. Any girl in this neighbourhood would be glad to marry him, but this pride is a most disagreeable trait of his character. Mrs Bennet describes him to her husband as a haughty and horrid man. In fact, everybody at the assembly finds him to be too proud.

Mr Bingley, Expected to Propose Marriage to Jane

Mr Bingley's preference for Jane Bennet is noticed by everybody at the assembly. In fact, both Mr Bingley and Jane have felt mutually attracted to each other. Mr Bingley's two sisters, Miss Bingley and Mrs Hurst, also develop a liking for Jane. In fact Miss Bingley invites Jane to dinner at Netherfield Park; and the Bennet family considers this invitation to be a great honour and also a golden opportunity for Jane. Jane goes to Netherfield Park but catches cold on the way because it has been raining. The consequence of her indisposition is that she has to stay on at Netherfield Park for about a week during which Elizabeth also joins her in order to attend upon her. The intimacy between Jane and Mr Bingley's sisters now increases; and both Jane and Elizabeth begin to think that Mr Bingley would surely propose marriage to Jane soon. However, Miss Bingley does not feel any liking for Elizabeth. In fact, Miss Bingley begins to feel jealous of Elizabeth.

A Change in Mr Darcy's Attitude to Elizabeth

In the meantime, Mr Darcy's attitude towards Elizabeth changes. On a closer acquaintance with her, he finds that there is, after all, a good deal of charm about this girl. She has a very intelligent face; and she has dark eyes which add the charm of her countenance. She also has a pleasing figure and a lively temperament. Mr Darcy begins actually to like this girl of whom he had originally disapproved even for the purpose of dancing. Miss Bingley begins to dislike Elizabeth all the more because she finds Mr Darcy feeling inclined towards her (Elizabeth). Miss Bingley wants Mr Darcy for herself. In other words, she hopes that Mr Darcy might marry her; and therefore Miss Bingley

would not like any other girl to catch Mr Darcy's fancy and thus to come in her way. It is during Elizabeth's enforced stay with her sister Jane at Netherfield Park that Mr Darcy gets the opportunity to interact with Elizabeth with Mr Bingley and Miss Bingley participating in those conversations.

Miss Charlotte Lucas, the Daughter of Sir William Lucas

Within a walking distance of Longbourn, there lives a family which is on visiting terms with the Bonnet family. The head of that family is Sir William Lucas, and he lives in a house, which he has named 'Lucas Lodge' with his wife and several children, the eldest of whom is Charlotte Lucas, aged twenty-seven years. Charlotte is a great friend of Elizabeth; and they always like to talk to each other frankly.

Charlotte expresses to Elizabeth her view that Mr Bingley has felt greatly attracted by Jane and might marry her if Jane encourages him and reciprocates his interest in her. Elizabeth agrees with this view.

Elizabeth's Continuing Prejudice and Darcy's Continuing Pride

Elizabeth finds herself no closer to Mr Darcy. If anything, the rift between them has become wider. Mr Darcy would certainly like to marry Elizabeth but he finds that she belongs to much lower status than he does, and he, therefore, finds it most improper on his part to marry a girl of that status. Elizabeth continuing to harbour her original prejudice against Mr Darcy does not show any special attention to him. In fact, in the course of a conversation, Elizabeth says to him that he has a strong tendency to hate everybody, while he says in reply that she has a strong tendency deliberately to misunderstand everybody.

Mr Collins's Proposal of Marriage, Rejected by Elizabeth

Mr Collins now appears on the scene at Longbourn. He is a cousin of Mr Bennet; and he is the man to whom Mr Bennet's whole property is entailed. On Mr Bennet's death, Mr Collins would inherit Mr Bennet's property because Mr Bennet has no male issue. On Mr Bennet's death, therefore, Mrs Bennet and her daughters would find themselves impoverished. Mr Collins comes on a visit to the Bennet family, his intention being to choose one of the Bennet sisters and propose marriage to her. As Jane is expected by everybody to marry Mr Bingley, Mr Collins makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, however, has found Mr Collins to be an oddity, that is, a queer kind of man. Mr Collins speaks a good deal about his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh who has been kind enough to him to confer living upon him and appoint him the rector at Hunsford. The manner in which he talks about Lady Catherine shows him to be an accomplished flatterer. At the same time, he has too high an opinion of himself. Elizabeth, therefore, rejects Mr Collins.

Elizabeth's Prejudice Deepened by Mr Wickham's Account

Another character now enters the story. He is Mr George Wickham, an officer in the militia regiment which is stationed near the town of Merytown. Mr Wickham and Mr Darcy had known each other since their boyhood because Mr Wickham's father was the steward to Mr Darcy's father. Mr Wickham has certain grievances against Mr Darcy, though these grievances are baseless and show only Mr Wickham's ill-will towards Mr Darcy. In the course of a social gathering, Mr Wickham gets acquainted with Elizabeth and tells her his grievances against Mr Darcy, emphasizing the fact that Mr Darcy is a

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very handsome man and whose talk is very interesting. In fact, she fancies herself as being in love with Mr Wickham. If Mr Wickham were to propose marriage to her, she would probably have accepted the proposal. In any case, she now feels further prejudiced against Mr Darcy because of Mr Wickham's tale of injustices and wrongs which, according to his account, he has suffered at Mr Darcy's hands. At the ball which Mr Bingley has arranged at Netherfield Park, Elizabeth is told both by Mr Bingley and Miss Bingley that Mr Wickham is an undesirable man, and that he seems to have told many lies to her about Mr Darcy; but Elizabeth is not convinced by what she is told by them. She cannot believe that Mr Wickham could have told any lies. In this, of course, she is badly deceived because later she discovers the reality of this man.

Mr Collins, Married to Miss Charlotte Lucas

Mr Collins visits Longbourn again. Having come into contact with Miss Charlotte Lucas, he decides to propose marriage to her. He is very anxious to get married because Lady Catherine has been pressing him to get married, and because he thinks that a clergyman should set an example of his marriage to his parishioners. So he proposes marriage to Miss Charlotte Lucas who is only too pleased by this proposal because, having already attained the age of twenty-seven, she is very keen to get married at the earliest opportunity. And thus, Mr Collins and Miss Charlotte Lucas get married. Mr Collins takes his newly wedded wife to the personage at Hunsford where Lady Catherine is quite pleased to meet the reactor's wife.

A Setback to Jane's Hope of Marrying Mr Bingley

Instead of receiving a proposal of marriage from Mr Bingley, Jane now receives a letter from Miss Bingley informing her that all the inmates of Netherfield Park are leaving for London. This piece of information comes as a great blow to Jane's hopes. Then Miss Bingley writes another letter to Jane, this time from London. Miss Bingley, through this letter, informs Jane that Bingley and the others might not return to Netherfield Park. Mr Bingley is thinking of marrying Mr Darcy's sister, Georgiana, who is a very beautiful and highly accomplished girl. Thus Jane finds that her hopes of marrying Mr Bingley have been dashed to letter, feels as disappointed and distressed as Jane herself. Elizabeth is deeply attached to Jane; and therefore, she fully shares all anxieties and Joys of Jane.

Elizabeth's Visit to Hunsford

Elizabeth now pays a visit to Charlotte at Hunsford. She goes there in the company of Charlotte's father, Sir William Lucas, and Charlotte's younger sister, Maria. Charlotte introduces her friend and her relatives to Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Lady Catherine is a very proud woman and takes every opportunity to impress upon others the fact that she is socially superior to them. Lady Catherine invites them all to a dinner at her house ('Rosings Park') which is a splendid mansion and splendidly furnished. Sir William and Maria are deeply impressed and awed by the splendour around them; but Elizabeth remains calm and composed.

Elizabeth's Rejection of Mr Darcy's Proposal of Marriage

A new development now takes place. Mr Darcy, accompanied by a cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, comes on a brief visit to Lady Catherine who is Mr Darcy's and Colonel Fitzwilliam's aunt. And now the stage is set for another meeting between Mr Darcy and Elizabeth. At a party which is held by Lady Catherine at her house, Elizabeth plays piano and also has much conversation with Colonel Fitzwilliam who impresses her as a very

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kind man. Mr Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam now begin to call at the personage daily to meet the inmates. However, Mr Darcy's chief interest in paying these visit is to meet Elizabeth. Actually, Mr Darcy is now more in love with Elizabeth than he had been before. And so one day he makes a personal of marriage to her. However, in the course of making this proposal, he emphasizes on her social inferiority to him, and he makes her conscious of the fact that he is doing her a favour by proposing marriage to her. As a self-respecting girl, Elizabeth does not like the condescending and patronizing tone in which Mr Darcy proposes marriage to her. She, therefore, declines his proposal. She gives two other reasons for her refusal. One is that Mr Darcy had been unjust and cruel to Mr Wickham; and the other is that Mr Darcy had advised Mr Bingley not to marry Jane. The information about Mr Darcy's having obstructed Mr Bingley's proposal of marriage to Jane was given to Elizabeth by Colonel Fitzwilliam who, however, is not himself aware of the exact particulars regarding Mr Darcy's intervention in Mr Bingley's plans of marriage. Elizabeth has been able to infer the correct situation from Colonel Fitzwilliam's talk.

Mr Darcy's Defence against Elizabeth's Charges

On the following day Mr Darcy hands over a letter to Elizabeth. Ongoing through the letter, Elizabeth is filled with astonishment. This letter contains Mr Darcy's defence of himself against the charges which Elizabeth had levelled against him on the previous day. In this letter Mr Darcy states the true facts about Mr Wickham, exposing that man as a most unreliable fellow and a rogue. In this letter he also admits that he had prevented Mr Bingley from proposing marriage to Jane but he defends himself by saying that he had done so under a genuine belief that Jane was not really in love with Mr Bingley. This letter produces a deep effect on Elizabeth. In fact, her reading through this letter marks a turning-point in her attitude towards Mr Darcy. She begins to think that she had been totally wrong in her judgment of Mr Darcy's character and also that she had grossly mistaken in having relied upon Mr Wickham's letter, though containing a defence of At the same time, Elizabeth finds that Mr Darcy's letter, though containing a defence of himself, is written in a tone, which is insolent and haughty. Thus, Mr Darcy's pride still remains intact, though Elizabeth's prejudice has begun to crumble.

No Development in the Jane-Bingley Affair

Mr Darcy leaves Rosings Park for London before Elizabeth can take any action on the letter which he had handed over to her. On her way home, she stops in London for a day with her uncle and aunt Mr and Mrs Gardiner with whom Jane has already been staying for the past three months. Although Jane had been staying in London for such a long period, she had not been able to meet Mr Bingley who also lives there. Jane had during this period called on Miss Bingley but even she had shown some indifference to Jane. This creates an impression in Jane's mind that perhaps she is now permanently alienated from Mr Bingley whom, at one time, she had hoped to marry. Both sisters now return home. Elizabeth informs Jane of what had passed between Mr Darcy and herself. She also tells Jane of Mr Wickham's real character as revealed in Mr Darcy's letter to her. Jane feels shocked to know that such a handsome and smart man as Mr Wickham possesses a wicked heart.

Lydia, Invited by Mrs Forster to Brighton

The militia regiment stationed near the town of Meryton has now shifted near the city of Brighton. Lydia feels very depressed because she would no longer be able to lead a gay

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life. However, Mrs Forster, the wife of the colonel of that regiment invites Lydia to accompany her to Brighton. Lydia feels delighted by Mrs Forster's invitation because, by going to Brighton, she can continue her contacts with the officers. Elizabeth privately urges her father not to give so much freedom to Lydia. Her father, however, does not wish to stop Lydia from going there.

An Unexpected Meeting between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy

Mr and Mrs Gardiner come to Longbourn on their way to Derbyshire where they intend to go on a pleasure trip. They would leave their two children with the Bennet family, and themselves proceed to Derbyshire. They had previously arranged with Elizabeth that she would also accompany them on their trip. Originally, they had wanted to go to the Lake District, but subsequently they had changed their minds. In any case, Elizabeth now goes with them. On the way they pay a visit to Pemberley House which is tourist attraction. Pemberley House is a splendid mansion and belongs to Mr Darcy. When going round this great country house, they happen to meet Mr Darcy himself. Mr Darcy was not expected at the house till the following day when he was to arrive here from London; but he has come a day earlier because of a change in his schedule. Mr Darcy greets Elizabeth most cordially and shows a lot of courtesy to her uncle and aunt. There is not the least touch of arrogance in Mr Darcy's attitude at this time. Both Mr and Mrs Gardiner's get the feeling that Mr Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. On the next day, Mr Darcy calls on Mr and Mrs Gardiner and Elizabeth at the inn where they are staying in the nearby town of Lambton. He brings his sister Georgiana with him. This visit further strengthens Mr and Mrs Gardiner's belief that Mr Darcy is in love with Elizabeth. Elizabeth too gets the same impression.

The News of Lydia's Elopement with Mr Wickham

Now Elizabeth has also begun to feel attracted towards Mr Darcy. This attraction had begun at Hunsford after Elizabeth had gone through Mr Darcy's letter. It is now likely event occurs to disturb the peace of the Bennet family. Colonel Forster informs Mr Bennet by an express letter that Lydia, who was staying with Mrs Forster in Bridgton, had eloped with Mr Wickham whom she had been meeting frequently. When Elizabeth learns this sad news from a letter written to her by Jane, she tells her uncle and aunt that she must get back home to provide whatever comfort she can to her parents in this crisis. She also tells Mr Darcy of what has happened.

Elizabeth, Back at Longbourn

Mr and Mrs Gardiner now cut short their holiday and return with Elizabeth to Longbourn. Mrs Bennet is almost crazy with grief at Lydia's misconduct and at the disgrace which Lydia has brought to the family. Mr Gardiner now also proceeds to London in order to help Mr Bennet in his efforts to trace Lydia. After a few days Mr Bennet returns to Longbourn, having failed in his efforts to trace Lydia or Mr Wickham. Mrs Gardiner now leaves Longbourn with her children, and joins her husband in London where they have their home. Mr Bennet feels most repentant of having always indulged Lydia's desires and whims.

After a few days, Mr Bennet receives a letter from Mr Gardiner. According to the information contained in this letter, Mr Wickham and Lydia have been traced and are staying in London without having got married. Mr Wickham has said that he would marry Lydia only on certain conditions. These conditions include the payment of a certain

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amount of money to him. At the same time, Mr Gardiner has informed Mr Bennet that everything is being settled with Mr Wickham and that Mr Bennet should not worry about the welfare of Lydia. A marriage duly takes place after Mr Wickham's demand for money has been met. The Bennet family gets the impression that the money has been paid by Mr Gardiner. But Elizabeth soon learns from her aunt, Mrs Gardiner, that the whole settlement had been arrived at by the intervention of Mr Darcy, and that the entire money had been paid by Mr Darcy himself. This information produces a profound effect upon Elizabeth regarding the character of Mr Darcy who has done a great service and a great favour to the Bennet family by saving the good name of the family. But for Mr Darcy's intervention, Mr Wickham would never have married Lydia but would have forsaken her. Lydia would in that case have been a deserted girl with a shameful past.

Mr Bingley's Proposal of Marriage to Jane

A change now takes place in Mr Bingley. This change is as sudden as the change which had been responsible for his having given up his intention to marry Jane. Accompanied by Mr Darcy, he now goes to Netherfield Park and gets in touch with the Bennet family. He makes a proposal of marriage to Jane which she most gladly accepts.

Elizabeth's Acceptance of Darcy's New Proposal of Marriage

Lady Catherine de Bough now pays a visit to Longbourn and has a private interview with Elizabeth. She warns Elizabeth not to agree to marry Mr Darcy in case he makes a proposal of marriage to her. Lady Catherine says that Mr Darcy has to marry her own daughter, Miss Ann de Bourgh, and that Elizabeth should, therefore, not come in the way. Elizabeth, however, refuses to give Lady Catherine any promise in this connection. After a few days, Mr Darcy comes to Longbourn and proposes marriage to Elizabeth. By this time Elizabeth's attitude towards Mr Darcy has undergone a complete change. All her prejudices against him have disappeared. She now feels that he would be the right kind of husband for her. She, therefore, accepts his proposal without the least demur or hesitation. Thus, Mr Darcy whose pride has by now completely melted away, and Elizabeth whose prejudices have completely disappeared, are united in wedlock. In fact, the marriage of Mr Darcy and Elizabeth takes place on the same day as the marriage of Mr Bingley and Jane.

3.2.2 Important Characters

Character sketch of some of the important characters of the *Pride and Prejudice* has been discussed in this section.

1. Elizabeth Bennet

Her physical charm: Of all her heroines, Jane Austen likes Elizabeth Bennet most. During the last one century and a half, countless readers and critics have fallen in love with her. Elizabeth is certainly not as beautiful as Jane, still she is graceful and charming. There is something indefinable about her charm which cannot be easily analysed. Darcy does not find her beautiful when he first meets her. She is tolerable. Darcy does not find her beautiful enough to tempt him. But later Darcy says that she is 'one of the handsomest women of my acquaintance.' Elizabeth is a complex character.

Understanding of human nature: Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of

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friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit. She had known Mr Collins to be an affected fool from the first letter he writes to them. She alerts her father to the impending dangers of Lydia's flirtations. She is aware of the vulgarity of her mother, the simplicity of Jane, the pedantry of Mary and the frivolity of Kitty and Lydia. It does not take her long to feel the cynical irresponsibility of her father. Elizabeth, however, fails to understand some intricate people like Charlotte Lucas, George Wickham and Darcy. Charlotte is an intimate friend. Her feeling of affection blinds Elizabeth to her demerits. In case of Darcy, his slighting remark, in the beginning of the novel, about her being just 'tolerable' hurts her pride. This makes her prejudiced against him. As a result of this prejudice, she misunderstands every word and every action of his. Wickham appears, charming. Being singled out by such a charming officer gratifies her and she succumbs to his charms.

Willingness to learn: Elizabeth is willing to learn. The process of her self-awakening begins after she reads Darcy's letter. She begins to read it with a strong prejudice against him. But gradually she realizes the truth of his statements. She now feels mortified at her spiritual blindness. She grows absolutely ashamed of herself. She realizes that she had been blind and prejudiced. This dramatic moment of self-revelation gradually brings about a total awareness of reality. She comes to know that Wickham is a charming unprincipled flirt. She begins to understand that Darcy is exactly the man who, in nature and talent, would most suit her. Her prejudice was wrong, but there was an element of honesty about it. And we love her for her honesty of mind.

Her moral courage: Elizabeth has great moral courage. She declines two marriage proposals: both undesirable but both attractive in their own way. Her father's estate is entailed on Mr Collins. Her connections are very low and vulgar. Her mother warns her that she will not be able to maintain her after her father's death. Mr Collins's proposal at least promises the comforts and security of a home, if no love. Mr Darcy's proposal is still more attractive, because she realizes that it would be a great honour to be the mistress of Pemberley. In these circumstances, it needed great moral and spiritual courage to reject these proposals. But Elizabeth did not want to marry where there was no love. She is indeed gifted with rare strength of character.

Elizabeth shows her strength of character in other matters also. Whenever she faces an act of absurdity, she asserts her independence of mind. She faces Lady Catherine with calm composure and unruffled dignity. When this lady tries to pressurize her to promise that she will not marry Darcy, Elizabeth refuses to be browbeaten by her. She never loses an argument. She is really a spirited and independent girl. She asserts her individually whenever required.

Her sense or wit and humour: Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Mr Bennet is also very witty but he is often cynical. Elizabeth's wit pleases but it never hurts. In her brilliance of wit she reminds us of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. There runs a strain of innocent raillery in all her conversation. Incorrigibly humorous, she does not spare anyone. She is capable of laughing as much at herself as at others. She loves Jane dearly but does not spare her from her raillery. She cannot help laughing even in most serious situations in life. When Elizabeth gives Jane the news of her engagement to Darcy, Jane asks, 'But are you certain - forgive the questions - are you quite certain that you can be happy with him?' Elizabeth, with cool and delightful irony, replies, 'There can be no doubt of that. It is settled between us already that we are to be the happiest couple in the world.' But she never oversteps the limits of propriety.

There is no doubt that Elizabeth's wit, besides being refined and subtle, never outruns discretion.

Her warm-heartedness: Another quality of Elizabeth is her selflessness and warm-heartedness. The concern she shows for Jane during her stay at Netherfield, the way she walks all the way to Netherfield speaks well for her. She feels concerned at Bingley's removal from the neighbourhood and is genuinely happy when Jane is engaged to him.

Elizabeth is indeed a lovable heroine. Of all Jane Austen's heroines, she impresses and delights us most. We can conclude with Shakespeare's words: 'Time cannot wither her nor custom stale her charm.'

2. Mr Darcy

Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance. He is one of the complex characters in the novel. While comparing Bingley and Darcy, Jane Austen tell us that in judgement and understanding, Darcy is definitely the better of the two.

His pride: The first characteristics that we note about Darcy is his pride. It is evident right from the moment he makes his appearance. He refuses to be introduced to any other lady except the two in his own party. He is declared to be 'the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world.' Several instances of his pride can be cited. He refuses to dance with Elizabeth: 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' In Chapter 11, he tells her, 'I cannot forget the follies and vices of others so soon as I ought, nor their offences against myself. My temper would perhaps be called resentful.'

When he makes his first proposal to Elizabeth, his tone is very proud and haughty. However, there are attempts to justify his pride. Charlotte Lucas does not feel offended by it: 'One cannot wonder that so very fine a young man, with family fortune, everything in his favour should think highly of himself. If I may so express it, he has a right to be proud.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that 'almost all his actions may be traced to pride, and pride has often been his best friend.' Some characters in the novel think that his pride is the result of his shyness. But after Darcy has been engaged to Elizabeth, he himself confesses his having been proud:

'I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately, an only son (for many years, an only child), I was spoiled by my parents, who, though good themselves, allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing - to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own.'

He is shy, but his pride is not just his shyness. And he is not just proud, he is even prejudiced against other people. Hence when he first insults Elizabeth, he is motivated by his prejudice against the rural people who are much beneath him in social status.

Humbled by love: Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. Darcy feels that she is rendered intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He is also attracted by her pleasing figure and the easy playfulness of her manners. He gets an opportunity to observe her more closely at Netherfield where she has gone to nurse the ailing Jane. He notices her exuberance of spirits, and her warm-heartedness. Darcy next meets her impressed by her intellectual sharpness and her sparkling wit. He is again when she is on a visit to Hunsford. He repeatedly calls at the parsonage.

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struck by her refinement and his sense of appreciation is shown in his compliment. 'You could not have always been at Longbourn.'

It is Elizabeth's angry refusal of his proposal that marks the beginning of the great change in him. Elizabeth charges him with having broken Jane's heart and having ruined Wickham's life. She also accuses him of not behaving in a 'gentleman-like manner'. This accusation humbles him. The next time, they come together at Pemberley, he takes pains to behave like a gentleman. He wishes to be introduced to the Gardiners. He requests Elizabeth to allow him to introduce her to his sister Georgiana. After Lydia's elopement with Wickham, he saves the family from disgrace. He makes provisions for the man he hates, pays off his debts, purchases him a new commission in the army and persuades him to marry Lydia. All this, he does out of his love for Elizabeth. He himself admits the miracles Elizabeth's love has brought about in him:

'What do I not owe you? You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled.'

His integrity of character: Darcy appears to be a man of principle. There lies beneath all his actions a conformity with high standards of conduct. There is absolutely no duplicity about him. In his proposal of Elizabeth, he does not hide the struggle he has undergone before he finally professes his love. When he is rejected by Elizabeth, he is not ashamed of his feelings. He makes it clear: 'But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence.'

His love and kindness: Darcy's relationship with Bingley, Georgiana and his tenants gives other side of his character. It is his pride and haughty manners that are shown aside when he is in Elizabeth's company. But it is quite another Darcy that others speak of and admire. To Bingley he is an esteemed friend. He has the highest regard for his opinion and judgement. To Georgiana, Darcy is a very loving brother, very eager to fulfil every desire of hers. To his tenants 'he is the best landlord and the best master that ever lived; not like the wild young men now-a-days, who think of nothing but themselves.'

Some critics feel that Darcy's transformation in the second half of the novel is incredible. They regard him as one of Jane Austen's serious failures. They attribute this failure to either her immaturity or to her general weakness in portraying male characters. The fact is that the action is unfolded from Elizabeth's point of view. We see Darcy through Elizabeth's eyes, and her eyes are prejudiced. We have to put together all the qualities of his character to get a correct picture of his personality. The writer has emphasized his negative qualities in the first half of the novel, but his inherent goodness cannot be hidden for long. His pride is slowly humbled through the love of Elizabeth. Darcy's portrayal in no way can be seen unconvincing.

3.2.3 First Impressions to *Pride and Prejudice*

Pride and Prejudice was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification. We can only discuss its significance. Jane Austen is not a psychological novelist. She is a painter of social manners. In the present novel, however, she analyses the interaction of the human emotions like pride and prejudice.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy symbolizes pride. On his very first appearance in the novel, he is declared to be 'the proudest and most disagreeable man in the world.' Wickham tells Elizabeth that almost all of Darcy's action may be traced to pride, but he calls it 'filial pride, his pride in his father now dead', and 'brotherly pride, his pride in his sister Georgiana'. Darcy's pride hurts Elizabeth when he declines Bingley's suggestion

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to dance with Elizabeth. He remarks, 'She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me.' Elizabeth at once gets prejudiced against him and she resolves to hate him. Darcy's assertion that he cannot forget the vices and follies of others intensifies her prejudice. She begins to misinterpret all his utterances and actions. If Darcy's pride affects his judgement, Elizabeth's prejudice affects hers. Darcy fails to detect the impropriety of Wickham's derogatory statements about Darcy. She allows herself to be imposed upon. So complete is her trust in Wickham that she readily declares Darcy to be hateful.

Their process of self-discovery starts at Rosings. Embarrassed by the vulgarity of his aunt Lady Catherine, Darcy gets a new vision of life. He realizes that the refinement of manners is not the monopoly of a particular class. His rejection at the hands of Elizabeth proves to him the futility of those things in which he took pride. There must be something wrong with his values as he could not please a woman he loved. His rejection completely humbles him. Elizabeth's moment of self-awakening comes when she receives Darcy's letter. She realises the validity of his objections to the Jane-Bingley marriage. She is now ashamed to think that she has been 'blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd'. She was proud of her discernment and understanding, but she has all along been blind. She is now ready to change her notion. Darcy's role in bringing about Lydia's marriage with Wickham overwhelms her. Elizabeth realizes that Darcy is exactly the man who is nature and talent will most suit her. Both of them give up their pride and prejudice and are united in marriage.

3.2.4 *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel

Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.

Pride and Prejudice deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys and the Darcys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class people. The Bennets and the Lucases belong to the lower middle class, while the Bingleys and Darcys are comparatively affluent. Since they are all land-owners, they have nothing to do to earn their living. The usual tensions of working life are absent from their life. *Pride and Prejudice* consists of a ball at Meryton, another at Netherfield, Jane's visit to Netherfield and Elizabeth's visits to the Hunsford Parsonage and the Rosings. Apparently, nothing sensational happens during these visits, except that Jane catches a cold on her way to Netherfield, Elizabeth unexpectedly runs into Darcy during her visit to Pemberley, or Lydia and Wickham elope towards the end of the novel. But even this elopement does not lead to any untoward results. Darcy, who was expected to withdraw after this slur on the Bennets, does nothing of the kind and in fact plays a key role in setting the matters right.

Pride and Prejudice is concerned with husband-hunting. The chief aim for Mrs Bennet, mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them. The Lucas family is confronted with the same problem. Miss Bingley is eager to secure Darcy's hand for herself. Lady Catherine is equally interested in her daughter's marriage with Darcy.

Jane Austen is also interested in discussing the importance of marriage taking place due to intellectual understanding and emotional compatibility, and not just for beauty or for the allurements of money. Mr Bennet married for beauty and for good looks and soon got disillusioned. His wife had a weak understanding and an illiberal mind.

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Mr Bennet sought comfort in his library or in his walks. Charlotte Lucas knows that Mr Collins is a pompous ass. But she agrees to marry him because he is in a position to offer her financial security. She too never finds real happiness in her life. Lydia is captivated by Wickham's handsomeness. That he is utterly unprincipled is obvious to everybody, for he shifts from Elizabeth to Miss King to Lydia with great felicity. But Lydia prefers to ignore this fact. And she too ruins her life.

The novel also shows the adverse effect of ill-matched marriages on the emotional development of the children. Thus if Mary, Kitty and Lydia are unequal to the demands of life, the responsibility lies primarily with their parents, one of whom is indifferent and irresponsible, the other indulgent and concerned but stupid, Jane too lacks emotional maturity. Even Elizabeth, the best of the lot, barely escapes the ill-effects.

3.3 ANITA DESAI: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anita Desai is one of the most renowned Indian writers in English. Born in 1937 to a Bengali father and German mother, she has been writing since the age of seven. She boasts of eight novels and numerous short stories, articles and literary pieces for journals and periodicals. She has won a number of awards, both in India and abroad. She was honoured with the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*. The very next year *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* won her the Federation of Indian Publishers and the Authors Guild of India's award for Excellence in Writing.

Popular Works

- *The Artist Of Disappearance* (2011)
- *The Zigzag Way* (2004)
- *Diamond Dust and Other Stories* (2000)
- *Fasting, Feasting* (1999)
- *Journey to Ithaca* (1995)
- *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988)
- *In Custody* (1984)
- *The Village By The Sea* (1982)
- *Clear Light of Day* (1980)
- *Games at Twilight* (1978)
- *Fire on the Mountain* (1977)
- *Cat on a Houseboat* (1976)
- *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975)
- *The Peacock Garden* (1974)
- *Bye-bye Blackbird* (1971)
- *Voices in the City* (1965)
- *Cry, The Peacock* (1963)
- *India - A Travellers Literary Companion*

Check Your Progress

1. Who is George Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. Which character takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent?
3. Name the five daughters of Mr and Mrs Bennet.
4. Which of Shakespeare's heroine does Elizabeth resemble?
5. What is the chief aim of Mrs Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*?
6. What was the original title of *Pride and Prejudice*?

Self-Instructional
Material

Desai's writing goes beyond observing the mundane, superfluous realities. To quote her,

'One's preoccupation can only be a perpetual search—for meanings, for values, for dare I say it, truth. I think of the world as an iceberg—the one-tenth visible above the surface of the water is what we call reality, but the nine-tenths that are submerged make up the truth, and that is what one is trying to explore.

Writing is an effort to discover, to underline and convey the true significance of things. Next to this exploration of the underlying truth and the discovery of a private mythology and philosophy, it is style that interests me most—and by this I mean the conscious labour of writing language and symbol, word and rhythms—to obtain a certain integrity and to impose order on Chaos.'

Anita Desai is concerned about 'the enduring human condition'. Her themes are existentialist and include: maladjustment alienation, absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning in life, decision, detachment and isolation. Desai explains how women in the contemporary urban milieu fight against discrimination of various types, but some do surrender before the relentless forces of absurd life. A perusal of Desai's novels reveals her deep involvement in the inner emotional world of her characters. To aid her literary interests she, therefore, resorts to the use of symbols and images. She tries to drum the clouds of the varied complexities of man-woman relationship and also the varying states of human psyche. Desai is a great artist and has employed techniques of stream of consciousness, flashback, montage and reveries which suit her existential themes and her externalization of internal emotional turmoil and tumults. Consequently, her novels do not have a well-constructed plot and a tightly-knit structure. There are episodes, happenings, incidents, encounters and reminiscences. Her characters are both typical as well as individualistic. They are typical as they suffer from a universal predicament of isolation and uncertainty. They are individualistic as they appear to be more sensitive and reflective in nature rather than the mass of common humanity around them. Her canvas is also reasonably large and it encompasses a large variety of characters representing various hues and colours of humanity. In fact, Anita Desai turns novel into a serious, intellectual endeavour rather than an object of mere entertainment. In her hands, novel is a mature and evolved genre fit for expressing sombre and reflective thoughts. Desai is thus a highly evocative, intense and engrossing novelist who makes the modern reader aware of a new perspective to perceive life. Her protagonists lead a tortuous and exacting existence which is made comprehensible through Desai's own keen and profound sensitivity towards life.

London's famous Arts Guardian succinctly sums up the author:

'...One of the best known and highly regarded novelists working in English in the sub-continent. The style she has evolved is lucid, tight, undramatic... her imagistic phase acquires an ambiguous and terrible power—the words hold down the events forcibly.'

Awards won

- 1978 - Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize - *Fire on the Mountain*
- 1978 - Sahitya Akademi Award (National Academy of Letters Award) - *Fire on the Mountain*
- 1980 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction - *Clear Light of Day*
- 1983 - Guardian Children's Fiction Prize - *The Village By The Sea*
- 1984 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction - *In Custody*

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- 1993 - Neil Gunn Prize
- 1999 - Shortlisted, Booker Prize for Fiction: *Fasting, Feasting*
- 2000 - Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature (Italy)
- 2003 - Benson Medal of Royal Society of Literature

3.3.1 *Fire on the Mountain*: Critical Appreciation

The plot of *Fire on the Mountain* is rather ephemeral and straightforward. The story deals with the momentous actions happening inside the inner-self of Nanda and her granddaughter Raka. After Ila Das is raped and murdered, that ferocious act occurs 'offstage' towards the last part of the book. This coincides with Raka's pronouncement where she informs that she has ignited fire in the forest. Although, there are other significant incidents in the remaining story, the author uses her imagery and her symbolism to prepare the readers for the horrifyingly violent finale. Actually the 'fire' symbolically rages inside the characters created by the author and by the end of the novel the fire completely explodes.

The first part of the novel, *Fire on the Mountain* offers the physical and emotional situation before Raka arrives at her great-grandmother's place. Nanda lives a very quiet and isolated retired life since her husband died. She interacts with very few people, like the occasional visit from the postman which she finds as a disturbance. Nanda's cook, Ram Lal is the only person with whom she interacts on a daily basis. She feels that visitors disturb her privacy which she has in her home while she is all alone. The author has created a setting of Nanda's home in such a way that the reader is left in no doubt about the kind of solitary life lived by her. Carignano, is located besides a cliff and far from civilization. The author has literally and metaphorically created a picture of a 'retreat' in isolation so that she can get the readers to visualise the kind of life Nanda lives. There is nobody to interrupt her peace and for this reason she does not appreciate the visit by the postman as he has brought her the letter which informs her about Raka's visit. Along with the news of her great granddaughter's visit, Nanda receives a call from her childhood friend, Ila Das who wishes to visit her. Both these instances makes Nanda feel insecure about her solitary life-style. In the next part, the story revolves around the relationship between Raka and Nanda. It concerns with the lack of interaction amongst the two. The author tries to establish that in spite of a generation gap, the two have a lot of similarities in their behaviour. Initially, Raka's unwanted visit is treated like an intrusion by Nanda as she feels that her presence is a threat for her solitary existence. Nanda is happy in her lonely life and does not want to take up any responsibility. She is not happy about sharing her home with anyone as she enjoys the calmness and quietness around her. But the letter from Asha which informs about the arrival of her great granddaughter makes her feel anxious about the peaceful existence she has established for herself. Nanda is not keen to give up her freedom and take the responsibility of anyone. She is upset that the presence of Raka will compel her to make conversation where as she is very contented by not talking to anyone all day long, 'Now, to bow again, to let that noose sleep once more round her neck that she had thought was freed fully, finally, 'now to converse again when it was silence she wished.'

Nanda Kaul's strong-minded disinterestedness and non-involvement is dealt by the author in the novel. This detachment is a result of unfortunate matrimonial relations. The author has protected such ties in her previous novels, titled *Cry, the Peacock*, *Voices in the City*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, etc. The

novels by Desai in a way project her personal yearning to lead a solitary life. She has a busy life, yet she is lonely because of her unhappy marriage to an ex Vice Chancellor of Punjab University. She lived a life as desired by her husband, but she was not satisfied with her meaningless existence. She missed loving care and warmth in her own life and once she got out of the unhappy relationship, she began to live on her own and was not happy if disturbed. She herself began to live a life of a recluse. The character of Nanda is a result of her own unsuccessful marriage. After discharging all her duties, Nanda no longer wishes to be disturbed by anyone. Emotional withdrawal is the actual cause for Nanda Kaul's cynicism towards human relationships. She did not feel wanted or loved by her husband, for him she was just a show-piece and someone to perform the daily household chores. Even though she was a wife of a dignitary and as a result had social standing, but all that was irrelevant as from inside she felt lonely and unwanted. Nanda was very upset because of her husband's extra marital affair with Miss David. As a result of her unsuccessful marriage, she started to believe that being attached to someone will always lead to infidelity and interacting with people socially was a gimmick. Her relation with her husband was very superficial as it did not completely involve her inner being and was completely shallow. Nanda has very painful memories of the time when her husband left her alone so that he could meet Miss David. Nanda likes her solitary existence as she does not want to be vulnerable to being attached with anyone and be betrayed again. Her distrust towards human relations becomes stronger when she hears about the rape and murder of her childhood friend, Ila Das. The distressing matrimonial life of Nanda Kaul is visible in the following lines, 'Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen-he had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a life-long affair with Miss David. And her children were all alien to her nature.' In the novel *Fire on the mountain*, marital ties are shaken because of an extra-marital affair and become the cause of distrust for the characters. In her previous novels, the author has presented unhappy marriage due to discordancy of natures or mental complexes. These aspects have left a deep impact on her and completely changed her outlook towards relationships. They have made her lose faith in all emotional ties and affections required in a relationship.

The conflict between the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and sanity and the need to be involved in the painful process of life is shown vividly in the novel. This wavering between attachment and detachment reflects the need for a meaningful life. Nanda Kaul meets with a measure of success until she is drawn out of herself by Raka's effortless withdrawal that seem to be totally absorbed in a world of her own and ignores Nanda Kaul completely when compared with the latter's flawed experiment. Raka only wants to be left alone to pursue her own secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli. Nanda Kaul wants to penetrate Raka's secret world as if Raka's total withdrawal is a challenge to her because withdrawal does not come naturally to her. In her desire to win Raka's affection and attention she builds an imaginary world around her father but this is of no avail. This action of Nanda Kaul also shows the unsatisfying condition of her own childhood and family life.

Emotional experiment by the author in the story is visible by the way the character of Raka has been portrayed. Remarking about the novel's characters lonely and absorbed childhood, the author states that 'I agree that the experiences of childhood are the most vivid and lasting ones.' The novel makes an attempt to exhibit the essentials of a parent-child relationship and the impact it has on the personality and emotional state of the characters.

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One more facet of the novel outlines how tense and stifled domestic atmosphere affects Raka's tender psyche. The character of Raka is the only child in the story and as a result of an abnormal childhood, she rejects all efforts of tenderness shown to her. She is not like most children of her age who are fascinated by simple things like fairy stories, escapade stories and usual bright things which catch the interest of young children. Raka has a strange mind and is attracted to peculiar places and stuffs. As a character is realized by the readers, it is easy for them to comprehend the views of the burnt house care-taker who believes that she is crazy. He thinks of her as 'the crazy one from Carignano'. Raka wants to remain on her own and unlike most children of her age she is not happy to be in the company of others even Nanda. She wants to explore the surroundings on her own and is very reluctant and uneasy to go with Nanda. She explores her surroundings without telling her great grandmother, she even visits the ravines and the secluded burnt house on the hill on her own. She has no feelings for Nanda; this is clear by the following lines in the novel, 'She ignored her so calmly, so totally that it made Nanda Kaul breathless.'

The author has portrayed the character of Raka as an abnormal child because she does not behave as most children of her age. She does not need anything and never makes any demands. Like her great grandmother, she just wants to be left alone and carry on with her explorations, she just wanted 'to be left alone and pursue her own secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli.' Loneliness by no means bothers her and she is as a result very content throughout her visit in Carignano. Once when she was returning from her routine explorations, she gets late as she goes to the club building to see the events which take place there, she had enquired about these events from Nanda's cook, Ram Lal who called them as fancy dress balls. Nevertheless, Raka is astonished to see the pervert manner in which people are dressed and gets very disappointed. Looking at the conduct of these people she is reminded of her father and his weird behaviour.

'Somewhere behind them was her father, home from a party, stumbling and crashing through the curtains of night beating her mother that made Raka cover under her bed clothes and wet the mattress in fright.'

Raka was deeply affected by the behaviour of her father towards her mother and as a result she has turned into such an emotionally imbalanced child. As a child, she witnessed how her father used to beat her mother when he was drunk. Her mother was always sad and helpless and in her misery did not realize the emotional needs of her daughter. As a result, Raka's distressing childhood years dispossessed her from trusting and enjoying other people's company and their attempts to interact with her. She ignores all attempts made by her great grandmother to attract her attention and she is not interested in listening about any stories from her childhood. Raka was never made to feel pampered as other children of her age; she was deprived of love and care by both her parents, as a result now she is not keen to listen to stories about relations and family. She is, as a result, contented in the charred house on the edge in Kasauli as the surroundings match the sadness and sorrow within her. She likes the solitary existence as by now she is completely averse to attachments. From the story, one can easily understand that childhood years are instrumental in shaping the mental state of the child, the standards of communications of Raka with her parents, clubbed with her home environment have resulted in leaving a lasting impact on the psyche of the young child. The author has called her an accepted loner and equates her with her great grandmother who had also become a loner as result of her married life which was only about fulfilling duties and obligations.

Though, both characters are not loners by birth and have turned into one due to their circumstances. Raka was a victim of a broken house and the reason for her turning into a loner was because of the anomalous conditions prevailing in her house. She has experienced plenty of uncertainty and sourness in her young life. Raka is distrustful and suspicious of all emotional ties due to the violence and abuse witnessed by her. According to the author, she has reached a state of emotional withdrawal.

The author strongly believes that a person's personality and attitude are shaped during younger years, but she does not deny that traumatic experiences can bring changes in the personality of an individual during adult years as well. The author feels that Nanda Kaul became a recluse due to her unhappy marriage and prior to that she was perfectly normal and happy. She was not always averse to human contact. Essentially her craving for solitude was a result of her unfortunate bonding with her husband and her kids. She originally, begrudged the arrival of Raka as it reminded her of her earlier life. Her own children were very selfish and she had very sour memories about them, having Raka in her home reminded of her misery. The arrival of her great granddaughter made her feel that again she would be obligated to take care of someone and will have to perform duties. Moreover, her solitude would be threatened by the child; she did not want anyone to disrupt the peaceful existence which she had established for herself at Carignano. Nanda begins to feel that presence of Raka is beginning to disintegrate her solitude and she is again looking forward to take care of someone. In actuality, Nanda is bursting with affection for Raka. In spite of all the rejection, she has received at the hands of her husband and children Nanda is drawn towards Raka. She wishes to care for her and show her affection.

Fire on the Mountain mainly revolves around the issue of relationships. Relationships of its characters have resulted in adding a lot of emotional aspects to the story. Nanda Kaul and her great granddaughter suffer due to their loved ones. They both began to prefer solitude instead of interacting with people. They liked to live alone and not have interaction with anyone. The author feels that Nanda has chosen for solitude as she is afraid to be emotionally attached with anyone again and she prefers to be alone so that she has no temptations. Anita Desai has managed to add a fresh element to Indian fiction in form of her English novel, *Fire on the Mountain*. With her writing she has tried to probe deeper into the human inner self. The appeal of her writing revolves around how she shapes her characters, who on their own try to battle with their frustrations and anger. Due to her style of writing, the author has managed to establish a significant place in the Indo-English fiction as she is able to continue her texts by shifting the chorus of her works of fiction from outside reality to internal reality and by continuing the course of the emotional experience of her characters, she is able to add a fresh element to the work. She has managed to establish herself as a prominent post-independent English author. As an author, she makes up for the lack of variety in her subject matter by delivering the matter with a lot of strength and power. Her subjects are heart touching and most readers can relate to her writings. Desai's irrefutable topics concerning life and emotional disquiets have made her work stand out from other writers of her period. Desai is able to disentangle the subliminal of all her extremely complex central characters.

Themes

Withdrawal is one of the most noticeable themes of *Fire on the Mountain*. The other themes which are outlined as the story progresses are solitude and need for isolation.

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The themes in their own way are personified in the characters of Nanda and Raka. In case of Nanda, the withdrawal is a result of an unsuccessful and persistent married life, whereas Raka is withdrawn because she has been a witness and victim of domestic violence; alienation in both the characters has been caused by one of the men in their life. Other theme which is unavoidable in the story is violence and existence of voracious characters of the world; this is expressed through the fate meted out to Nanda's childhood friend Ila Das. In the story, when Nanda is waiting for Raka to arrive, she saw a white hen dragging a worm and breaking it into two, Nanda felt she was the worm, 'She felt like the worm herself, she winced at its mutilation.' At the same time, Nanda has been compared to a voracious cat in hunt of the bird, and subsequently she has been shown as a hoopoe bird who wants to hunt and feed her young ones. Even though the author tries to portray the ravine as an illustration of nature and as a sanctuary for Raka, who is unable to tolerate the people of Carignano and the clubhouse, but the ravine is shattered by the waste discarded by the people and contaminated by the smoulder from the vents of the Pasteur Institute.

The Institute functions as a suitable representation for the conflicting nature of people and development, as it works for people by producing serum, nonetheless at a price: the odour of 'dogs' brains boiled in vats, of guinea pigs' guts, of rabbits secreting very keen to remember the past; even as colonization presented a superficial magnificence tries to trace the accounts about various residents in a sarcastic manner, he mentions how corrugated roof of Colonel Macdougall blew off and in the process beheaded a coolie; he also humorously comments about the attempts made by the pastor's wife to poison him and even trying to stab him; how Miss Jane Shrewsbury's cook died because she had poked a knife in his neck. According to the picture created by the author in the fictional story, it is assumed that if people try to retreat from their responsibilities towards others, they are bound to get violent reactions. Failure of Nanda to be able to connect with Ila Das and with Raka became the indirect cause for death of her friend. In the same way, Raka's inability to be close to Nanda became the cause for her to put an end to everything around her as she is not able to survive or endure any of it.

Characters

The characters of Anita Desai's novels are always stronger than her plot, in fact most of her novels are remembered because of the portrayal of the characters. This is visible in her novel *Fire on the Mountain* as well; the plot is required only because it helps in revealing the characters. Desai focuses on the physical appearance of her characters only when it provides symbolism to reflect the inner self of the character or it is integral part of the story. Nanda is the central character in the story and the author hardly mentions much about her appearance, but through her writing skills she has conveyed to the readers about her background and how it has had a deep impact on her thoughts, the author has conveyed the fears faced by Nanda and reasons for her inhibited antagonism, and unconscious want for affection and caring.

The author has tried to elaborate about Nanda's need for isolation by giving a detailed description of her house, Carignano, situated on a ridge away from the activity of the town. The author has explained the readers that Nanda has created these surroundings for herself as she wants to forget about her previous busy life as she does not wish to have duties and obligations towards anything or anyone: 'The care of others ... had been a religious calling she had believed in till she found it fake.' The ending of

part one of the novel reads, 'Discharge me. I've discharged all my duties.' Nanda wants to live a simple life and does not want any reminders from her past, the author has compared the barrenness of Carignano with Nanda and has presented her state as the 'withering away' garden as she no longer wishes to be in a state she used in her past, 'state of elegant perfection'. The author has presented the surroundings and Nanda's state in a similar manner.

The story of *Fire on the Mountain* is actually about four women—Nanda Kaul, her great granddaughter Raka, her childhood friend Ila Das and the fourth character is of the writer herself, as she is all over the story shaping and moulding each element of the settings in the story. *Fire on the Mountain* remains within the internal layer of an extremely isolated, gendered female cosmos which is a surreptitious storeroom of confusions and contradictory feelings which arise due to extreme situations in life. The novel attempts to clarify the events of life and the reasons for their occurrence. The story attempts to find answers to the problems in the life of its characters.

Literature Appraisal

All the characters in the story are seeking loneliness. They are in a close relationship with solitude and in order to strengthen their relation with solitude they stay away from love, attraction, caring and longing, rather they are close to animosity, resentment, refutation and resignation. The story tries to explain why its characters are seeking solitude and want to be away from people. The protagonist Nanda has started to live a secluded life as she was fed up of her life as a dutiful wife and mother. She no longer wishes to be a part of the shallow life which only expected her to be performing duties and in return there was no appreciation or love. Nanda Kaul withdraws to Carignano, snuggled amid the hills of Kasauli, to be away from the insensitiveness and grossness of the world. Her retreat at Kasauli provided her with the solitude she was seeking. As soon as Raka's arrival is announced in the story, Nanda Kaul flinches due to panic as she feels that her presence will end her solitude and peaceful existence that she has managed to establish for herself. Initially, her presence has been presented in following phrase by the author, 'mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry', but after interacting with her great granddaughter Nanda realises that she is very quiet and Raka is also happy to be on her own. Raka is forever exploring the grounds around the house and is most peaceful when she is not disturbed by anyone. The author soon establishes that Raka may be a visitor to Nanda's home, but she is not an intruder and her presence in the house will not become a reason for Nanda to be annoyed or disturbed. Ila Das is the third character of the story; she, also like others in the story is very lonely. With a lot of difficulty after her husband's death, she comes to accept her solitude and tries to live her life peacefully. However, she receives a very raw deal and loses her life after being brutally raped by some tribal men whom she had been trying to help so that they could lead a more civilized life.

Critical Analysis

The story of *Fire on the Mountain* is quite similar to Anita Desai's previous short story titled as *Grandmother*, in that story the grandmother's life story is similar to that of Nanda of *Fire in the Mountain*. In both the stories, the author has established that most of the time, the experiences of the past become instrumental in shaping the present attitudes and psyche of an individual. The characters of both the stories wish to lead a life of solitude. *Fire on the Mountain* is the fifth novel of the author. The story of the novel is also closely connected with the stories of her other novels such *Cry, the Peacock*

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(1963), stream-of-consciousness narrative and imagery has been used in the novel in order to project the sickly psyche of a woman who is gradually putrefying and is a victim of her past experiences. Maya from the *Cry, the Peacock* and Nanda of *Fire on the Mountain* are lonely because of their husband's insensitive and uncaring behaviour. Most of Desai's novels revolve around the themes of isolation and absence of communication in wedded life. This theme can be found in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Desai has a tendency to focus on the inner self of her characters and mostly creates a setting so that the inner self can develop and shape the story to an intense level. Background and character intermingle most obviously in her novel, *Voices in the City* which was published in 1965. Desai's themes and characters offer short, poetic novel or the novella, and for this reason she has adopted a three-part structure in the *Fire on the Mountain* and some of her previous novels. In an actual sense, the construction seems dialectic, as it consists of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis conforming. This can be seen in her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, starting from Nanda's unsubstantiated withdrawal, to Raka's intimidation of her detachment, and the final death and fire which signify some sort of decontamination, and the author's attempt at establishing awareness within its characters.

3.4 SUMMARY

- Jane Austen was one of the supreme artists in fiction. She was a highly sophisticated artist. In the opinion of the critic, W.L. Cross, 'She is one of the sincerest examples of our literature of art for art's sake.'
- Jane Austen wrote her novels with care, constantly revising them. There was nothing in her novels that did not have a clearly defined reason, and did not contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings of the moral structure.
- The range of Jane Austen's novels was limited. She drew all her material from her own experience.
- Jane Austen defined her own boundaries and never stepped beyond them. These limitations were self-imposed and she always remained within the range of her imaginative inspiration and personal experience.
- Jane Austen's novels do not represent stormy passions and high tragedy of emotional life. She was primarily concerned with the comedy of domestic life.
- Jane Austen described the English country scene with skill and fidelity. She gives a vivid and glowing picture of the social manners and customs of the eighteenth century.
- Jane Austen is a great creator of characters. She has created a picture-gallery filled with so many delightful characters. Her characters are not types but individuals.
- Jane Austen is a satirist as well as moralist. Satire is an element in which Jane Austen lives but there is no trace of the savage indignation in her writings.
- Of all her heroines, Jane Austen likes Elizabeth Bennet most. During the last one century and a half, countless readers and critics have fallen in love with her.
- Elizabeth has a good understanding of people. She claims that she fully understands Bingley and she is right. She looks through the mask of friendship of the Bingley sisters and discovers their conceit.

Check Your Progress

7. What, according to Desai, are the two preoccupations of her writing?
8. What is unique about the structure of Desai's novels?

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- Elizabeth is willing to learn. The process of her self-awakening begins after she reads Darcy's letter. She begins to read it with a strong prejudice against him.
- Elizabeth is gifted with an irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Mr. Bennet is also very witty but he is often cynical. Elizabeth's wit pleases but it never hurts.
- Darcy is the hero of *Pride and Prejudice*. He is the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year. He is twenty seven, tall, handsome and of majestic appearance.
- Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. Darcy feels that she is rendered intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He is also attracted by her pleasing figure and the easy playfulness of her manners.
- Some critics feel that Darcy's transformation in the second half of the novel is incredible. They regard him as one of Jane Austen's serious failures.
- *Pride and Prejudice* was originally entitled *First Impressions*. When Jane Austen revised the novel, she gave it the present title. The present title is perfectly appropriate and suitable. It does not need any justification.
- In *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy symbolizes pride. On his very first appearance in the novel, he is declared to be 'the proudest and most disagreeable man in the world.'
- Jane Austen has rightly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is notorious for never going out of the parlour. She makes a very candid confession that for her two or three families in a 'country village' are enough to work with.
- *Pride and Prejudice* deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys and the Darceys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class people.
- Anita Desai is one of the most renowned Indian writers in English. Born in 1937 to a Bengali father and German mother, she has been writing since the age of seven.
- She was honoured with the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*.
- Anita Desai is concerned about 'the enduring human condition'. Her themes are existentialist and include: maladjustment alienation, absurdity of human existence, quest for the ultimate meaning in life, decision, detachment and isolation.
- The plot of *Fire on the Mountain* is rather ephemeral and straightforward. The story deals with the momentous actions happening inside the inner-self of Nanda and her granddaughter Raka.
- Nanda Kaul's strong-minded disinterestedness and non-involvement is dealt by the author in the novel.
- The conflict between the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and sanity and the need to be involved in the painful process of life is shown vividly in the novel.
- The author has portrayed the character of Raka as an abnormal child because she does not behave as most children of her age.
- *Fire on the Mountain* mainly revolves around the issue of relationships. Relationships of its characters have resulted in adding a lot of emotional aspects to the story.

Self-Instructional
Material

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- Withdrawal is one of the most noticeable themes of *Fire on the Mountain*. The other themes which are outlined as the story progresses are solitude and need for isolation.

3.5 KEY TERMS

- **Domestic novel:** Sometimes referred to as 'sentimental fiction' or 'woman's fiction,' 'domestic fiction' refers to a type of novel popular with women readers during the middle of the nineteenth century.
- **Moralist:** A moralist is someone who has very strong opinions about what is right and what is wrong.
- **Milieu:** Milieu means the particular people and society that surround you and influence the way in which you behave.
- **Realist:** Realist is a person who accepts a situation as it is and is prepared to deal with it accordingly.

3.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. George Wickham is an officer in the militia regiment which is stationed near the town of Merytown.
2. A rich young man by the name of Charles Bingley takes a palatial house called Netherfield Park on rent.
3. Mr and Mrs Bennet have five daughters – Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine (or Kitty), and Lydia.
4. In her brilliance of wit Elizabeth reminds of Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.
5. The chief aim for Mrs Bennet, mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them.
6. *Pride and Prejudice* was originally entitled *First Impressions*.
7. The search for truth and exploration of style (writing language and symbol, word and rhythms) are the two preoccupations of Desai's writings.
8. Desai's novels do not have a well-constructed plot and a tightly-knit structure. Her stories are told through episodes, happenings, incidents, encounters and reminiscences.

3.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the dramatic nature of Austen's art.
2. Who is Mr Bingley? What relation does he share with Jane?
3. At what point in the novel does Darcy experience change of attitude towards Elizabeth?

4. Why does Lydia feel delighted by Mrs Forster's invitation to accompany her to Brighton?
5. What is the importance of fire in the novel *Fire on the Mountain*?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the achievements of Jane Austen as a novelist.
2. Analyse Austen's art of characterization with special reference to Elizabeth and Darcy.
3. How can Jane Austen be called a domestic novelist? Support your answer with examples.
4. Discuss the appropriateness of the title *Pride and Prejudice*.
5. Desai's characters exist more as abstractions outlining mental conditions rather than living, breathing beings. Discuss.

3.8 FURTHER READING

- Naik, M.K. 1982. *A History of Indian English Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
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- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. 1971. *The Twice Born Fiction*. Delhi: Arnold Heinemann.

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UNIT 4 SHORT STORIES

Structure

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- 4.5 *The Fly*: Katherine Mansfield
 - 4.5.1 About the Author
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- 4.6 *Trail of the Green Blazer*: R.K. Narayan
 - 4.6.1 About the Author
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- 4.9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
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4.0 INTRODUCTION

A short story is a prose fiction with a concise form. Contemporary short stories have evolved from tales, myths and fairy tales of the ancient era and the middle ages. Unlike a story of a novel which is a complete account of a particular occurrence, short story systematizes the act, thoughts and conversation of its characters in a plot which is based on a systemised pattern. The plot is presented as per the point of view of comedy, sadness, romance or satire and the presentation can be done employing the description style of fantasy, realism or naturalism.

The short story is considered to be the earliest form of literary forms. For example, the Hebrew bible's tales of Jonah, Ruth and Esther; Boccaccio's *Decameron*; *The Arabian Nights* and *Canterbury Tales* all have features of contemporary short story in them. The short story developed as an autonomous transcript by the latter part of the eighteenth century, its development coincided with the time of emergence of novels and newspapers. Most nineteenth century recurrently published magazines, like *Tatler* and *Spectator*, became an appropriate avenue for the publishing of short stories.

The major difference between a short story and novel is of their length. The basic elements of both a story of a novel and a short story in a magazine are similar; both have common elements such as, setting, atmosphere, characters, conflict, plot of the story and the theme.

In this unit, we will learn about short stories by studying four famous short stories: *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf, *The Fly* by K. Mansfield and *The Trail of the Green Blazer* by R.K. Narayan.

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4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the life and inspirations of the author, Edgar Allan Poe
- Explain the summary and themes of *The Cask of Amontillado*
- Describe the influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf
- Discuss the characters, themes and techniques used in *The Duchess and the Jeweller*
- Critically analyse Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly*
- Discuss the style of writing of R.K. Narayan
- Assess the themes and characters of *The Trail of the Green Blazer*

4.2 READING A SHORT STORY: AN INTRODUCTION

The father or originator of contemporary short stories, Edgar Allan Poe has defined short story as a tale which can be read in a short duration. According to him, any story which can be read in thirty minutes to two hours falls under the category of short story; the story has a single focal point and the rest of the story revolves around that 'certain unique or single effect' to which every detail is subordinate. Short stories have a limited length and for this reason the writers have the restriction of including only a few characters and they have to stress on single momentary action. As a result, the acts of a short story mostly coincide with the climax or are in the middle of the story so that it can give full importance to the events and the setting of the story. In order to make the presence of the central character effective, the central event has to be presented well by the writer. Short stories are likely to be less composite than novels. Typically, a short story concentrates on a single incident. Short stories work around a single plot, a solo setting, and limited number of characters; and the story covers a short duration of time. In the story which is focused on events or 'story of incident', the emphasis is on the sequence and the consequences of an event as in *The Golden Bug* by Edgar Allan Poe. In a story, where the focus is on the characters, the story deals with the emotional and moral potentials of the central character. Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables. This category of short stories is mostly meant to give spiritual and religious messages and hence used by various religious gurus and leaders for inspiring and enlightening their supporters.

Stories can be traced to the period of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which were orally narrated to people. Verbalized stories were mostly spoken in a rhyming and musical verse so that it could keep the listeners interested in the tale. The oldest record of these stories can be dated to the sixth century BCE; these were fables by Aesop who was a Greek slave as a result of which these fables in the recent times are known as Aesop's fables. Another form of ancient short story which was famous in the Roman Empire is known as the anecdote. Anecdotes operated as a type of parable, a short truthful description which tries to convey a message. Several remaining Roman anecdotes had been composed as the *Gesta Romanorum* during the period between the thirteenth and

fourteenth century. In this period, in England, several fictitious anecdotal letters of Sir Roger de Coverley were printed.

The tradition of verbally telling stories ended in Europe in the starting of the fourteenth century and they were replaced by written stories like *The Canterbury Tales* written by Geoffrey Chaucer and *Decameron* which was written by Giovanni Boccaccio. Both books consist of independent short tales. Some of the stories are serious and intense whereas some are full of humour; the stories are very well created work of literary fiction. Only few writers during that period adopted a frame story. Towards the last part of sixteenth century many short stories of Matteo Bandello were published in Europe, these were mostly tragic novellas.

France saw the development of sophisticated 'nouvelle' (short novel) by authors like Madame de Lafayette during the second half of the seventeenth century. Traditional fairy tales by Charles Perrault was published in the 1690s. The arrival of Antoine Galland's original contemporary version of the *Thousand and One Nights* or popularly known as the *Arabian Nights* during the eighteenth century had a huge effect on short stories of Voltaire, Diderot and others.

Short stories have a vast extent as it covers a great variety of prose fiction, starting from a short story (flash fiction) with limited word limit of possibly five hundred words to a novelette or novella which is lengthier than a short story but smaller than a novel. This kind of short stories was mainly used in Germany and it was popularised in 1795 by Goethe.

Some of the initial experts of short story in America were Washington Irving, Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. In England, Sir Walter Scott and Mary Shelly were known short story writers. E.T.A Hoffmann in Germany, Balzac in France and Gogol, Pushkin and Turgenev in Russia. Writers like Charles Dickens, Anton Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy, William Trevor, Herman Hesse, Vladimir Nabakov, Virginia Woolf, Rudyard Kipling, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, P.G Wodehouse, J.D Salinger, H.P Lovecraft, D.H Lawrence, Thomas Mann, Richard Matheson, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King and Earnest Hemingway were extremely talented authors of short stories as well as novels.

Elements of Short Stories

We have learnt that a prose fiction which may be read in a single setting or a short time may be defined as a short story. They have developed from the previous tradition of verbal storytelling during the seventeenth century. In recent times, short stories have expanded to a large extent and they contain work which is very diverse and not easy to classify. The most typical elements of every short story would be to have a small number of characters; stress is given on a single self-contained event so that a 'single effect' or mood can be evoked among the readers. With this technique the writers of short stories are able to utilize the plot, characters, and supplementary vigorous components to maximum level than found in characteristic of an anecdote, though the level cannot be compared with a novel as it has much higher intensity. Even though there is a vast difference between a novel and a short story but the writers of both use similar techniques of literature while creating either.

The length of a short story is not fixed. When it comes to differentiating a novel or an anecdote and a short story on the basis of its word limit there is no fixed criteria. There is no formal differentiation in terms of word count. In fact, the parameters of each is provided by the oratorical and real-world context in which a certain story is

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created and deliberated, therefore the constituents of a short story might vary concerning its genera, countries, periods, and critics. The principal shape of a novel as well as a short story is redirected by the strains of the existing markets where it is going to be published. The development of the form also is dependent on the requirements of publishing industry and the guidelines provided by them as they wish to publish only that form which generates revenue.

The short stories can be compiled into one lengthy book and its size and price can match the price and length of a novel. The writers of short stories can describe their creation as part of the imaginative and individual manifestation of the form. They may not like to be categorized as writers of a particular form or genre.

A short story generally incorporates a solo central character and a few extra supporting characters. This is done so that the story can be given a structure and the monotony can be broken. The central character is recognized as primary character of the story. The writer can include comprehensive details about the setting, approaches and sensitivity. The story is centred on the primary character by the writer. Moreover, the central character frequently is the leading role or star in the story and may be referred as the protagonist while the antagonist is the character who plays a negative role in the story and is against the protagonist throughout the short story.

4.3 THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO: EDGAR ALLAN POE

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis of the short story.

4.3.1 About the Author

The Cask of Amontillado was published in 1846 by the American short-story writer, essayist, and poet Edgar Allan Poe. The short story was the last creation of the author and is considered to be one of his best short stories. It is a story of revenge, murder, suffering, and obsession. The story is set in a vast Italian underground cemetery (Italian catacomb). The story is a journey into the gloomy and cryptic recesses of the human inner self.

The author was born on 19 January 1809 and his parents were actors David and Eliza Poe. The author lost his parents when he was just two-years-old and was made to be separated from his other siblings. The author was said to be attracted to gloomy themes because of his orphaned state. Poe has a fascinating biography and has been a topic of several debates and gossips. For instance, he is supposed to have died because of a bite of a rabid dog. However, he most likely would've died due to his drug and alcohol-related problems. He was known to be heavy drinker, and along with that he was addicted to the drug laudanum as well.

In spite of all the rumours, there is no denying the fact that as a writer Poe was absolutely vivid, farsighted, and powerful with his writings. He essentially developed the genre of mystery or detective fiction along with science fiction, and he carried a very clear-cut idea about the nature and aim of his stories, same preciseness is reflected in his essays as well. Most readers find Edgar Allan Poe's stories to be enjoyable as they are comparable to an intricate puzzle. The readers have to exercise their brains in order

Check Your Progress

1. What are fables?
2. Name some of the initial experts of short story in America.

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to figure out the story. *The Cask of Amontillado* is very crisp, and it helps the readers follow the details very easily.

4.3.2 The Cask of Amontillado: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

Summary

The Cask of Amontillado, occasionally known as *The Casque of Amontillado* was published as a short story in the November (1846) edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The book was one of the most widely read magazines in America at that time. And it was published merely one more time in Poe's life. The story is staged in an anonymous Italian city during the time of the carnival but the exact year is not mentioned. The story is about a man wanting to take revenge from his friend who he feels has insulted him terribly, as a result of which he wants to kill him. The story is about a person being buried alive in the box by detainment. The author has narrated the story from the point of view of the murderer; this perspective is also seen in other works by author such as *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*.

The story begins with the narrator, Montresor, speaking with an unnamed individual, who knows him well, about the day he was successful in his exercising his plan for revenge on Fortunato. Fortunato was a nobleman and the narrator's friend and colleague. The narrator tells that he killed his friend during the carnival. The reason for the murder was that he was annoyed over all the wounds and insults the friend had given him. He explains that the murder was easily carried out because Fortunato was drunk and dazed, and wearing a clown's motley.

The act of murder is unfolded in the following sequence. Montresor convinces Fortunato to come for a private wine-tasting outing by informing him about his access to about 130 gallons (a pipe full) of rare vintage Amontillado wine. He suggests gaining approval of the pipe's substances by inviting a wine enthusiast, colleague Luchesi, for the tasting session. Montresor is confident of the fact that Fortunato will look for the opportunity to boast about his own developed palate for wine. He will further try to convince Montresor that he does not need Luchesi for approving the quality of the wine as he himself is capable of doing that. Fortunato is so confident that he even jokes about the questionable authority of Luchesi given that he 'cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry'. They both go to the palazzo where the wine cellar is located. On reaching the wine cellar, Montresor serves him the wine. At first, Montresor serves wines like Medoc and then De Grave so as to get him to a drunken state. All this time, Montresor fakes a concern towards Fortunato and suggests that they should leave, he even informs Fortunato of the wet atmosphere inside and how it would aggravate his cough but Fortunato is adamant to keep going inside and says that '[he] shall not die of a cough'.

In the course of their walk, Montresor mentions his family coat of arms: 'a golden foot in a blue background crushing a snake whose fangs are embedded in the foot's heel, with the motto *Nemo me impune lacessit* ('No one attacks me with impunity')'. On hearing this, Fortunato makes an ostentatious, laughable movement with a raised bottle of wine. When Montresor gives the impression that he has not understood the gesture, Fortunato inquires, 'You are not of the masons?'. To which Montresor replies that he is, and when Fortunato says he does not believe him and demands a proof, Montresor shows him the trowel he had with him. Once they reach a slot, Montresor informs Fortunato that the wine is inside the slot. By this time, Fortunato is completely drunk and

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without any suspicions steps inside the slot and immediately upon entering he is chained to the wall by Montresor. After making Fortunato immobile, Montresor announces that as Fortunato does not want to leave, he must let him be inside and all alone. Montresor retrieves the brick and mortar that he had kept nearby, earlier and starts to fill up the slot with the help of his trowel, he entombs Fortunato alive inside the slot. Once Fortunato realizes what is actually happening, he tries to break away from the chains in order to escape and when he struggles to free himself, he begins to shout for help and in turn is mocked by Montresor who knows that nobody will be able to hear his cries. Fortunato tries to laugh it off by saying that it is a part of a joke and now they must leave as people are waiting for them, especially his wife. All this while, Montresor continues to erect the wall and once he reaches the last part, Fortunato cries and asks Montresor to leave him in the name of God. Montresor before placing the last brick puts a torch inside the opening. After finishing the wall, Montresor begins to feel a little sick but he quickly dismisses the feeling and blames it on the wetness of the underground cemetery.

Montresor ends his narration by telling his friend that after fifty years also, Fortunato's body still hangs from the chains in the slot where he had put him. The murderer Montresor then says: 'May he rest in peace!' (*in pace requiescat!*).

The story has been told in first person and it is for this reason that the name of the narrator is only revealed in the end. Till then, he is referred to as 'the narrator' in the story. The readers learn about the narrator's name in the last few lines of the story where Fortunato while begging for his mercy calls him by his name 'Montresor.' It is the last cry of Fortunato which gives out the name of the narrator. The narrator tells his friend that he had killed Fortunato fifty years ago and nobody till date has found out about his murderous act.

Critical Analysis

Even though the subject matter of the story is a murder, *The Cask of Amontillado* is not an account about uncovering the murderer like in *The Purloined Letter*; no investigation takes place in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* or committed by Montresor. In fact, the story is about a narrative by the murderer about the crime that he has committed a long time ago. The enigmatic matter in *The Cask of Amontillado* is the motive behind the act of murder committed by the narrator or Montresor. In the absence of an investigator in the tale, it is now the reader's onus to find the murderer.

The motive has just been explained vaguely by the narrator who mentions the 'thousand injuries' and 'when he ventured upon insult'. The readers may assume that the reason behind the fatal revenge are these insults which had hurt the narrator to the extent that he had taken his friend's life. There is a reference in the story where Montresor gives the impression that his family had a better standing at some point of time but it is no longer the same. Fortunato is also referred to as making demeaning comments about Montresor's elimination from Freemasonry.

Several critics have concluded that Montresor lacked any concrete reason for murdering Fortunato and he could be insane to do so, although this observation does not hold much ground as the writer has not provided any such input in his detailed outline of the plot. There is also an indication that Montresor is virtually as oblivious about his motives for revenge as Fortunato himself. While remembering the act of murder, Montresor observes, 'A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who

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has done the wrong'. Once Fortunato is restrained to the wall with the chains and just about to be buried alive, Montresor simply ridicules and copies his cries for mercy instead of telling him the reason for this treatment. From this situation, the critics have assumed that even Montresor was not sure about the precise contents and the extent of the offenses committed by Fortunato and whether they were so grave that the poor soul had to be murdered for them. Superfluous analysis into the ambiguous hurts and abuses might be just in the mind of the narrator and may not actually be serious.

Montresor came from a well-off family and maybe due to the fall in the status he suffers from inferiority complex and unnecessarily reads too much into harmless jabber by Fortunato who is from a rich and established family. This assumption is based on the name of the victim. The reason for the murder could just be because Fortunato has a better status and had exceeded Montresor in society; this itself could be considered as an insult by Montresor and become a reason for revenge.

There is a hint that Montresor holds Fortunato responsible for his despondency and forfeiture of respect and self-esteem in the society. It is simple to establish that Fortunato is a Freemason, whereas Montresor is not, and this may be one of the reasons for Fortunato's rise in the society and his step towards the upper class. For this rise, too, Montresor has blamed Fortunato through the following lines: 'You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was'. This switching of affluences makes a suggestion that, as the names Montresor and Fortunato are similar to each other, hence there is an emotional common empathy between the casualty and the killer. This implication of an empathetic interchange is further reinforced with the suggestion that Montresor buries Fortunato specifically in the Montresor family catacombs instead of killing him at any other place in the city which is in the middle of the commotion of the Carnival. It is due to these congregation of the two characters that the bigger symbolism of the Montresor's crest is seen—'the footsteps on the serpent while the serpent forever has his fangs embedded in the heel.'

Once the critics try to investigate the nature of Montresor, they realize that there could be another implication of Montresor's crest. One of the understandings is that Montresor is justified in crushing the rude Fortunato as that will put an end to the numerous wounds he has inflicted. But a more probable understanding is provided by the author that the unsighted fool Fortunato, mistakenly, puts his foot on the snake, who according to the author is the devious and scheming Montresor, who returns the unintentional hurting by sinking his teeth deeply in the heel of his wrongdoer.

L. Moffitt Cecil of Texas Christian University discusses that even though Fortunato has been projected as a wine expert but his activities in the story do not substantiate this assumption. For instance, Fortunato remarks that his fellow nobleman will not be able to correctly differentiate Amontillado from Sherry while Amontillado is actually a variation of Sherry, and he drinks expensive French wine, De Grave, in a much unsophisticated manner. Cecil also feels that a person who is truly a wine expert will never taste wine when he is not in a sober state as the delicate flavour of wine cannot be tasted over any other alcohol. On a lighter note, Cecil comments that since Fortunato was not showing the due regard to such an expensive and vintage French wine he deserved to be buried alive.

The way in which Montresor's bricklaying has been elaborately explained in the story has led to many commentators believing that the author must have personal experience of the art. They feel that it is a possibility since all parts of Poe's life are not known to people, especially about the period after 1837 when he left the Southern Literary

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Messenger. The way Montresor has imprisoned Fortunato alive within the confinement of four walls has been a feature in few other stories written by the author. The act of immurement is there in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Premature Burial*, *The Black Cat*, and *Berènice*.

Motivation for the Story

A mythical modern legend says that the motivation for *The Cask of Amontillado* arose from an account which was narrated to Poe in Castle Island, Massachusetts, in 1827. As per the legend, when Poe was based at Castle Island in 1827 he came across a memorial which was made in the memory of Lieutenant Robert Massie. Massie was killed on Christmas Day in 1817 by Lieutenant Gustavus Drane during a sword duel. They got into a duel after they have a tiff while they were playing cards. The legend has conferred that all the soldiers decided to take revenge. They got him drunk and in his drunken state they lured him into a cell, the way Montresor had chained Fortunato is the same way in which the soldiers chained Drane to a wall, and sealed him inside the cell. Though later it was claimed that this was a false story as the skeleton which the author had found at the Island in a cell did not belong to Drane as he is believed to have lived until 1846 after being court-martialled from the army.

Poe's main source could be the story *A Man Built in a Wall* by Joel Headley, who reportedly had seen a confined skeleton in the wall of a church in Italy. In fact, the story written by Headley has fine points which are there in *The Cask of Amontillado* as well: it not only has the part about the enemy being walled into a slot but also gives a description of the art of bricklaying which is also done by the Poe in his story, in Headley's story, too, the motive for murder is revenge; and in both the stories the victims plead to the murderer to let them go. The author of *The Cask of Amontillado* could have been inspired from the themes of *La Grande Bretèche* by Honoré de Balzac or from the story of *The Quaker City* and *The Monks of Monk Hall* written by George Lippard; he was also very close to Poe. There is also a conjecture that Poe might have copied the motto of Montresor's family % 'Nemo me impune lacessit' from *The last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper, which also features the same phrase.

It is believed that Poe had written the short story as a retort to Thomas Dunn English, an American politician, as both were rivals and had many conflicts, generally circling about literary travesties of each other. Poe was very offended by one of the works done by English; in fact, he was so upset that he sued the writer's editor for publishing it. The editor worked for *The New York Mirror*. In 1846, English wrote a novel titled as *1844, or, The Power of the S.F.* The theme of the novel was revenge. The plot of the story was complicated and the readers were not able to follow. Nonetheless, the story had references about secret societies and the central theme was revenge. It involved a character called Marmaduke Hammerhead. Poe retorted with *The Cask of Amontillado*, and throughout the story he made some particular mentions about the aspects of the novel written by English. In *The Cask of Amontillado*, the character of Fortunato makes a reference to the Masons belonging to a secret society; this can be a parallel to English's *1844's* secret societies. Fortunato gestures of distress are also portrayed in the similar fashion as in the novel, *1844*. The image used by English about the token with a hawk grasping a snake in its claws, is identical to the picture described on Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake, with the slight difference that the snake is at the same time biting the sole of the shoe. The scenario about the vault in *The Cask of Amontillado* is derived from the sequence in the novel which

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happens in the underground vault. Finally, Poe does not take acknowledgment for his personal literary revenge and instead crafts a short story as a response to the novel. His story is written with a remarkable effect, as suggested by him in the essay 'The Philosophy of Composition'.

Poe could have also taken the inspiration from the Washingtonian movement that was promoted by the members who supported temperance. The group contained people who had given up drinking and asked people to stay away from alcohol. This group could have played a small role in motivating some parts of the story. It is believed that Poe might have been interested in joining the movement as he wanted to himself give up drinking. In 1843, Poe had anticipations about attaining an appointment in the politics and so he might have written this story to make people realise the ill-effects of drinking and how it can cost someone their life. *The Cask of Amontillado* might have been an attempt to tell a gloomy tale about adopting temperance.

Richard P. Benton was Poe's scholar and he has stated his view about the motivation of the story: 'Poe's protagonist is an Englished version of the French Montrésor and has argued forcefully that Poe's model for Montresor 'was Claude de Bourdeille, comte de Montrésor (Count of Montrésor), the 17th-century political conspirator in the entourage of King Louis XIII's weak-willed brother, Gaston d'Orléans'. The renowned intriguer and memoir-writer was initially connected to The Cask of Amontillado by Burton R. Pollin; he was also Poe's scholar.'

Additional motivation for the way Fortunato has been murdered originates from the dread of being buried alive. The period in which the story has been written, the coffins used to be designed with bells so that people outside could be alerted in case someone was being buried alive. On some occasions, the body used to be tied with bells so that an alerting signal could be easily given. The story incorporates this element through Fortunato attire; he is described as being dressed in a clown's outfit with bells on his hat. In the end, the narrator does hear the bells from inside the bricked wall but he decides to ignore them and leaves the catacomb.

The story, *The Cask of Amontillado*, has been adapted in form of movies as well as television series on a number of occasions: *The Cask of Amontillado* the screenplay was given by Richard

- A British film was made by Mario Cavalli, the screenplay was given by Richard Deakin and Anton Blake played the role of Montresor and Patrick Monckton of Fortunato in 1998.
- The fourth part of 'American Masters' season 9, named 'Edgar Allan Poe: Terror of the Soul' adapts the story.
- In 2011, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado* was made into a film starring David JM Bielewicz and Frank Tirio, Jr. It was directed by Thad Ciechanowski, produced by Joe Serkoch, by production house DijitMedia, LLC/ Orionvega. In 2013, it won a regional Emmy Award.
- In 1976, The Alan Parsons Project put out an album named, Tales of Mystery and Imagination and one of its tracks was 'The Cask of Amontillado'.
- In 1977, Marvel Comics made a version in Marvel Classics Comics.
- In 1977, Pendulum Press did a version in The Best of Poe.
- In 1979, Moby Books did an illustrated story version in Tales of Mystery and Terror (part of their Great Illustrated Classics series). Adaptation by Marjorie P. Katz, art by Pablo Marcos.

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- Organizacion Editorial Novaro of Mexico in 1980 made a version of the story in Cuentos De Edgar Allan Poe (part of their Clasicos Ilustrados series). Adaptation by Hector D. Shelley, art by Guido Del Carpio Rivera.
- In 1982, Troll Associates made a children book with illustration based on the story. Adaptation by David E. Cutts, art by Ann Toulmin-Rothe.
- Globe Communications Corp made an adaptation about the story in Monsters Attack #2 in 1982. Adaptation by Charles E. Hall, art by Walter James Brogan
- In 1995, Mojo Press did a version in The Tell-Tale Heart: Stories and Poems by Edgar Allan Poe. Art by Bill D. Fountain.
- Udon Entertainment's Manga Classics line published The Stories of Edgar Allan Poe, which included a manga presentation version of *The Cask of Amontillado*.

Themes

- **Independence and Captivity:** The divergence concerning independence and captivity is thrilling in *The Cask of Amontillado*. The freedom of Montresor is dependent on Fortunato; therefore, one has to die so that the other can be free.
- **Treachery:** It initiates the action in *The Cask of Amontillado*. A series of hideous retributions is started by the betrayal of one of the characters. Betrayal is done so that revenge and murder can take place.
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** Though there is mention of only wine in *The Cask of Amontillado*. But several other forms of drugs are referred in between the lines indirectly. The story also tries to deliver a message of ill-effects of alcohol; as had Fortunato not been in a drunken state, Montresor would not have been able to take his revenge.
- **Mortality:** *The Cask of Amontillado* has a scary obsession with death, corpses, and bones. This is one of the last stories written by the author before his death and it has many elements which are related to mortality.
- **Imprudence and Foolishness:** In *The Cask of Amontillado*, the author has clearly shown how imprudence and foolishness can become fatal. The tale strengthens human idiocy and madness to extravagances which can make them harm a friend and fellow human-being.

Characters

- Montresor is the narrator who in order to take revenge has resorted to murder. The author has not been able to completely justify the reasons for the revenge. The injuries and the insults mentioned by the narrator could have been his misunderstandings and assumption that his friend was demeaning him due to his lack of status. The character of Montresor has been shown to be very cold and ruthless, who has not shied away from committing murder for some petty insults which may as well be a part of his imagination.
- Fortunato seems like a gullible fool who loves to drink and as a result could be easily fooled and murdered by Montresor. He trusted people very easily and for that reason he could be fooled through just an outing of wine tasting. The character of Fortunato thinks himself to be an authority over wine and that is why he told Montresor that after he got his approval he did not have to get any more guarantees. He is not aware that his innocent gestures have annoyed Montresor so much so that he is about to kill him.

- Luchesi is a character who has been used by the author as a device to create the plot. His mention is only to instigate the action in the story. Montresor purposely mentions his name for tasting the wine so that he can get Fortunato excited and prove himself to be the expert where vintage wine is concerned.
- The mention of Montresor's family is made by the author just to stress the point that he comes from a socially well-off family and for that reason the catacomb has all the graves which belong to his ancestors.

Literary Devices

- **Symbolism, Imagery, Allegory:** The author has extensively used symbolism in his story as each detail is trying to convey a message. He has used symbols as he wants to keep the readers engrossed and compels them to decipher a lot of messages that he could have conveyed in a straight forward style. Each aspect appears to convey something else. In order to create suspense in the story, Poe appears to convey something else. For instance, at the time when Fortunato has employed foreshadowing in the story. For instance, at the time when Fortunato says, 'I shall not die of a cough,' Montresor replies, 'True,' as he has already decided how Fortunato is going to die (he is going to be buried alive and die of hunger and thirst). Montresor's description of the family coat of arms, too, foreshadow the impending happenings. The shield has a human foot stamping on an obstinate snake in the grass. In this image, the foot symbolizes Montresor and the snake in the grass symbolizes Fortunato. Even though Fortunato has offended the snake in the grass symbolizes Fortunato. Even though Fortunato has offended the snake in the grass symbolizes Fortunato. Montresor with bitter verbal abuses, Montresor will eventually crush him to death. The discussion about Masons also indicates the death of Fortunato. Fortunato contests Montresor's assertion that he is a fellow mason and Montresor responds by showing him that he is even carrying a trowel. The trowel is later on going to be used by Montresor in order to dig Fortunato's grave.
- **Setting:** The story has been set-up as a horror and gloomy fiction. The concluding dialogue between Montresor and Fortunato intensify the horror.
- **Narrator's point of view:** The entire story has been told from the point of view of Montresor, hence he is the narrator. He emotionless, cruel, ruthless, conspiratorial, and revengeful. He gives out every detail about how he mercilessly buried a man alive and at the end did not feel guilty about it.
- **Genre and tone of the story:** The story is a gloomy horror tale. Most of the story takes place inside an underground burial area and late at night. The author has tried to describe the interiors of the graveyard in a very descriptive and elegant style and tried to even describe the architecture of the graves. The author has used sarcasm at a number of places and he has managed to narrate a spine-tingling story with several elements of irony. The title of the story also adds elements of mystery to the tale of revenge of Montresor.

4.4 THE DUCHESS AND THE JEWELLER: VIRGINIA WOOLF

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* by Virginia Woolf. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

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Check Your Progress

3. When was *The Cask of Amontillado* originally published?
4. What is the enigmatic matter of the *The Cask of Amontillado*?
5. State the phrases through which Montresor explains his motive for murder in the story.
6. Name the story which mentions the image similar to that of Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake.

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4.4.1 About the Author

Adeline Virginia Woolf was born on 25 January 1882. The English writer has been regarded as notable modernists of her time. She has been identified as the forerunner of using the stream of consciousness as a device for narrations. She belonged to a well-off family in Kensington and she did her graduation from the King's College in London, as a result of which was very familiar with the initial activists of higher education for women. Her writing career started in 1900 and during the period between the World Wars, she became an important and a dominant personality of the intellectual group called the Bloomsbury. Her work began to be recognized in the London literary society. Her first novel, *The Voyage Out* was published in 1915, the book was published by Hogarth Press, and this publishing house was established by Woolf in partnership with her husband, Leonard Woolf. Her most popular writings consist of her novels namely, *Mrs Dalloway* which was published in 1925, *To the Lighthouse* published in 1927 and *Orlando* which was published in 1928. In 1929 she wrote an essay titled 'A Room of One's Own', the essay was as lengthy as a book and it carried a personal remark by her: 'A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.'

During the movements of feminist criticism in 1970, Woolf's work came to be recognised in a major way as it was believed that it inspired feminism. The movements during this time made her pro-feminist aspect in her writings stand out and as a result, her work began to be read world-wide. Due to its world-wide recognition her work was translated in many languages. Woolf died at a young age of 59 as she suffered from mental ill-ness. In 1941, she died due to drowning. As a modernist writer, her work was considered to be the most appreciated amongst her colleagues like Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. There was a decline in her fame post World War II, but then she gained popularity with the increase in feminist criticism during the 1970s. Her first writings were published by *The Guardian* in December 1904 and in 1905 she began to write for *The Times Literary Supplement*.

In 1915, *The Voyage Out*, was published by Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd, the publishing house owned by her half-brother. The original title of the novel was *DeSalvo* had redone the initial version of *The Voyage Out* and this is presently offered to public under the proposed title. DeSalvo claims that various revisions done by Woolf in the text were due to the changes happening in her personal life. Woolf continued to put out books and essays which got attention from critics as well her readers. Bhaskar A. Shukla, in his book *Feminism: From Mary Wollstonecraft to Betty Friedan*, has commented about the writings of Woolf stating- 'Virginia Woolf's peculiarities as a fiction writer have tended to obscure her central strength: she is arguably the major lyrical novelist in the English language. Her novels are highly experimental: a narrative, frequently uneventful and commonplace, is refracted—and sometimes almost dissolved—in the characters' receptive consciousness. Intense lyricism and stylistic virtuosity fuse to create a world overabundant with auditory and visual impressions'. He has further stated that, 'The intensity of Virginia Woolf's poetic vision elevates the ordinary, sometimes banal settings'—often wartime environments—'of most of her novels'. 'For example, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) centres on the efforts of Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-aged society woman, to organize a party, even as her life is paralleled with that of Septimus Warren Smith, a working-class veteran who has returned from the First World War bearing deep psychological scars'.

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Her book, *To the Lighthouse* reconnoitres the passage of time, and how women in the society become a source of emotional strength for men. *Orlando* is considered to be the least intense novels of the author. The story is a biography of a parodic nature about a young nobleman who does not age in thirty years and instead he changes into a woman suddenly. The book partially portrays the author's male friend Vita Sackville-West. The purpose of writing this book was to cheer up Vita after he had lost his family home. The techniques of historical biographers are being scoffed in the book, *Orlando*; the author projects the biographer's character to be pompous so that he can be ridiculed. *The Waves*, which was published in 1931, is a story about six friends whose reproductions, are similar to singings than to inner orations as a result they produce a wave-like atmosphere which resembles a prose poem more than a novel based on a plot. *Flush: A Biography* can be described as a fiction as well as a biography since it is partially both. The biography is a cross-genre amalgam of fiction and nonfiction by Virginia Woolf. She had written this after she completed the emotional novel, *The Waves*. It is the story of a cocker spaniel belonging to Victorian poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The book is transcribed from the point of view of the spaniel. Woolf was inspired after the popularity of the play titled, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* by Rudolf Besier.

In 1941, the author wrote her last novel titled as *Between the Acts*, and according to Bhaskar A. Shukla, 'Her last work, *Between the Acts* (1941), sums up and magnifies Woolf's chief preoccupations: the transformation of life through art, sexual ambivalence, and meditation on the themes of flux of time and life, presented simultaneously as corrosion and rejuvenation—all set in a highly imaginative and symbolic narrative encompassing almost all of English history.' The book is considered to be the most expressively poetic work of the author as it is not only emotional but the style which is adopted in the book closely resembles verses. The writings of Woolf were very supportive of the tendencies of rationalism followed by the Bloomsbury group. Writes like Jorge Luis Borges and Marguerite Yourcenar translated works by Woolf in more than fifty languages so that they could be read all over the world.

Influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf

Russian literature had a major influence on Woolf. From 1912 onwards she embraced the artistic conventions of Russian literature. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's style about depiction of a fluid mind in action facilitated to inspire Woolf's works on a 'discontinuous writing process', although Woolf was not in favour of his fixation with 'extreme psychosomatic' and the 'wild instability of emotions', which he projected through his characters. She also did not agree with his favourable attitude towards his right-wing, imperialist politics. Dostoyevsky was a fervent follower of the autocracy of Imperial Russia. Where Woolf was against the overrated emotional nature of Dostoyevsky's content she completely admired the work of Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy. Chekhov's stories about ordinary people performing their routine activities were liked by Woolf. The stories of Chekhov were about banal things and the plots lacked a well-ordered ending. Woolf was able to learn a lot from the way Tolstoy wrote his books, she learnt about how the storywriter must portray the psychological and inner state of the character. Woolf was influenced by the works of Ivan Turgenev and from his writings she learnt that an author has to consider several 'I's' while writing a novel, and the author has to not only consider the 'I's' but at the same time balance all of them first with the character and then with the entire plot. She realized that writing novels required the author to be completely passionate about the art of writing. The facts of the story should be in complete harmony with the author's overstretching visualization.

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American writer Henry David Thoreau was another significant influence on Woolf. In one of her essays in 1917, Woolf wrote that as a writer she constantly wanted to follow Thoreau so that she could incorporate his style into her work. Woolf admired Thoreau for the 'effortlessness' with which he was able to write about complex topics, like the soul. Corresponding to Thoreau, Woolf also believed that peaceful state of mind helps in contemplating and understanding the world better. Together they believed that writing and life are related to each other hence it is better to write about simple things so that people can relate to them. They felt that it is not necessary to have complexity in the plot to generate emotions, peace and presence of mind is enough. The struggles which were a part of human relationships in the present time were a matter of deep concern for both of them. Other important influences comprise of: William Shakespeare, George Eliot, Marcel Proust, Emily Brontë, Daniel Defoe, James Joyce and E. M. Forster.

The Duchess and the Jeweller is a short story written by Virginia Woolf in 1938. Being a promoter of addressing the 'stream of consciousness,' Woolf in her story illustrates the views and activities of a materialistic jeweller. According to Woolf, people who are corrupt are selfish as well and they do not regret their actions. The story has been written in order to prove this belief of the author. The story was initially published in *Harper's Bazaar Magazine* in 1938 and after Woolf's death as a part of a collection of short stories in *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* in 1944.

4.4.2 *The Duchess and The Jeweller*: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

The protagonist of the story is Oliver Bacon. He is one of the affluent jewellers in England, though at one time he was just a poor boy living on the streets of England. In order to earn money, as a boy, he stole dogs and sold them to rich women. He also procured fake watches and sold them to rich women. He suffers from subservience because of his past. Even though he has become rich and is well respected in the society of Lambourne. She wants to sell pearls to him so that she can pay for her gambling debts. The pearls are imitation, but she is able to cleverly sell them to Oliver for the price of twenty thousand. When Oliver makes an attempt to check the authenticity of the pearls, the duchess very smartly invites him for a party which will be attended by aristocrats and she even mentions her daughter's presence. Oliver has a liking for the Duchess's daughter Diana, as soon as he hears her name he signs on the cheque. Oliver purchases the fake pearls as he wishes to be present at the party and be with Diana with whom he has fallen in love. Moreover, he wants to be a part of the rich circle of the society. After the Duchess leaves, he looks at his mother's picture and apologizes.

The story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* reproduces the English society during the author's time. Social mobility was slowly developing during that time. The common people were rising to an upper status whereas, due to self-indulgence, the well-offs were struggling. The protagonist of the story, Oliver Bacon becomes rich because of his hard work but is still unable to forget his past and suffers from an inferiority complex. Now he has his residence in posh and prime location of Piccadilly, in London. He has become a part of the rich English society and is invited to several functions by the aristocrats. The Duchess of Lambourne also visits him at his office. These aspects in the story show how Oliver, a commoner, had managed to rise in the social setup. The story also reveals how the rich are losing their wealth and status because of their gambling habits, the Duchess comes to Oliver to sell fake pearls as she is in need of some money

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to repay her debts. In order to get the twenty-thousand, she lets go of all her dignity and nobleness. The Duchess does not shy away from using her daughter as a pawn in order to get the money. It can be concluded that the author has charmingly revealed the English society during her time. She has shown the falling of the bigwigs as a result of their self-indulgence and the moving ahead of the commoners due to their hard work.

The pearls traded by the Duchess of Lambourne to Oliver were fake yet Oliver Bacon accepted them and gave the cheque of twenty thousand, the author has stated two reasons for this, the first reason was because Bacon wanted to be a part of aristocratic circles. Even though he was rich yet he felt out of class, hence when the Duchess invited him for the party which was going to be attended by the high-ups of the society he got lured in. The second reason was that the Duchess mentioned that her daughter Diana was going to be present at the party and he could spend the weekend with the woman he loved. Oliver gets so carried away that writes the cheque without checking their genuine-ness.

In the story the Duchess and the Jeweller are referred to as '... friends, yet enemies; he was master, she was mistress; each cheated the other, each needed the other, each feared the other...' When the characters of the Duchess and the jeweller are compared it is realized that the expression in the story is correct. The second part of the statement states: 'He was master, she was mistress.' During the course of the story it is revealed that Oliver had become rich using fair and unfair methods, so in a way he is a master in cheating people and the Duchess is a mistress as she also is a cheat who fools Oliver into buying fake pearls. The statement, 'Each cheated the other, each needed the other, and each feared the other.' reveals that both the characters cheated in their own way and for their personal gain. In spite of knowing that the pearls were not genuine, Oliver paid for them because he wanted to go for the party and be with Diana. When the Duchess came to visit him, Oliver purposely keeps her waiting. Also, since they both need each other for their own personal reasons, the writer has remarked that they feared each other, because they knew each other's weaknesses and secrets. They have been called friends by the author as they now belonged to the same financial status in the society.

The author has addressed the British class system in the story. Woolf shows no mercy in her criticism of all those who use devious methods to rise in the society, she has included the vanities of the upper class as well as the people of the lower class.

Characters

The story has two main characters: The Duchess and Oliver. The character of Oliver Bacon has been given prominent development by the author in the story. The Duchess is one of the typical figures; the way of her entry into Oliver's place of work has been described by the author as standard for all Dukes and Duchesses: 'the aroma, the prestige, the arrogance, the pomp'. The author has conveyed that she has a commanding feature by comparing her presence metaphorically with the image of a wave and just as the wave breaks when it touches shore, she breaks down as soon as she takes a seat and begins to wallow and fall all over Oliver. The author has portrayed her to be oversized and dressed in very tight fitting clothes. By providing this description of Duchess with the waves and the dressing, the author perhaps has tried to reflect that she lacked discipline and did not have a very strong character. Woolf depicts the Duchess to be a very careless person. She has been shown as an extravagant individual who loves to spend money and take advantage of her status. She is spoilt as well as selfish and

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because of her extravagance she has put herself into trouble and uses fraud to get out of the situation. She is having financial problems because of her habit of gambling and now she needs help from the jeweller so that she can gather cash to pay her debts. The other character in the story is Oliver Bacon, who is a rich jeweller. Like the Duchess, he is also projected as an unscrupulous individual who would not stop from taking advantage of others for his personal gain. The character of Oliver suffers from an inferiority complex, he has risen from rags to the riches and is yet not content with all that he has achieved. According to the author, both Oliver and the Duchess are materialistic and have no morals. They both cannot be described as friends as they are interacting with each other due to their personal motives. The Duchess has come to sell her fake pearls and in order to dupe him, she very manipulatively after showing him the pearls starts to talk about the party she is planning over the weekend with the guest list including the rich and the famous. When Oliver attempts to check the pearls she cleverly extends the invitation to him as well and informs him that her daughter Diana is also going to be present. On hearing this, Oliver promptly signs the check because he does not want to lose the opportunity to be with Diana as he is in love with her.

Although at one point, it appears that Oliver is truly in love with Diana but soon the readers realize that he is using her just as a means to an end as he wishes to be a part of the upper class. This can be seen from that fact that since the Duchess has subtly conveyed to Oliver that Diana can be his, for a price, the readers soon catch on that Oliver was not fooled by the Duchess to pay for the fake pearls but he actually paid the money because he wanted to be with Diana. He treated Diana as a commodity and this is what makes the readers observe a similarity between the Duchess and Oliver. They both have shown lack of ethics in order to gain personally and both are equally manipulative. Although Oliver apologizes to the picture of his mother for what his actions but in the end, he justifies it by saying that he paid the price for Diana, he plans to go for the party and become a part of the upper class.

The author feels that both are selfish and unethical. The greed inside is driving them and the author is concerned that most of the people in the society are like the jeweller and they could actually be ruling the country in near future by taking over the aristocrats. The author feels that people like Oliver are more corrupt than the aristocrats as they have just realized the luxuries of life and would go to extreme limits to get more. According to Woolf's assessment, it is not necessary that if one class overthrows the ruling class then change is bound to take place, particularly when the class in power is not better prepared and knowledgeable. Finally, it can be said that civilized society requires civilized individuals to bring about ethical changes and change is not always bought by the upper and the moneyed class.

Themes

- Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation. The story has been narrated in third person and is a part of the collection titled *The Complete Shorter Fiction*. The narrator of the story has not been introduced and this has managed to keep the readers interested and realize the importance of the setting of a story. The detailed description provided by the author about the residence in which Oliver stays highlights the theme related to appearance and its relevance in his life. The author gives a description of his earlier lifestyle so that the readers are able to understand the struggle he has gone through to reach his present status. Earlier

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he used to live in a filthy alley in slums and now he lives in a posh flat in one of the prime locations of London. And yet the author has described his successful jewellery store as a 'dark little place.' This description is meant for the readers to realize that in spite of a grand outwardly appearance from inside Oliver has not changed. He is very concerned about what people think about him in the story and for that reason he wants to appear successful.

- During the story the author tries to explore the theme of trust. Oliver is completely conscious about the ways of the Duchess, as on previous occasions too she had tried to sell fake jewellery. Hence she cannot be trusted. In the same way the author has made the readers aware that during his younger days, Oliver used to sell stolen dogs and fake watches to the rich. The author clearly suggests that it is not just the poor who cannot be trusted but the rich, too, are not trustworthy. This has been well established in the story.
- Vanity is another theme which the author uses in the story, especially when Oliver knowingly buys fake pearls from the Duchess. Oliver does not bother to verify the pearls because he wants to spend a weekend with Diana. He feels that by the pearls because he wants to spend a weekend with Diana. He feels that by attending the party he will get an opportunity to be in the company of the aristocrats and he will be accepted by them. It is evident that Oliver links affluence and the accrual of riches to the upper class of the society. He feels that wealth will help him to be accepted by aristocrats of the society. Oliver believes that by being wealthy, he will be accepted by those who have been born upper class.
- The author has on several occasions has shown the manipulative nature of the characters. In order to sell her fake pearls, the Duchesses calls Oliver an old friend who has to help her to get out of the tricky situation. By calling him a friend the Duchess is trying to make him feel that they both belong to the same class, she is not only being charming but at the same time taking advantage of Oliver's insecurities and feeding his desire to be able to belong to the upper class.
- Another theme which stands out in the story is the lack of contentment, Oliver in spite of becoming a rich jeweller and acquiring many assets is not happy with his life and he is constantly aspiring for more wealth and recognition. Another aspect which highlights dissatisfaction is the fact that Oliver continues to try to impress his dead mother. His behaviour also suggests lack of self-confidence and for this reason he is constantly seeking others approval.
- The author's use of animal imagery in the story is very obvious. At one point the author has compared Oliver's pursuit for the impeccable jewellery to that of a hog trying to search a truffle piece. Well along in the story Oliver has been compared to a horse by the author, as he is constantly whinnying like a horse. These comparisons by the author are done in order to highlight the nature of Oliver to the readers. The author is trying to convey that Oliver is not a very pleasant individual. The author has used animal imagery to describe the bag which the Duchess was carrying for the pearls; the author has compared it to a ferret. The use of animal imagery in the story on a number of occasions may also be the author's way to convey her own disregard for the people belonging to the upper society. The surname given by the author to Oliver could also be way of her trying to be uncomplimentary towards Oliver.
- In the concluding part of the story, the author has highlighted the insecurities and the vulnerabilities of Oliver as a result of which, he allows the Duchess to fool him once again. In the end, he asks for forgiveness from his mother and by this

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action the author is trying to show that in his mind, Oliver still belongs to the alley and is being scolded by his mother for selling stolen dogs. Oliver is unable to have control over his vanity and his constant aspiration to belong to the upper social circles. Even after realizing that the Duchess has sold him pearls which are fake, he does not take any action to get his lost money back, rather he states, 'it is to be a long week-end'. The Duchess has managed to not only take advantage of Oliver's insecurities but she has also used his vulnerability towards her daughter to get what she wants. The author has used control as one of the themes, but the irony of the situation is that it should have been Oliver who should have been in control rather than the Duchess who was desperately in need of money. The Duchess very cleverly controls the meeting and finally gets what she wanted.

Techniques

The author did not have too much opportunity to experiment and innovate in the short story as she is able to do while writing a novel. Nonetheless she was able to focus on a single feature and completely allowed it to control the outlook of the story. In *The Duchess and the Jeweller*, the author has concentrated on the tones of the central character as he is the main feature. The main aim of her technique, according to James Wood as he has mentioned in *The New Republic* was, 'to unwrap consciousness.' 'Character to the Edwardians,' he has further stated, 'was everything that could be described. For Woolf, it was everything that could not be described'. Therefore, her engagement of a stream-of-conscious narrative allowed her to precisely enter the mind of a character and since the mind functions in reaction to the direct present and as per the accumulated sensations present in the memory. Oliver's character has been unfolded by the author not only according to his present actions but the past too which has left a thorough impact.

The literary work of the British Isles was dominated by fiction novels during the major part of the nineteenth century. The short story written by Virginia Woolf can be considered as one of the pioneers of that time in England. Her style of writing in her short story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* bears resemblance to the work of Joseph Conrad as far as the detailed examination of one particular character is concerned. The description of the social standards is similar to the work of Guy de Maupassant, whereas the commanding expressive passages and conversation are resonant of few of the stories written by D. H. Lawrence and they are a part of his initial collection of 1914, titled as *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.

4.5 THE FLY: KATHERINE MANSFIELD

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Fly* by Katherine Mansfield. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

4.5.1 About the Author

Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a known modernist short story writer from New Zealand. She was born on 14 October 1888 and died at a young age of thirty-four. She grew up in colonial New Zealand and used her pen name Katherine Mansfield in her writings. Katherine left New Zealand at the age of nineteen years and went to the United Kingdom. The author was very close to D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. She was detected with extra pulmonary tuberculosis, and this became the cause of her early death.

Check Your Progress

- Name the first novel by Virginia Woolf.
- What did Virginia Woolf like about Chekhov's stories?
- How does the author refer to the Duchess and the Jeweller in the novel?
- List some of the prominent themes of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*.

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Her initial stories were published in the High School Reporter and in the Wellington Girls' High School magazine in 1898 and 1899. In 1900, her foremost officially published writings featured in the society magazine *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*. Mansfield besides being a writer was an accomplished musician as well; she had received training from Thomas Trowell. In 1902 she became infatuated with her teacher's son, Arnold Trowell, who was also a prominent musician, though he did not reciprocate her feelings. In her journals, she has written about feeling lonely in New Zealand, and reasons her disillusionment as result of the subjugation of the Māori people. Māori characters were frequently represented in a compassionate way or with optimism in some of her stories which were written closer to her death, they are mentioned in her stories, *How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped*. In 1903, she shifted to London with her sisters and began to attend Queen's College. Mansfield resumed playing the cello, as she hoped that someday she would be able to make a career for herself in the field of music. During this time, she continued to write and contribute towards the college newspaper. Seeing her dedication, she was later made the editor of the college newspaper. She was mainly fascinated with the writings of French Symbolists and Oscar Wilde. Her vivacious and charismatic approach to life and work was highly appreciated by all her peers. During her college years she met a South African writer, Ida Baker known by the name Lesley Moore. Mansfield and Moore became close friends. Mansfield concentrated on her music and writings and while she was in London she did not become a part of political activities of the time.

In 1922 Katherine wrote her short story *The Fly* and on 18 March it was published in *The Nation & Athenaeum* and then in 1923 the story appeared as a part of the collection of short stories titled as *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.

4.5.2 The Fly: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

The story *The Fly* tries to establish the fact that time heals all sorrows of people. Mr. Woodfield, is a man in a sickly state due to his age. He is not allowed too many outings by his family, except on Tuesday, when he is allowed to have his day of outing. On one such occasion, Mr Woodfield comes to visit his friend who used to be his boss as well. The author refers to Mr Woodfield's friend as 'the boss' throughout the story. The boss is rich and in good health in spite of being five years older than Mr Woodfield. Mr Woodfield notices that his ex-boss has renovated his office and changed the furniture as well. With all the changes, he also notices that there is an old framed picture on the boss's table. The author reveals to the readers that the picture belongs to the boss's son who had died during the war. The identity of the person in the picture has not been mentioned by the boss in the story. While the friends are conversing, Woodfield mentions that he had wished to inform the boss about something but now he is unable to recollect what the topic was and he seems quite restless about his inability to remember. In order to cheer him up, the boss serves him a drink of vintage whisky. Though Mr Woodfield is surprised by the gesture yet he accepts the drink. It was regarding a visit made by his daughter to their brother's grave and while they were at the graveyard, his daughters he is able to recall the topic he wished to bring out. At this point the readers come to know that the boss had lost his son six years ago during the war. The loss of the son had had a deep impact on the boss. Even the mention about his son makes the boss feel very miserable and for that reason even after Mr Woodfield departs he is upset and wishes to be alone. The memory saddens him but still he is not able to cry. He looks at the picture of his son

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on his desk and feels that he does not remember his son ever having such harsh expressions. The memory he has was of a boy who was cheerful and full of life. While he was engrossed in his thoughts, he suddenly notices that a fly had fallen into the inkpot on his desk and now it is struggling to come out. The boss takes the fly out of the pot and puts it on the blotting paper, the fly once out of the pot manages to dry itself but as soon as it is completely dry the boss puts little ink over it and as a result it starts struggling again. The boss is impressed by the way the fly tries to dry itself again though this time the fly is not able to be as quick given that it is weak from the constant struggling. When the boss drops the next ink drop the fly becomes completely powerless and dies. The boss realizes that his unkind actions has led to the death of the fly and he tosses the dead fly and the paper into the dustbin and calls the clerk to get new blotting paper for his desk. The boss all of a sudden 'feels a wretchedness that frightens him and finds himself bereft'. He attempts to think of what he was doing prior to noticing the fly but all of sudden he is completely blank and unable to even recall that he was thinking about his dead son and feeling sad remembering him.

Characters

The Fly is a short story which is a part of the collection of *Dove's Nest*. The story is considered to be one of the best works of the author and it is believed that she wrote this story after the death of her brother. *The Fly* mainly is the story of a person who has been trying to overcome the death of his son for the last six years. The author has tried to depict his anguish. Furthermore, she has tried to create an intense setup by providing indicative details. This technique has been used by Lawrence as well. The author has mentioned several characters in the story but she has concentrated only on Mr. Woodifield, who is a heart patient with very frail health. He is not allowed to be out of the house alone because of his health. He lives with his wife and daughters who let him go out of the house only on Tuesdays. Mr. Woodifield has lost his son in the war. Mr Woodifield is in better health. He has also lost his son during the war. There are a few other characters which have been mentioned in passing and have only been introduced in the story for effect.

The flowing characters in the story are:

- The office clerk - Macey
- The author's symbolic device in the story - the Fly
- One of Mr Woodifield's daughters - Gertrude
- Mr Woodifield's son - Reggie, who lost his life in the First World War

The main character is that of the boss and he has been fully developed by the author with the help of discourse, monologue and imagery. Woodifield visits his friend and ex-boss on a Tuesday and mentions that his daughter had been to the grave of their son. The Boss does not react to this information. The only way it is clear that he has heard this dialogue is described by the author as quivering of his eyelids. From here on, the author tries to convey that the boss is trying to suppress his emotions. The author establishes this by telling the readers that even though Mr Woodifield continues to talk about the graves of the boys, the boss tries to project that he is completely unaware about the context in which his friend is talking. At this point, a simple comparison can be made between the characters of *The Fly*. Mr Woodifield freely talks about the death of his son as he has come to terms with his loss, but at the same time the boss ignores these

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topics as he is still struggling to overcome his loss; he hides his sorrow by avoiding the topic of his son. The author manages to evoke a sense of pity for the boss among the readers. The sorrow which was hidden inside him surfaces after his friend departs and he looks at the picture of his son and remembers him. He remembers his son as a cheerful boy and feels that the picture on his desk has a very stern look. The boss tries to cry but he is unable to do so and soon gets distracted by the fly in the inkpot and forgets about his son. Most of Mansfield's stories project the emotional state of the characters but she avoids sentiments like weeping and wallowing. By not showing them in tears she tries to evoke deeper sentiments.

The catastrophe of the boss's life is in his attempt to simplify human existence. It provides an additional aspect to his character which is his understanding of the uselessness and brittleness of human effort. He has been trying for the past six years to avoid the memory of his son who is dead, however just a passing reference of his grave made by his friend brings his memory back and he realizes that he has not been able to forget his loss. The boss submits to the unavoidability of human destiny. He cultivates a kind of cynicism and negativism. The episode with *the fly* in the inkpot depicts the boss as the unpredictable spirit who inflicts harm for getting negative pleasure. He feels that the plight of the fly could have been what his son must've had gone through at the battlefield as he would have also struggled for his life. Though his pessimism made see the fly as a struggle and suffer for its life. By the end, the boss begins to give an impression of a person who is insignificant, helpless and weak as he is not willing to accept the reality that his son is no more. Therefore, the boss reflects the strait of Dostoyevsky's acceptance of death.

Themes

The author never gives a clear understanding of her story's theme and what it is meant to signify and as a result the theme of the story has been considered to imply several subjects. Mansfield at no time clarified precisely what she denoted by the title *The Fly*. The story is repeatedly understood as a condemnation of the inhuman horrors of the First World War and its impact on property and people. Several researchers have commented that the time in which the author wrote the story concurs with the year of her brother's death. (he died in 1915 and was a causality of the same war). Another understanding about the theme is the fly being compared with war heroes who are innocuously trounced by war and it signifies their struggle for survival during the war. Few of the critics have reached to the conclusion after going through her papers and letters that the fly was meant to portray her own struggles with her aliment and how she lost due to her father's cruel and selfish attitude, which is similar to the character of the boss in the story.

There are many who feel that the author through her story only wants to convey that death is often not accepted by most easily and time proves to be the only healer. It has been established in the story *The Fly* that time conquers grief; hence this can be identified as one of the themes of the story. With the help of the character of Mr. Woodifield and the author has established that six years is long time and the passage of time has helped him to accept the death of his son. He is able to talk about his daughters visiting his son's grave without feeling sad. Similarly, the author mentions how the boss has managed to heal the boss, who always thought that he will not be able to overcome the death of his son. In the story, after his friend leaves he wants to cry over the loss of his son but is unable to cry, then he looks at the photograph of his son, thinking that seeing his picture, will make him cry but actually he realizes that the picture does not

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resemble his son as he remembers him to be cheerful whereas the picture is making him look very stern. The author articulates his emotional state strikingly: 'He wanted, he intended, he arranged to weep.... But no tears came yet.' These lines reflect the current state of his grief. Time has helped him to heal. The fact that the boss easily gets distracted by the fly and its activities finally makes him forget all about his previous thoughts.

Another theme which has been reflected by the struggling fly is the helplessness which is faced by man to survive. The quote by William Shakespeare beautifully words the second theme of the story, 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.'

The readers realize that the author tries to symbolize the vulnerability of man in the hands of fate. The way the author describes the struggles of the fly, man attempts to struggle for its life but then he cannot go against his destiny. In the story the writer uses the fly to symbolize all the characters in the story. The strong are always able to crush the weak. The writer tries to use the struggles of the fly to symbolize her fight with the incurable disease of her time.

The author has paid a lot of attention in developing the character of the boss. He symbolizes malicious powers which are unjustified and groundless, he has been projected as the cruel forces of war that are just out to kill innocent people for their amusement. The readers were impressed by the character of the boss in the beginning of the story but as the author begins to bring forth his true nature the readers realize that he is just an intimidating sadomasochistic. He could have intimidated his son just as he was able to intimidate his friend and Macey. The way he behaves with the helpless fly he seems as a tormenter who takes the boyish pleasure in torturing others. On the other hand, some critics feel that the boss is not an unfeeling character, as he may have been just performing an experiment to check the survival instincts of a mere housefly. He is terrified with his discovery and clears the mess and the order for a new paper was just his way of diverting himself.

It has been observed by many critics that story has multifaceted symbolism. Initially the contrast between the boss and Mr Woodifield shows the boss to be stronger and energetic though he is five years older. During the story the attitude of Mr Woodifield about his son's death makes him appear as a stronger of the two. The critics feel that both are weak and immature as they do not face the realities of life. They both do not visit the grave of their dead sons. The fly has been shown as a symbol of struggle of life and power of destiny and at the same time the author uses the fly to symbolize strong men (bosses) taking advantage of the weak (staff members). The boss's behaviour with the fly is similar to how he behaves with Mr Woodifield and his clerk; he is benevolent towards his friend in the same way as he helps the fly out of the inkpot. But later he behaves in a condescending manner, when simply for his amusement, he puts ink over the struggling fly and expects it to survive; this is the way he orders his office clerk. These actions put a doubt in the minds of the readers about his behaviour towards his son.

There are many critics who believe that in *The Fly*, Katherine Mansfield has tried to employ themes of control, obliviousness, martyr, accountability and war. Though the story has been narrated in third person but she has completely developed the character of the boss. The story occurs at the boss's office; this could be a ploy of the author to highlight the theme of control. The way the office is described in the story and the mention made by Mr Woodifield about its snugness all point towards boss's nature to maintain control. The action of dropping ink on the fly by the boss in the later part of the

story also denotes his wish to be in complete control. The way he behaves with his staff is also an indication of his controlling nature. Through the boss the author may as well be referring to all the army generals who always liked to be in control and give instructions to the soldiers.

The author has symbolised the pen used to drop ink on the fly by the boss as constant signing of orders by the generals during the war. The pen helped in signing orders which caused tremendous loss of life and property and in the story pen seems to be the source of the fly's death as well. The remark made by Woodifield about the vastness of the graveyard in Belgium also points out towards the extent of damage and destruction that took place during the war. The boss has been compared with the generals of the army who have caused so many deaths as the boss became the cause of the fly's death.

It is shown in the story that the boss was able to get diverted by the fly so easily while he was remembering his son. In fact, he started to conduct a test about its survival skills. And even after he was done with his testing, he could not remember what his thoughts were prior to the starting of the test. The fly incident may also be an important indication that despite the boss feeling sorrow about the loss of his son, when he begins to experiment with the fly, he easily forgets him. It is possible that the author is trying to make the suggestion that just as the generals of the war have no recollection about the losses they caused during the war, similarly the boss has forgotten about his son.

The author's description and characterization of the main characters being old ages can be an attempt by the author to state that many young and productive people lost their lives during the war and the ones remaining are old and are not capable of much work. The author comments the characters being not wise by comparing Mr Woodifield to a baby. Additionally, the experiments of the boss with the fly does not portray him to be any more mature than a child who is playing games to end his boredom. Lack of wisdom in the characters can be the writer's way to convey that all the generals who supported war were also devoid of intelligence.

The story has an interesting ending as it is clear that the boss has not gained any insight after his childish experiment with the fly. The story tries to convey that in spite of such a large scale loss of life, the war, too, did not benefit anyone and it was a total wastage of resources and men. Like the death of fly did not prove anything similarly neither did the war. Furthermore, the no recollection of the boss's thoughts prior to the experiment signifies that even the generals do not realize the repercussions of their actions. The action of throwing the dead fly into the dustbin is similar to the generals not paying much heed to their actions. They are all leading a comfortable life as decorated generals like the boss remains in his redecorated comfortable office.

The distressing short story written by Katherine Mansfield has been put through several extensive and vivacious debates by the critics. There is not much agreement about the credibility or the relevance of the story. The story revolves around the visit of an old friend to the office of his ex-boss; his visit reminds the boss about the death of his son during the war. The second part of the story shows the boss first rescuing a housefly and then becoming the reason for its death. The simple plot of the story give an in depth description of the characters. The critics feel that the narration lacks humour and empathy. Other the other hand, many critics are of the opinion that the story also creates an interesting reading of an emotional crisis that affects a man in such a way that he becomes completely oblivious to his surroundings. The story has several elements which feature in other short stories written by the author. The story uses epiphany as the

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pivotal point of the storyline. Critics have found several issues with the internal aspects of the plot. The author has extensively used symbolic patterning in order to project the key aspects; she has used the main aspects along with imagery to stress up on the complexities of the situations as well as the characters. The work is often referred as an autobiographical creation as many similarities have been found with her situation during her last years of life in the story. The story tries to project the helplessness of the writer during her last days by showing the struggles of the fly. The story may be referred to as an analysis of war and domination of elders. It is an attempt to conduct a philosophical survey of finding the value of life. All versions, though, appear to be in accord that *The Fly* is possibly the gloomiest and utmost heart-breaking treatment of human venality amongst the literary compositions of the author, along with being the most blatant attempt at criticizing the war because of its noticeable impact after it ended.

The ending is very abrupt as it makes no conclusions and leaves the readers wondering. The boss kills the fly and his experiment has no outcome. He even forgets all about his previous conversation with his friend and how he was remembering his son. The reader is left to ponder whether the boss has so easily forgotten about his son out of grief or lack of affection for him.

The story has been analysed from other angles where the boss is stimulated by the memory of his dead son. The boss chooses to torture a housefly which he sees struggling for life in the inkpot in order to check the strength of the fly. The boss may be thought to be visualizing himself while seeing the fly struggling. It may be a representation of his subconscious mind and his own inquiry about whether he will ever be able to reconcile with the loss of his son. It tries to draw a comparison between their individual struggles. The writer wants the readers to realize the internal struggles the boss is undergoing. The author has set the tone of the story by providing a setting which is full of a feeling of bleakness, anger, and resentment. In spite of the third person narration the focus remains on the boss. The storyteller is not well-informed as he only conveys the feelings and the emotions of the boss and is completely ignorant about the feelings of Mr Woodfield. The metaphor of the fly has been used by the author to signify the recollections and tussles of the boss. The allegory is used to disperse meaning throughout the story and it aids describing the drives and views of the boss. The use of the metaphor helps in enhancing the overall appeal of the story for the readers. There are several detailed sentences, terms and expressions in the story that throw light on the character of the boss. It is clearly stated in the story that the boss 'was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by the old Woodfield'. This, in fact, displays to the readers that he wants to feel superior and perhaps is showing his arrogance. Once Woodfield departs, the boss states- 'My son! But no tears came yet' makes the readers question his love for the dead son. Lastly, the expression, 'Look sharp!' shows the readers that the boss makes too many demands over people who work for him. It also implies that maybe he had such expectations from his son as well and he expected him to take over his business after returning from the war.

4.6 TRAIL OF THE GREEN BLAZER: R.K. NARAYAN

In this section, we will have a look at the short story *The Trail of the Green Blazer* by R.K. Narayan. We will start by discussing the life of the author and then move on to the summary, characters and critical analysis.

Check Your Progress

11. List the flowing characters in the story *The Fly*.
12. How does the boss react when Woodfield talks about coming across the grave of the boss's son?
13. What does the character of the boss symbolize in *The Fly*?

Self-Instructional
Material

4.6.1 About the Author

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, popularly known as R.K. Narayan was an Indian author famous for his writings set in the imaginary South Indian town of Malgudi. He was born on 10 October 1906. As an important author of early Indian literature in English he was as well-known as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Graham Greene was Narayan's mentor and close friend and he played an important role in helping Narayan get his first four books published. Among these were the partial-autobiographical trilogy of *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*. The imaginary town of Malgudi was initially created in *Swami and Friends*. Narayan's *The Financial Expert* is considered to be one of the most unique writings of 1951 and his work *The Guide* won the Sahitya Akademi Award and subsequently was adapted for a movie and for Broadway.

The writings of R.K. Narayan try to highlight the social situations and routine life of the characters in the story. His work has been equated to William Faulkner as he had also introduced an imaginary town in his stories and reconnoitred the humour and care in the routine life of his characters. The short stories written by R.K. Narayan have a similarity with the ones written by Guy de Maupassant. The readers can see the similarity in the way each manages to wrap up a story. On the other hand, the author has faced lot of criticism for the way he simplifies his text. R.K. Narayan, in his writing career of more than sixty years, was presented with several accolades and awards. The Royal Society of Literature presented him with the AC Benson Medal; In India, he has been honoured with the second and the third highest civilian awards namely, the Padma Vibhushan the Padma Bhushan and the Rajya Sabha of the Indian parliament nominated him as a member.

Style of Writing

The technique of writing adopted by Narayan was natural and self-effecting and had a natural flare for hilarity and wittiness. The writer always focused on regular people, with whom the readers could easily relate. The simplicity of the characters helped the readers to understand the topic of writings. He managed to write intricately about the Indian society and was able to maintain the style of fictional writing throughout the story. The author was always able to maintain the simplicity that was an essential feature of his characters. The author often used Tamil overtones along with nuanced dialogic prose depending on the character's nature. Narayan has been often called as the Indian Chekhov by the critics as they find many similarities in his writing style with the author. Both the authors have the ability to present a tragic situation with ease and the calm splendour and wit which makes it an interesting reading. Narayan's mentor and friend Greene often found similarities in their work. According to Anthony West of *The New Yorker*, his work was close to Nikolai Gogol but it contained practical variability. Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri feels that Narayan's short stories are as entrancing as his novels, although they have a less word count and can be read very fast. Due to his style he is able to convey much more in a mere short story whereas few authors fail to deliver the same in a novel with hundreds of pages. The author is able to give a thorough understanding to the readers about the characters' lives. Due to these abilities, Lahiri feels that Narayan is at par with geniuses of short stories which O. Henry, Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor. She has like others compared Narayan to Guy de Maupassant for his ability to be able to make the story concise and yet not lose the charm of the story. Lahiri felt that both the authors were able to write about the life of a common man as their main

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theme. Critics have observed that his writings have a tendency to be extra expressive and there is not much of critical observations; the independent style of the author was a result of a disconnected life-force which made his stories seem real and genuine. The author's attitude and his approach towards life delivered an exceptional skill to blend characters and actions. The knack of being able to use common situations helped the readers to connect very easily with the events of the story. The creation of the fictional South Indian small town Malgudi enabled the author to introduce various superstitions and traditions which were stated to be in practice there. Malgudi is often considered to be an important element of his writings. Malgudi was a fictional, semi-urban town conjured by the author. The town was created by him in September 1930 on the day which happened to be the auspicious day of Vijaydashami. Narayan's grandmother wanted him to start his efforts on a good omen. The town was fictional but Narayan gave a very realistic appeal to it by providing a history about its origin. The author gave the full biography. The town dates back to the period of Ramayana and Lord Rama is supposed to have visited the town. The history of the town has mentions of the visits made by Buddha during his explorations. Although Narayan did not offer any exacting physical limits for the town, he endorsed it as per the events of the stories, laying foundations for next story. A map of the town had been created by Dr James M. Fennelly, he had researched Narayan's writings very thoroughly and on the basis of the descriptions in the stories he gave an outline of the extent of the town. Malgudi progressed with the shifting political backdrop of India. During the 1980s, when the patriotic enthusiasm in India did away with several British names and statues and replaced them with Indian names and personalities, the mayor of Narayan's Malgudi removes the statue of Frederick Lawley in order to exhibit the same sentiments. Though, after the Historical Societies presented evidence that Lawley was a strong supporter of the independence movement in India, the mayor was compelled to reinstall his statue.

Critical Reception

Graham Greene was responsible for R.K. Narayan's first break. When his friend read his stories in *Swaminathan and Tate*, he decided to act as the agent for the author. He changed the title to *Swami and Friends*, and found a publisher for the subsequent books written by Narayan. Although Narayan's initial writings were not successful commercially but he began to be noticed by other writers of that time. In 1938 Somerset Maugham, while travelling to Mysore, specially made an effort to meet Narayan. After reading *The Dark Room* by Narayan, Maugham wrote him a letter wherein he admired Narayan's work. E.M. Forster was another modern author who liked the initial work done by Narayan. Few of the critics who found a stark similarity in the way both the authors equipped their narratives with dry humour began to call Narayan as 'South Indian E. M. Forster'. Although Narayan was very popular amongst his followers and colleagues, his work failed to impress the critics. His work did not receive similar critical consideration bestowed to other authors of his standing.

His accomplishment in the United States began to be noticed when Michigan State University Press began to publish his books. He visited United States for the first time while he was on a fellowship of the Rockefeller Foundation. During his visit he conducted lectures in several universities, and these included the Michigan State University and the University of California, Berkeley. His work was noticed by John Updike, he felt that his writings were similar to Charles Dickens. In an evaluation of Narayan's works printed in *The New Yorker*, Updike termed him as a writer who belonged to an endangered

variety. According to him, Narayan as an author was able to totally identify himself with his characters and he realized the importance of common people and their stories.

The author is instrumental in spreading Indian writings to the entire world, his novels, essays and short stories are now read in many parts across the globe. Critics have often regarded his writings to be pleasant, mild and benevolent. Notwithstanding these adjectives Narayan is considered to be the greatest writers of the Indian literature in the twentieth century. He has faced criticism at the hands of some of the present day writers, mainly of Indian origin. According to them, his writings have a very pedestrian style with a superficial vocabulary and lacks in vision. Shashi Tharoor had once stated that Narayan's subjects are like the subjects found in Jane Austen's stories since they both do not include the society as a whole. And moreover he felt that at least Austen was able to take her prose subjects away from their routineness, Narayan's fails to do that. Shashi Deshpande holds a similar view point about Narayan's writings, she feels that in his writings are pedestrian and childlike as the language and diction is very simple and this is further clubbed with the absence of intense emotions among his characters. According to V.S. Naipaul and many others, Narayan never mixed himself or his works with the political affairs or concerns of India. On the other hand, Wyatt Mason of *The New Yorker* felt that even though Narayan's writings appeared unpretentious and displayed a lack of attention to the political situation, yet he delivered his story with a clever and illusory technique while dealing with such topics and has definitely included them very tactfully and it has left the readers guessing. According to former vice-chancellor of Andhra University, Srinivasa Iyengar, Narayan included politics only with reference to his subjects, rather distinct from his fellow writer Mulk Raj Anand as he mostly addressed the political situations and problems of the period. Paul Brians, has stated in his book *Modern South Asian Literature in English*, that Narayan totally overlooked British rule and stressed on the personal lives of his characters, this shows that he was not affected by the impact of colonialism.

Narayan's simplicity of writing was very much appreciated in the west. William Walsh, who has written one of his biographies, commented on the way his stories were a comedic art. Anita Desai who was nominated for Booker prize on several occasions considers his writings as 'compassionate realism' according to which fundamental immoralities are cruelty and pretentiousness. Wyatt Mason feels that Narayan had his own individual style as he treated his characters to be a public entity instead of private being. Mason has identified Narayan's initial writings to be amongst the significant English-language fiction from India, with this development, he delivered his western readers the primary works in English to be instilled with an eastern and Hindu existential viewpoint. Mason felt that through his writings Narayan just does not provide description of events but portrays his true feelings.

4.6.2 Trail of The Green Blazer: Critical Analysis

In this section, we will discuss the summary, themes, characters in the story.

People are continuously cautioned about the pickpockets who are mostly found in crowded places so that they are able to gel in the crowd after they have spotted their victim. The pickpockets prudently watch the victim while they attempt to quietly check their wallet and reassure themselves but by doing this they provide the indication to the pickpocket that the presence and location of the wallet. *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is a short story about the grind and life of a proficient pickpocket. Raju or the pickpocket attempts to be dressed in such a way that he completely blends in with the crowd. His

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aim is to be extremely plain and ordinary. The readers come to know that he gets delighted when a stolen wallet holds sufficient cash to get by for many days and he is annoyed when stolen wallet has less money. While reading the story, the readers come to know the places which are more frequently visited by the pickpocket and the ones he avoids. For instance, he considers the market for stolen fountain pens as a waste of time. Since he gets and could get caught for pickpocketing he does not tell his wife the source of his income and his wife is almost scared to question him as she is afraid to find out. The author has very skilfully managed to depict the dynamics of their marriage by devoting just a few lines. The author feels that in spite of being a pickpocket, he is very much answerable to his wife. The plot revolves around one day, when he steals a wallet and decides to return the wallet. In the process of slipping the wallet back into the green blazer he gets caught and when he tells everyone that he was actually putting the wallet back in the owner's blazer, nobody believes his story and he is ridiculed. He is handed over to the police and goes to jail for a period of eighteen months. The jail term manages to change him slightly and in the end, the story puts forward a thought-provoking lesson in morals.

Summary

Raju masquerades himself as a resident and comes to a village fair in search of persons whose wallets he can flick. He notices a man wearing a green blazer. Raju starts following the man from a distance but keenly listens to what he is saying to the coconut vendor. From the way he is haggling with the coconut vendor about the cost, Raju realizes that the man in the green blazer is grouchy and miserly. During this time, Raju hears him talking about buying a balloon for his son as he does not want him to be upset and from this Raju deduces that the man is soft-hearted. Soon Raju manages to pick the wallet from the green blazer and as soon as he opens the wallet Raju is thrilled with the amount of money he finds inside. The wallet contained thirty rupees and some change. He gets super thrilled as with this amount he will not have to pick any pockets for at least two weeks and additionally, it will allow him to treat his wife to a movie. Raju even decides to give the change to beggars. While emptying the wallet, Raju notices the balloon the man had purchased for his motherless child, he cures the father for keeping the balloon folded inside the wallet. Now Raju realizes that if he throws the wallet the man will not have the balloon to give to his child. Raju imagines the disappointment of the child when his father would return without a balloon. The guilt of becoming the cause of the disappointment becomes too much for Raju to handle hence he decides to put the wallet back into the man's green blazer pocket. The moment he puts his hand inside the pocket to slip the wallet back, the man in the green blazer catches his hand and starts shouting. His shouting draws the attention of the people around and they all start to beat him. Nobody believes when Raju claims that he was putting the wallet back and not stealing. The police is called and Raju is sent to prison. His claim that he was putting the wallet back is not bought by the magistrate or even his wife. After serving the jail term of eighteen months when Raju comes out of the jail, he feels that he will never again in life return something that he has stolen as his hands are only efficient in picking things and not putting them back.

Characters

The protagonist of the short story *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is Raju who earns a living by picking pockets. Raju is very efficient at his job and goes about his job in a very skilful and systematic manner. This can be known given the reference in the story about

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maintaining adequate distance and constantly keeping an eye on the prey. Moreover, Raju has been portrayed as a lazy person as he has all the energy to observe his prey for picking pockets but does not want to do any substantial job to take care of his family. The readers realize that in spite of being a thief Raju is a soft-hearted and compassionate man, who after seeing the balloon folded in the wallet thinks about the disappointment of the child and decides to take the risks of returning the wallet.

The other character in the story is the green blazer which from Raju's point of view is the antagonist. The green blazer may be described as the minor character or the flat character in the short story. It has been called as a flat character because it is not fully developed nor is described with enough details: The author portrays the owner of the green blazer to be a rich man as he stands out in the crowd and because of his outfit Raju decides to pick his pocket.

The setting of the story is a hot, sunny afternoon. A village fair is in progress and as a result there is lot of noise and activity happening at the market place. The author has depicted an Indian village during British period. The social conditions were bad due to poverty and over population. In the story, Raju is a pickpocket. Pickpocketing becomes easy at crowded places. Narayan has provided a very suitable start to the story:

The Green Blazer stood out prominently under the bright sun and blue sky. In all that jostling crowd one could not help noticing it. Villagers in shirts and turbans, townsmen in coats and caps, beggars bare bodied and women in multicoloured saris were thronging the narrow passage between the stalls and moving in great confused masses, but still the Green Blazer could not be missed.

Each occupation requires hard work and attentiveness. In profession of pickpocket, accountability is dual. Bulging wallets have an extra appeal for Raju and after spotting one, he picks it up with the utmost precision. He just keeps the cash and throws the wallet. Once he has picked pockets, his day's work is over and he returns home. His wife thinks he does a decent job in an office as she is not aware of his actual job and like all dutiful wives, she does not question him about his source of income and respects him for his hard work. Raju picks at pockets very skilfully as a lot of skill is required doing this job. The author describes the job of pickpocket very beautifully in the story:

It was a nicely calculated distance, acquired by intuition and practice. The distance must not be so much as to obscure the movement of the other's hand to and from his purse, nor so close as to become a nuisance and create suspicion.

Raju is very good at his work and after taking the cash he throws the wallet. It is while he is about to throw the wallet taken from the green blazer that he notices the balloon. On seeing the balloon, he suddenly gets very emotional and does not want to become the cause of disappointing a motherless boy. His feelings for the unknown child are poignantly described in the following lines in the story:

Raju almost sobbed at the thought of the disappointed child-the motherless boy. There was no one to comfort him. Perhaps this ruffian would beat him if he cried too long. The Green Blazer did not look like one who knew the language of children. Raju was filled with pity at the thought of the young child-perhaps of the same age as his second son.

Raju, on thinking of the disappointed child, becomes troubled and unwilling to take the stress. He decides to put the wallet back into the blazer's pocket. Regrettably, while he is putting the wallet back into the pocket he gets caught by the man in the green blazer. When he tries to explain that he was keeping the wallet back and not taking it.

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nobody in the crowd believes him. Instead all ridicule him. He is sent to jail. The policemen also do not believe him and think he is joking. His wife also condemns his acts and reprimands him for the disgrace he has brought to the family. After finishing his sentence of eighteen months as soon as he comes out, he decides that never in his life would he steal and return anything. He decides:

If ever I pick up something again, I shall make sure I don't have to put it back. For now, he believed God had gifted the likes of him with only one-way deftness. Those fingers were not meant to put anything back.

The poor pitiable individual mislaid many things starting from his freedom for a short period and his respect in his family. This can be described as the irony of life.

According to Disha Sharma, 'the short story is a good example of Narayan's use of irony. Life is full of contradictions and this is what the story conveys to us in a typical Narayan's way. The pickpocket was successful so far he was professional devoid of human sentiments.

The lesson learnt by Raju at the end of the story is not correct as it is essential to realize that one good deed does not make up for all the wrong doings in life.

Analysis of Structure

Like all short stories, *The Trail of a Green Blazer* evolves from a solo incident. The story develops from the point, when Raju picks the pocket of the person wearing the green blazer and then the events which follow form the structure of the story. The story has three parts: starting, middle and ending.

- **Starting:** Raju lookouts for the man wearing the green blazer with the poise of a specialized pick-pocket.
- **Middle:** The middle consists of two parts, the first part portrays Raju as a hunter and the second part he himself becomes the prey. First, Raju skilfully picks the pocket and he is as usual not caught. So he is the hunter. Then while he is putting the wallet back he gets caught and from a hunter he becomes the prey.
- **Ending:** Raju is not able to comprehend why he is being punished for returning the wallet, as he feels that it was his moral action.

Themes

The author has tried to convey many themes in the short story. The main theme of the story is crime as the central character of the story is a professional pickpocket. The author also tries to tell the readers that illegal ways of life cannot become permanent and all criminals are bound to be caught. Another theme is of hesitation; which Raju feels after stealing the wallet, as he did not want to become the cause of disappointment of a motherless child. His hesitation to keep the wallet led to his downfall. The author admires the patience which is shown by the pickpocket in order to closely observe his prey.

Conflicts: There are several conflicts in the story, some of them are listed below:

- **Human vs human:** This type of conflict in a story means that the central character is in conflict with other characters, especially the antagonist. In this story the protagonist is Raju and the antagonist is the green blazer. The person wearing the green blazer stood out in the crowd amongst the villagers and he seemed to be a rich person because of the blazer. This makes Raju select him to be his victim as he feels that his wallet will have ample money. Raju gets into trouble while he is

attempting to put the wallet back into the blazer and nobody in the crowd believes his innocence. Hence one of the conflicts is between Raju and green blazer. The other struggle of this nature is between Raju and his wife as she also does not believe that he is innocent.

- **Human vs Society:** When the story involves a struggle between the central character and the society. In the story, when Raju returns the wallet nobody is willing to believe that he was actually putting the wallet back. The society condemns the acts of the pickpocket and ridicules him.

- **Human vs Self:** The protagonist's struggle with his own self in the story is visible when after stealing the wallet, Raju remembers the child and gets emotional thinking about his tears and disappointment. He is going through a struggle with his conscience about returning the wallet. He keeps the money and decides to put the wallet back as it still has the folded balloon inside.

Point of View in the Story

The story has been narrated from the point of view of the third person. The narrator is able to convey the thoughts of all the characters besides Raju together with the wife, green blazer, coconut seller or even the police. The narrator has clearly described the thoughts of Raju after he discovers the folded balloon in the wallet which he has stolen and what is going to be the plight of the child when he does not get the balloon.

Language Style of the Story

- The story uses the flashback in the initial paragraphs. While Raju is following the green blazer, the author mentions about his skill of pickpocketing and his preference for crowded places or his reluctance to pick fountain pens.

- The author externalises Raju's emotional side while narrating the state of the child when he does not get the promised balloon: 'Raju almost sobbed at the thought of the disappointed child – the motherless boy. There was no one to comfort him. Perhaps this ruffian would beat him if he cried too long. The Green Blazer did not look like one who knew the language of children'. Raju feels that since his mother is dead who shall comfort the crying child as he could not picture the person in the green blazer being capable of consoling a crying child.

- The author has used the simile in order to make a figurative comparison in the story. He has compared the act of pickpocket waiting for targeting his victim with how a hunter waits for his prey. 'It had to be finely balanced and calculated – the same sort of calculations as carry a shikari through his tracking of game and see him safely home again. Only this hunter's task was more complicated. The hunter in the forest could count his day a success if he laid his quarry flat; but here one had to extract the heart out of the quarry without injuring it'. In paragraph four, the author has compared the pitch of the person in the green blazer with a tiger's growl.

- The use of metaphor is noticed in the story. At one point the author has compared Raju with a hunter: 'only this hunter's task was more complicated. The hunter in the forest could count his day a success if he laid his quarry flat; but here one had to extract the heart out of the quarry without injuring it. But in the following lines he has been described as a lazy person. Constitutionally he was an idler and had just the amount of energy to watch in a crowd and put his hand into another

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person's pocket.' These extreme comparisons in relation of the same person exhibit the metaphorical language used by the author.

- The author has personified the green blazer in the following lines of the story, 'Over and above it all the Green Blazer seemed to cry out an invitation. Raju could not ignore it'. The use of imagery is very prominent in the beginning lines of the story where the author manages to make the readers clearly picture the market scene as described by him in the story. Symbolism is used when the author uses the green blazer to state that the owner of the green blazer is a foreigner.

The short story written by R.K. Narayan has been described as an irony of life as Raju get punished for the one good deed that he was trying to do in life.

4.7 SUMMARY

- The father or originator of contemporary short stories, Edgar Allen Poe has defined short story as a tale which can be read in a short duration. According to him, any story which can be read in thirty minutes to two hours falls under the category of short story; the story has a single focal point and the rest of the story revolves around that 'certain unique or single effect' to which every detail is subordinate.
- Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables.
- The most typical elements of every short story would be to have a small number of characters; stress is given on a single self-contained event so that a 'single effect' or mood can be evoked among the readers.
- *The Cask of Amontillado* was published in 1846 by the American short-story writer, essayist, and poet Edgar Allan Poe. The short story was the last creation of the author and is considered to be one of his best short stories. It is a story of revenge, murder, suffering, and obsession. The story is set in a vast Italian underground cemetery (Italian catacomb). The story is a journey into the gloomy and cryptic recesses of the human inner self. It features a narrator telling his friend about a murder he committed.
- Most readers find Edgar Allan Poe's stories to be enjoyable as they are comparable to an intricate puzzle. The readers have to exercise their brains in order to figure out the story. *The Cask of Amontillado* is very crisp, and it helps the readers follow the details very easily.
- Major themes involved in *The Cask of Amontillado* are: independence and captivity, treachery, drugs and alcohol, imprudence and foolishness, etc.
- Adeline Virginia Woolf was born on 25 January 1882. The English writer has been regarded as notable modernists of her time. She has been identified as the forerunner of using the stream of consciousness as a device for narrations.
- Amongst Virginia Woolf's prominent works are: *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and essay titled 'A Room of One's Own'.
- *The Duchess and the Jeweller* is a short story written by Virginia Woolf in 1938. Being a promoter of addressing the 'stream of consciousness,' Woolf in her story illustrates the views and activities of a materialistic jeweller; According to Woolf,

Check Your Progress

14. Why is the writing style of R.K. Narayan equated with that of William Faulkner?
15. What is Raju's reaction on finding the wallet of the man with the green blazer?
16. Which character is the antagonist of *The Trail of the Green Blazer* according to Raju?
17. State the simile which is used by the author to talk about the act of pickpocketing in the story.

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people who are corrupt are selfish as well and they do not regret their actions. The story has been written in order to prove this belief of the author.

- Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation.
- Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a known modernist short story writer from New Zealand. She was born on 14 October 1888 and died at a young age of thirty-four. She grew up in colonial New Zealand and used her pen name Katherine Mansfield in her writings.
- In 1922 Katherine wrote her short story *The Fly* and on 18 March it was published in *The Nation & Athenaeum* and then in 1923 the story appeared as a part of the collection of short stories titled as *The Dove's Nest and Other Stories*.
- *The Fly* mainly is the story of a person who has been trying to overcome the death of his son for the last six years. The author has tried to depict his anguish.
- The story is repeatedly understood as a condemnation of the inhuman horrors of the First World War and its impact on property and people. Another understanding about the theme is the fly being compared with war heroes who are innocuously trounced by war and it signifies their struggle for survival during the war. There are many who feel that the author through her story only wants to convey that death is often not accepted by most easily and time proves to be the only healer.
- Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, popularly known as R.K. Narayan was an Indian author famous for his writings set in the imaginary South Indian town of Malgudi. He was born on 10 October 1906. As an important author of early Indian literature in English he was as well-known as Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.
- Prominent works of the R.K. Narayan include: *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*, *The Financial Expert* and *The Guide* which won the Sahitya Akademi Award and subsequently was adapted for a movie and for Broadway.
- The technique of writing adopted by Narayan was natural and self-effecting and had a natural flare for hilarity and wittiness. The writer always focused on regular people, with whom the readers could easily relate.
- *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is a short story about the grind and life of a proficient pickpocket. The plot revolves around one day, when he steals a wallet and decides to return the wallet. In the process of slipping the wallet back into the green blazer he gets caught and when he tells everyone that he was actually putting the wallet back in the owner's blazer, nobody believes his story and he is ridiculed. He is handed over to the police and goes to jail for a period of eighteen months. The jail term manages to change him slightly and in the end, the story puts forward a thought-provoking lesson in morals.
- R.K. Narayan has tried to convey many themes in the short story. The main theme of the story is crime as the central character of the story is a professional pickpocket. The author also tries to tell the readers that illegal ways of life cannot become permanent and all criminals are bound to be caught. Another theme is of hesitation; which Raju feels after stealing the wallet, as he did not want to become the cause of disappointment of a motherless child.

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4.8 KEY TERMS

- **Short story:** It is a work of fiction that is written in prose, in a narrative form. It usually presents a single significant episode or scene involving a limited number of characters.
- **Fable:** It refers to short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness.
- **Simile:** It refers to a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g. as brave as a lion).
- **Metaphor:** It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.
- **Stream of consciousness:** It is a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust are among its notable early exponents.

4.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Short stories which are written with the purpose of conveying virtuous or ethical awareness are categorized as parables or fables. This category of short stories is mostly meant to give spiritual and religious messages and hence used by various religious gurus and leaders for inspiring and enlightening their supporters.
2. Some of the initial experts of short story in America were Washington Irving, Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe.
3. *The Cask of Amontillado*, occasionally known as *The Casque of Amontillado* was published as a short story in the November (1846) edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The book was one of the most widely read magazines in America at that time.
4. The enigmatic matter in *The Cask of Amontillado* is the motive behind the act of murder committed by the narrator or Montresor.
5. The motive has been explained vaguely by Montresor through phrases like the 'thousand injuries' and 'when he ventured upon insult'.
6. The story which mentions the image similar to that of Montresor's coat of arms having a foot stamping on a snake 1844, or, *The Power of the S.F* by Thomas Dunn English.
7. Virginia Woolf's first novel is *The Voyage Out*, which was published in 1915. The book was published by Hogarth Press, and this publishing house was established by Woolf in partnership with her husband, Leonard Woolf.
8. Chekhov's stories about ordinary people performing their routine activities were liked by Woolf.
9. In the story *The Duchess and the Jeweller* are referred to as '... friends, yet enemies; he was master, she was mistress; each cheated the other, each needed the other, each feared the other...'.

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10. Virginia Woolf has employed several themes in the story of *The Duchess and the Jeweller*. The themes which are most visible are trust, vanity, appearances, contentment, lack of confidence and manipulation.
11. The flowing characters in the story, *The Fly*, are:
 - The office clerk- Macey
 - The author's symbolic device in the story- the Fly
 - One of Mr Woodifield's daughters- Gertrude
 - Mr Woodifield's son-Reggie, who lost his life in the First World War
12. The Boss does not react to the information given by Woodifield about coming across the grave of his son. The only way it is clear that he has heard this dialogue is described by the author as quivering of his eyelids. From here on, the author tries to convey that the boss is trying to suppress his emotions.
13. The author has paid a lot of attention in developing the character of the boss. He symbolizes malicious powers which are unjustified and groundless, he has been projected as the cruel forces of war that are just out to kill innocent people for their amusement.
14. The writings of R.K Narayan try to highlight the social situations and routine life of the characters in the story. His work has been equated to William Faulkner as he had also introduced an imaginary town in his stories and reconnoitred the humour and care in the routine life of his characters.
15. Raju is thrilled with the amount of money he finds inside the wallet of the man with the green blazer. He gets super thrilled as with the amount he will not have to pick any pockets for at least two weeks and additionally, it will allow him to treat his wife to a movie. Raju even decides to give the change to beggars.
16. According to Raju, the green blazer is the antagonist of the story.
17. The simile used by the author in *The Trail of the Green Blazer* is the comparison of the act of pickpocket waiting for targeting his victim with how a hunter waits for his prey.

4.10 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. State the elements of short stories.
2. Briefly state the themes of *The Cask of Amontillado*.
3. What are the literary devices used in *The Cask of Amontillado*?
4. Write a short-note on the influences on the writings of Virginia Woolf.
5. What tragic situations helped Mansfield create a tragic world?
6. What are the kinds of symbolism used by Mansfield in *The Fly*? How does the story end?
7. Write a short-note on the critical reception that R.K. Narayan received for his writing style.

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the motivation for Edgar Allan Poe for writing *The Cask of Amontillado*.
2. How does Virginia Woolf depict the relationship between the Duchess and the jeweller?
3. Explain the themes of the short story, *The Duchess and the Jeweller*.
4. Evaluate *The Fly* as a story of the post-war period.
5. 'The Fly' by Katherine Mansfield, can be fruitfully read as potent social criticism.' Discuss.
6. Describe the conflicts that are raised in *The Trail of the Green Blazer*.
7. Critically analyse the short story, *The Trail of the Green Blazer*.

4.11 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 PRACTICAL CRITICISM: APPRECIATION OF UNSEEN PROSE PASSAGES

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Non-Fiction Prose and English Prose Fiction: An Introduction
 - 5.2.1 Letter and Biography
 - 5.2.2 Autobiography
 - 5.2.3 Essay
- 5.3 Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One's Own*
- 5.4 R.K. Narayan: *The Axe*
 - 5.4.1 *The Axe*: Summary and Analysis
- 5.5 J.L. Nehru: Speech on Indian Independence
 - 5.5.1 Overview of 'Tryst with Destiny'
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- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Key Terms
- 5.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.9 Questions and Exercises
- 5.10 Further Reading

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Prose is the most basic form of written language, applying common grammatical structure and natural flow of speech rather than rhythmic structure. Its simplicity and loosely defined arrangement has led to its usage in the majority of spoken dialogues, factual discourse as well as contemporary and imaginary writing.

There are many prose forms. Novels, short stories, and works of criticism are kinds of prose. Other examples include comedy, drama, fable, fiction, folk tale, hagiography, legend, literature, myth, narrative, saga, science fiction, story, articles, newspaper, journals, essays, travelogues and speeches. Each form of prose has its own style and has to be dealt with in its own particular way. Travel writing is also one form of prose. Through this, we get a first-hand account of the travels of the writer, the places he has visited, and the experiences he has encountered.

5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the different styles of non-fiction prose
- Understand the treatment of unseen prose passages
- Critically analyse Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*
- Discuss Narayan's short story *The Axe*

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5.2 NON-FICTION PROSE AND ENGLISH PROSE FICTION: AN INTRODUCTION

Non-fictional prose is any literary work founded chiefly on fact or reality, even though it supposedly incorporates elements of fiction or fancy. Its example can be essays, biographies, letters, diaries, autobiographies, confessions, and so on. Non-fictional prose differs from factual business letters or prescriptions and is used to define an aesthetic writing which aims to teach, convert or impart experience or reality through factual or spiritual revelation. Under this, infinite themes and subject-matter can be dealt with, which may vary from personal to objective. It encompasses political, philosophical, moral, historical, biographical, autobiographical, religious, romantic and argumentative literature. It came into existence after the Renaissance in the sixteenth century England. Non-fictional literature has been used as an effective source of displaying emotions in modern literature. In such prose, the complexities of life give way to self-revelation and introspection on different issues, both personal and objective. There are numerous eminent writers of non-fictional prose, such as Sir Thomas Browne, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Thomas Moore, Jonathan Swift, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, among others.

5.2.1 Letter and Biography

Let us analyse the history and growth of letter through the ages.

Letter: History and Growth through the Ages

A letter is a written message which is usually sent by post. It is a familiar source that gives an insight into the personal life and feelings of a writer. It can be both personal and impersonal. Generally, a letter is a personal expression. In English literature, we have a number of writers whose letters are of literary and aesthetic importance. Among them, Keats is the foremost. His letters are personal in expression and are a very important source of information on his poetic progress and his poetic theories. There are many other letter writers of significance including Horace Walpole, Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, William Cowper, Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley, Charles Lamb and Charles Dickens.

Age-wise Production, Reflection and Social Aspects

If we look at it historically, letters have existed from the time of ancient India, ancient Egypt and Sumer, through Rome, Greece and China, up to the present day. Letters were used to self-educate during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century. They were used to exchange ideas with like-minded people and also were seen as a way to practice critical reading, self-expressive writing, polemical writing. Letters were initially seen as a written performance.

In the ancient world letters were written on various materials like metal, lead, wax-coated wooden tablets, pottery fragments, animal skin, and papyrus. Posted letters gradually became less important as a routine form of communication as communication technology has diversified. For example, the development of the telegraph drastically shortened the time taken to send a communication, by sending it between distant points as an electrical signal. At the telegraph office closest to the destination, the signal was converted back into writing on paper and delivered to the recipient. The next step was the telex which avoided the need for local delivery. Then followed the fax (facsimile)

machine: a letter could be transferred electrically from the sender to the receiver through the telephone network as an image. Today, the internet, by means of email, plays a large part in written communications; however, these email communications are not generally referred to as letters but rather as e-mail (or email) messages, messages or simply emails or e-mails, with only the term "letter" generally being reserved for communications on paper.

From Ovid, we learn that Acontius used an apple for his letter to Cydippe.

The historical study of epistolary discourse provides an instrumental means of reconstructing ways of communicating both in the public and the personal spheres. According to Armando Petrucci, 'From the linguistic diachronic point of view letter writing is a particularly rewarding object of study since epistolary discourse is perhaps the most ancient form of attested writing thus allowing the investigation of its features across time and cultures.'

Letter has developed over the ages and given rise to different textual subgenres. These include the Pauline epistles incorporated in the Bible, the medieval letter used as an administrative treatise of spiritual instruction, along with the scientific correspondence and newsletters in the seventeenth century to the epistolary novel of the eighteenth century. Personal to commercial correspondence only developed in the late modern period.

It has been observed that socio-linguists, social historians, and literary scholars have become increasingly interested in the letter as genre and letter writing as social and cultural practice since the late twentieth century. This renewed academic interest in letters has resulted in a lot of scholarly studies. It also increased the publication of letter collections and useful specialised bibliographies which have enlarged the amount of data and analytic tools available to scholars. This helps define the relevance of letters. They shed light on socio-cultural issues such as the rate of literacy or women's education in past periods, etc. Most of the scholars focus on the whole modern period as this was a great age of letters and letter writing all over Europe and beyond. Their main focus was the eighteenth century considering the fact that in this century the epistolary genre reached a perhaps unsurpassed socio-cultural prominence as a form of communication and expression. It is, however, in the early modern period that correspondence acquired the characteristics and uses that were to become typical of the genre in the whole modern period.

Letters provide as documents and materials which can contribute to the reconstruction of social relationships and information exchanges in past cultures and shed light on social interaction. They provide information for socio-historical investigation, the history of languages, linguistic diachronic investigation, and historical sociolinguistics.

Types of Letters

There are many types of letters but the most common types of letters are formal and informal letter writing.

- **Informal letter writing:** These letters are generally written to relatives and friends. These can also include invitations, etc.
- **Formal letter writing or business letters:** These letters are used as a communicative tool in the business and are usually used by the traders, firms and companies for business purposes.

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Types of Business Letters

Businesses are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units. Nevertheless, by and large, all these businesses have certain common concerns and approaches within any given business environment. They deal with people internally as well as externally. They have their stakeholders in owners, employees, customers and the community. Businesses are also organized into various functional areas such as personnel, marketing, sales, purchase, accounts, administration and secretarial. Business letters are of a wide variety and emanate from all these sources. Similarly, people who deal with these businesses also correspond with all these departments at some stage or other. To be able to correspond effectively with all these departments under various business situations, one has to familiarize oneself with various types of letters and their features. Although the general principles of good letter writing discussed earlier hold good, the approach will have to vary depending upon the functional area to which the letter relates.

When we refer to various types of business letters and their replies, we are covering letters that move both ways, i.e., letters from business organizations to various other agencies as well as individuals and other agencies to business organizations.

Some common areas of business correspondence or the specific types of letters with which a business letter writer should be well versed are as follows:

From the Purchase Department:

1. Calling for quotations for products and services
2. Inviting tenders for jobs and supplies
3. Asking for samples and drawings
4. Placing test orders
5. Placing orders
6. Status enquiries
7. Technical bids and commercial bids

When we refer to tenders, quotations and orders it must be emphasized that there are financial implications. The subject matter and the details of the quotation, tender or order have to be specifically and clearly stated such that there is no ambiguity.

From the Sales/Marketing Department:

1. Sales letter
2. Circular letters
3. Preparation of sales letters with the conditions of sale on the reverse.
4. Preparation of market survey reports
5. Reports from salesperson to sales executives
6. Offer of discounts and business concessions
7. Launch of a new product or scheme
8. Mailing of company literature
9. Letter of acknowledgement

In this category, there are two types of business letters. One set relates to the letters emanating from within the sales departments, or from salespersons and marketing personnel in the field to other departments or to their own executives. The other set of letters relates to letters written by people in sales and marketing to people outside the organization—customers, prospects, agents and distributors and other agencies. It is the latter category that needs particular attention. Letters to the customers and prospects either substitute or supplement personal contacts and as such can make or mar the business promotion efforts. They carry the image of the organization and the people behind the letters. Sales letters should also be elegant and appealing. The presentation should be such that it elicits the attention of the addressee.

From the Accounts Department:

1. Dues and collection letters to various agencies and customers
2. Follow-up letters
3. Correspondence with banks
4. Opening/closing of accounts
5. Regarding overdrafts, cash credit and current accounts
6. Stop payment instructions
7. Request for issue of letters of credit (LCs)
8. Protest for wrongful dishonouring of cheques
9. Letters relating to interest payments and service charges
10. Complaint letters covering wrong credits and debits and delays in realization of instruments
11. Correspondence with insurance companies regarding payment of premium, renewal of policies, claims and settlements
12. Correspondence with agencies like the Telephone Department, Post and Telegraph authorities, the Provident Fund Office, Income Tax Office and Commercial Tax Department

By their very nature, these types of business letters should be accurate, brief, simple and to the point. In particular, letters relating to collection of dues and recovery of money need to be drafted with a keen sense of understanding and sensitivity. Such letters should necessarily vary in terms of terseness or intensity and choice of words depending upon the nature of dues, age of dues and other such relevant factors. Some of them have to be polite, some persuasive and some firm.

From the Personnel Department:

1. Calling candidates for written tests
2. Interview call letters
3. Offer of appointment
4. Provisional and final appointment orders
5. Confirmation in service
6. Changes in emoluments
7. Disciplinary matters—show cause notices, charge sheets, calling for explanation, discharge, other punishments and letters of dismissal
8. Leave and travel sanctions

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9. Training programs and deputation
10. Letters of reference

When we refer to personnel department letters or employee-related letters, we are indeed discussing a very wide variety of letters. These letters may be general or specific, routine or special, pleasant or unpleasant. Letters from HRD department are normally pleasant or otherwise motivating and training related, whereas letters from the Industrial Relations Department or from the Disciplinary Authority are normally of the none-too-pleasant category. These two are obviously widely different in nature and the letter writer must use the appropriate language and approach. While HRD and training-related letters should carry a positive, encouraging and developmental stance, disciplinary letters will have to carry an authoritarian and even a legal or procedural approach. It is necessary to acquire adequate familiarity with the terms and ensure that there are no inadvertent inadequacies in the letter.

From the Administration and Secretarial Departments:

1. Change in management
2. Changes in business hours
3. Opening and shifting of branches and offices
4. Invitations and public notices
5. Correspondence with directors and shareholders
6. Agenda and minutes of company meetings
7. Correspondence with shareholders and debenture holders pertaining to dividend and interest payments, transfer and transmission of shares
8. Correspondence with agents and transport companies
9. Representations to trade associations, chambers of commerce and public authorities
10. Letter seeking appointments/personal interviews

Correspondence relating to directors and shareholders and matters concerning company meetings, especially in listed companies and larger organizations, are often handled by qualified company secretaries. The point to be noted here is that such correspondence is generally specialized in nature and will have to be attended in a systematic and organized manner. The business letter writer keen on acquiring such letter-writing skills will have to necessarily understand secretarial functions.

Other Types of Business Communication:

1. Job applications
2. Preparation of biodata and curriculum vitae
3. Export- and import-related correspondence
4. Preparation of bill of exchange, promissory note and hundi
5. Telegraphic and fax messages
6. Mild and strong appeals
7. Correspondence with foreign institutions and agencies
8. Advertisements of various types—newspapers and print media, hoardings and banners
9. Press releases
10. Questionnaires and opinion polls

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11. Legal correspondence
12. Publicity literature such as brochures and booklets
13. Newsletters and house journals
14. Preparation of charts, graphs and stickers

Letters of Social Significance:

1. Social letters in business
2. Inviting a guest
3. Congratulatory letters on achievements
4. Letters that say 'Thank you'
5. Letters of appreciation
6. Accepting or declining invitations
7. Condolence letters
8. Letter of introduction
9. Goodwill messages

We have generally listed in the foregoing paragraphs various types of letters and correspondence that emanate from a business on a regular basis. While most of it is routine involving primary level of writing, there are some, as we have noted, which call for specialized and cultivated skills. The objective in listing various types of letters from different departments and functional areas is to give an idea of the expanse of business communication. Like in other areas, in letter writing too, conscious efforts and willingness to learn are a must. A good business letter writer has to appreciate the essential characteristics of each such letter and develop relevant skills.

Instead of providing drafts or models of various types of business letters, we have thought it appropriate to present a fairly comprehensive list of business letters for all occasions. We have also highlighted the significant features and principles to be borne in mind while drafting some letters such as orders and quotations, sales letters, and collection and recovery letters. Models tend to inhibit learning. Skills are acquired through attentive learning, application and practice. We are also giving in the following paragraphs some more useful tips or guidelines that should help in developing letter-writing skills. Notwithstanding the routine nature of most business correspondence, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to develop variety and style in writing the letters. Letters must have certain intensity or depth depending upon the situation, and it is not possible to bring out such variations in one or two 'draft models.' Students and practitioners desirous of improving their skills in letter writing are advised to practice drafting a variety of such letters, i.e., letters for all occasions, taking note of the following additional guidelines and compare them with standard drafts or models available from authentic sources as confidence-building measures.

Biography: History and Growth through the Age

Biography is a story of a person's life told by someone else. It is a description in detail or a complete account of someone's life. It covers the happenings from the beginning to the end of a person's life which include birth, education, youth, experience, marriage, middle age, professional achievements, old age and his or her death. It also includes information about family and important acquaintances. It is a literary form of writing, based only on facts.

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Types, Age-wise Production and Social Aspects

One of the earliest biographers was Cornelius Nepos, who published his work titled '*Lives of Outstanding Generals*' in 44 BC. Slowly and steadily, the much extensive ones were written in Greek by Plutarch, in his *Parallel Lives*, published about 80 A.D. The early Middle Ages (AD 400 to 1450), saw a decline in the awareness of the classical culture in Europe. The only repositories of knowledge and records of the early history in Europe during this time were those of the Roman Catholic Church.

In Medieval Islamic Civilization (c. AD 750 to 1258), similar traditional Muslim biographies of Muhammad and other important figures in the early history of Islam began to be written. This marked the beginning of the Prophetic biography tradition. Early biographical dictionaries were published as collections of famous Islamic personalities from the 9th century onwards. They contained a lot of social data for a large segment of the population than any other works of that period contained. The earliest biographical dictionaries initially focused on the lives of the prophets of Islam and their companions. *The Book of The Major Classes* by Ibn Sa'd al-Baghdadi is one of the early examples. Gradually the documentation of the lives of many other historical figures (from rulers to scholars) who lived in the medieval Islamic world began.

By the late Middle Ages, biographies became less church-oriented in Europe. The reason for this was that biographies of kings, knights, and tyrants began to appear. The most famous of such biographies was *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory. Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1550) was the landmark biography focusing on secular lives which very soon became a bestseller. Two other developments are noteworthy in the fifteenth century: the development of the printing press in and the gradual increase in literacy.

Biographies in the English language began appearing during the reign of Henry VIII. John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563), better known as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, was essentially the first dictionary of the biography in Europe, followed by Thomas Fuller's *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662), with a distinct focus on public life.

A prime source for the biographers of many well-known pirates and one that was influential in shaping popular conceptions of pirates was, *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724), by Charles Johnson.

While the historical impulse would remain a strong element in early American biography, American writers carved out a distinct approach. What emerged was a rather didactic form of biography, which sought to shape the individual character of a reader in the process of defining national character. The American biography followed the English model, incorporating Thomas Carlyle's view that biography was a part of history. Carlyle asserted that the lives of great human beings were essential to understanding society and its institutions.

James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* was the first modern biography, and a work which exerted considerable influence on the evolution of the genre. Boswell covered the entirety of Johnson's life by means of additional research although Boswell's personal acquaintance with his subject only began in 1763, when Johnson was 54 years old. It has been claimed to be the greatest biography written in the English language. Boswell's work was unique in its level of research, which involved archival study, eye-witness accounts and interviews, its robust and attractive narrative, and its honest depiction of all aspects of Johnson's life and character - a formula which serves as the basis of biographical literature to this day.

During the 19th century, there was a sort of stagnation in the biographical writings. In many cases there was a reversal to the more familiar hagiographical method of eulogizing the dead, similar to the biographies of saints produced in Medieval times. By the middle of the century, a distinction between mass biography and literary biography began to form, reflecting a breach between high culture and middle-class culture. It was however noticed that the number of biographies in print experienced a rapid growth, due to an increase in the habit of public reading. This revolution in publishing made books available to a larger audience of readers. In addition, affordable paperback editions of popular biographies were published for the first time. Periodicals began publishing a sequence of biographical sketches.

5.2.2 Autobiography

An autobiography means the story of the life of a person written by the person himself. The term was coined by William Taylor (1786-1858) in 1797 in the English periodical, *the Monthly Review*. For Taylor, the word was a hybrid coinage and had to be shunned because it was too 'pedantic.' Robert Southey (1774-1843) also used the term in 1809. For him, it was a story based on the writer's memory about himself. Autobiography is a form of literature in which the writer writes about his own life, experiences and achievements. It aims at a successful presentation of the self or personality. It is a record of the most important events and periods of the writer's life.

Earlier autobiographies were called or entitled *Apologia*. They were meant to provide self-justification for the life of the author. John Henry Newman's (1801-1890) autobiography (1864) is called *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Saint Augustine's (354-430) *Confessions* is his famous autobiographical work. Rousseau (1712-1778) used *Confessions* (1782) as the basis for writing his autobiography. In India, Babur (1483-1530) wrote *Baburnama* between 1493-1529. During the Renaissance, the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571) wrote his biography, *Vita* (Life) between 1558 to 1562. During this period autobiography became a medium to express political, social, philosophical, psychological and aesthetic thoughts. In the twentieth century, Adolf Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* and Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* are very famous examples of autobiographies which also reflect their political views. An autobiography does not mention the end of a person, as a writer himself is supposedly writing it. Dr. Samuel Johnson, a noted critic and writer of the eighteenth century, considered autobiography as a better medium than biography. According to him:

'The writer of his own life has at last the first qualification of an historian, the knowledge of truth; and though it may be plausibly objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartiality may be expected with equal confidence from him that related the passages of his own life, as from him that delivers the transactions of another.'

According to Longfellow, 'Autobiography is a product of first-hand experience...' Thus, it is a thing expressed more truthfully and objectively because it is a writer's first-hand experience. The felt experiences can be expressed best by a person himself. An autobiography can be written in two forms: (i) Subjective (ii) objective or fictionalized. A subjective autobiography is that which expresses the author's own ideas about himself and centres the events around it. It speaks about his personal life, childhood, youth, emotional experiences, his career, profession, status, and so on. It is generally expected that a writer would write his autobiography after he has passed a considerable period of his life. St. Augustine's *Confessions* of 5th century A.D. can be quoted as one of the first examples of full and candid analysis of the self. Jean Jacques Rousseau's

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Confessions published during the later half of the eighteenth century influenced European thought in the 18th century, becoming one of the inspirations for the French Revolution.

An autobiography can also become an instrument to express a person's philosophical, political, social, economical and psychological ideas. It may also turn from subjective to objective like Rousseau's *Confession*. The autobiographies of David Hume, Edward Gibbon and Benjamin Franklin, written in the 18th century, are notable works of art. There are autobiographies in which the name of the writer and his real stories are not revealed. They are called fictionalized autobiographies. In such types of autobiography, the important ideas, emotions, experiences are all mentioned but names of the characters are different. Here, the writer expresses his emotions through an invented set of characters and events. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is one such example. William Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris* (1823) is a sad story of the writer's love-life. Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and others wrote autobiographies using their personal experiences of life. Henry Brooks Adams, John Stuart Mill, and Cardinal Newman all are considered as famous writers of autobiography.

The subject and treatment of an autobiography differ according to the profession, skill, learning and intellectual inclination of a writer of autobiography. Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography *Left Hand, Right Hand!* is a great piece of literature. Thomas De Quincey, Benjamin Robert Haydon (painter), Leigh Hunt, Trelawny, J.S. Mill, John Ruskin, Morley, H.G. Wells, Lloyd George, Rudyard Kipling, George Moore, Sir Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru all are known as the masters of the art of autobiographical writing. Their autobiographies inspire people with literary taste and artistic fervour. Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* are all categorized as fictional autobiographies. In short, autobiography is a form of literary expression which expresses the writer's own personality in art subjectively. Like the novel, this is a very popular form of expression in the modern age.

Social Features and Historical Development with Relevance to Personal Life and Literary Values: Chronological Development

Writing of autobiographies began very late in the history of English literature. Autobiographies gained prominence in England in the 17th Century. During the 18th century autobiographies came to be considered under the branch of literature. Benjamin Franklin, David Hume and Edward Gibbon are the prominent autobiographers of the 18th Century. In the 19th and 20th centuries autobiography gained first rate importance and became a major form of literature. Some important modern autobiographers are Viscount Morley, Lord Asquith, W.H. Davies, R.L. Stevenson, Viscount Haldane and E.V. Lucas. Modern autobiography need not necessarily be of great men. The greatness of the autobiography depends upon the literary skill which the autobiographer uses in his autobiography. Modern autobiography is becoming more and more literary in form and structure.

Autobiography has caught the attention of critics in the recent years. The major studies in autobiography as a literary genre in English are:

- Ray Pascal's : *Design and Truth in Autobiography*
- George Misch's : *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*
- Anna Robson Bum's : *The Autobiography, A Critical and Comparative Study*

- Wayne Shumaker's : *English Autobiography : Its Emergence, Materials and Form.*
- John Morris's : *Version of the Self.*
- James Olney's : *Metaphors of Self etc.*

The origin of the genre of autobiography date back to antiquity with the publication of Augustine's *Confessions* but the history of autobiography as a literary term is much shorter. After the mid 18th century there was a slight shift as autobiography was seen separate from historiography as well as from a general notion of biography. The latter, variously coined 'life', 'memoir' or 'history', had not distinguished between what Johnson then seminally parted as "telling his own story" as opposed to "recounting the life of another".

During the emergence of the modern subject in 1800, autobiography emerged as a genre of non-fictional narration where the subject is self-reflexive who enquires his life and identity from the beginning to the present. The pre-modern spiritual autobiography, the tradition of which continued till the nineteenth century was constructed in a way that it was moulded into a moral kind of a narrative. Dividing life into clear-cut phases centred round the moment of conversion, the spiritual auto biographer tells the story of self-renunciation and surrenders to providence and grace. The key experience is that of conversion to a new self.

The narrative mode of modern autobiography as a literary genre, firmly linked to the notion of the individual, evolved to some extent by propelling the moment of self-recognition towards the narrative present. By 1800, the task of autobiography was to represent a unique individual, as claimed by Rousseau for himself: "I am not made like any of those I have seen; I venture to believe that I am not like any of those who are in existence". Goethe also saw himself as a singular individual embedded in and interacting with the specific constellations of his time.

Development of the Genre in India

The forms of biography and autobiography were quite alien to the Indians before the British arrived. However, the forms of informal autobiography or confessions were prevalent in the Vedic literature like *The Gambler's Lament* is the Rigveda or in the Buddhist literature like *Theragatha*, 6th Century B.C. to 3rd century B.C.). These forms can also be seen in the later Sanskrit literature like Bana's life given in the first few chapters of *Harshcharitam* (7th cen A.D.) or in the Mughal literature like *Babarnama*, *Tuzak-i-Jahangir*, etc.

These informal autobiographies were written either to promote spirituality or to glorify the auto biographer himself. The second half of the nineteenth century can be seen as a period of systematic development of autobiography in various languages including English in India. The first piece of autobiographical sketch (1833) which is a very realistic Rammohan Roy's short autobiographical sketch (1833) which is a very realistic presentation. The first extensive autobiography was written by Lutufullah, a tutor in Persian, Arabic and Hindustani to British officers in 1857. Kashiprasad Ghose's letter published in James Lang's *Hand book of Bengal Missions* (1848) also provides great literary interest. Novelist Lal Behari Dey's *Recollections of My School Days*, serialised in the *Bengal Magazine* (1873-76), proclaims the superiority of English education to oriental learning. Some attempts of autobiographical writings by Indians in the nineteenth century are:

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- Nishikanta Chattopadhyaya's *Reminiscences of German University Life* (1892)
- Rakhal Das Halder's *The English Diary of an Indian Student* (1861-2)

During the first half of the 20th century there was a total quest for freedom. The freedom fighters who devoted themselves to the freedom struggle wrote about their own experiences through autobiographies. Some of such examples are:

- Surendranath Banerjee's *A Nation is Making* (1925)
- Mahatma Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927)
- Lala Lajpat Rai's *The Story of My Deportation* (1908)
- Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936)
- Barindarakumar Ghose's *The Tale of My Exile* (1928)
- B. K. Sinha's *In Andamans: The Indian Bastille* (1939)
- Dhan Gopal Mukherji's *Caste and Outcaste* (1923)
- Anand's *Apology for Heroism* (1946)
- K. Subba Rao's *Revived Memories* (1933)

Other autobiographies of the period include social reformers like D. K. Karve *Looking Back* (1936) or men of spirituality like Swami Ram Das's *In quest of God* (1923), an educationist like G. K. Chatur's *The last enchantment* (1933).

The form of autobiography reveals four different aspects that vary according to the auto biographer's mode and mood. These can be classified into four aspects:

- Subjectivity
- Self-revelation
- Introspection
- Self-concealment

The centre of any autobiographical work is the life. James Olney rightly observes: "The 'I' that comes away to it's own being shapes and determines the nature of the autobiography and in so doing half discovers, half creates itself that opened up the subject of autobiography specifically for literary discussions". Each individual has a story in himself. It is only by writing and expressing himself that the autobiographer exposes the life and creates a place for himself. Thus, autobiography is at once subjective, self-revelatory and introspective.

Janet Gunn observes: "Autobiography is the act of 'settling down' or of wedging one's feet downward. It represents an act both of discovery and creation that involves at the same time, the movement of the self in the world recognizing that "the land makes man" and the movement of the self into the world, recognizing well that "man elects his land". The great poet W.B. Yeats says in his autobiography "It is my self that I remake".

Many a times when autobiography is written by a political or social leader, he indulges himself in narrating other persons, individuals and events so much so that his self is completely dissolved. This is not advisable in autobiography. The writer should maintain a balance in giving account of other events and his own self. The self-referentiality of autobiography should be evident in the language, narrative and the structure of the work.

Literature grows out of life but the truth of literature is imaginative. Facts of life are completely dissolved in imagination and reshaped by literature. Facts get a distinct

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shape by getting the touch of an artist. Autobiography is a record of a person's real life, lived in a particular time and place. George Gusdorf says that this mode of writing "is limited almost entirely to the public sector of existence". That is to say, autobiography not only deals with personal but also with public lives of the people. It deals with the realities of life. To quote from the article of Charles J Rzepka: It is a search of self through the annals of history, an act which embodies the self where the 'real' or 'actual' self is replaced "by a new self-made object, a cultural artefact- the book at hand, the autobiographical text". As autobiography is a life-history it is surely associated with reality. Fact is the soul of autobiography. It recreates life through the imaginative transformation of facts. However an autobiographer is different from a historian. A historian is concerned with the results of the events while an autobiographer is concerned with the events themselves. An autobiographer is honest to his experiences and feelings. A strict order of chronology is not expected from an auto biographer. An autobiography is beyond the limits of time-span. Many a times an autobiography does not follow the chronology of details.

5.2.3 Essay: Growth of Essay Writing and the Modern Period

An essay is a short piece of writing which reflects the writer's own point of view about a particular subject. Essays are essentially written in prose form. They may have diverse elements in focus such as literary criticism, political manifestos, observations of daily life, reflections of an author, recollection, personal philosophies, learned arguments, criticism of life, events or happenings, and so on. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'essay is a composition of moderate length on any particular subject, or branch of a subject; originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range.' A philosophical essay may turn into a treatise in length. W.H. Hudson says that an essay should be subjective because it is a literature of self-expression. An essay should be brief, precise, argumentative, fact or philosophy-based and logically satisfying. It should aim to fulfil or give some understanding of a certain aspect of a subject. Francis Bacon's essays are the best examples of these types of essays.

According to M.H. Abrams, an essay is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, and persuade to accept a thesis on any subject, or simply entertain. The Frenchman, Montaigne and the Englishman, Sir Francis Bacon are called the fathers of the modern essay. Essays are of many kinds. The four broad categories are, narrative, descriptive, persuasive and expository essays. There are other types such as cause and effect, classification and division, compare and contrast, dialectic, exemplification, familiar, personal, history, critical, economic and logical. **Critical** essays are those in which the subject matter is impersonal. It comes more from the brain than the heart and is generally an evaluation of a subject or work of art. All the important critics of English letters come into this category. It also aims at theorising literature. We have chiefly two types of critics in English: (i) Classic (ii) Romantic. But in the post war period, we have numerous variations in this genre. **Personal** essays have more to do with inner feelings and the heart of the writer than the brain. **Familiar** essay is a type in which the essayist addresses a single person and he speaks about himself and a particular subject. Charles Lamb in the Romantic Age of English literature has been called the greatest exponent of familiar essays. This essay type is a blend of both personal and critical, and hence, use both heart and brain equally.

An essay is a composition of short prose. The English essay has many forms, but there are hardly any cut and dried rules to guide and govern their writing. Sir Francis

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Bacon rightly suggests that there is a very close relationship between the word 'essay' and the word of the mineralogist 'assay' which means the process employed in mineralogy to remove the dust away to be left with specks of gold. Bacon thinks deeply over some topics of social custom or behaviour till his conclusions are reduced to well written concise statements, justifying the appropriateness of the remark, 'Brevity is the soul of wit'. It is for this reason that Bacon's essays can be called a collection of sayings, mottoes and proverbs. Bacon has the power of explaining a bare truth with the help of an appropriate image or metaphor.

It is as relevant as it is important to note that although Bacon is called the father of the English Essay, he did not invent the form. He should be given the credit for importing the idea from France and transplanting it into the literary soil of England. In his essays, Bacon does not appear as a scientist or a philosopher but as a man of action or in the words of Bacon himself a 'Citizen of the World'. However, he is too much of an English man, or rather an Elizabethan-Jacobean Englishman, to be more precise, to fit into the category of a citizen of the world. Bacon was not only a speculative philosopher. He lived in a world of action and formulated a philosophy for a man of action. Many of Bacon's essays are written for the benefit of kings. Bacon was a very shrewd observer of society and took a keen interest into the nature and affairs of men. He was born in the age which was remarkable in many ways. It was a period of great importance in the history of England. He was the true son of Renaissance. The elements of wonder, of enquiry, of admiration, is all found in Bacon's works.

Early English Prose Fiction is a balanced and representative collection of fictional prose works from the 16th and 17th centuries, and many of these important texts are difficult to obtain elsewhere.

Early English Prose Fiction is the largest corpus of works of prose fiction available in electronic form. It includes Elizabethan fiction, Jest Books, collections of short pieces and novellas, Restoration fiction, and works of popular fiction.

Early English Prose Fiction is the perfect complement to English Poetry and English Drama. It contains prose versions of some of the poetry in those databases and includes many of the same authors.

Growth of Essay Writing

Let us chart the growth of essay writing from the late fifteenth century to the modern period. English essayists included Robert Burton (1577-1641) and Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682). In France, the three volume Essays of Michel de Montaigne in the mid 1500s contain over 100 examples widely regarded as the predecessor of the modern essay. In Italy, an indepth analysis of courtly manners was written by Baldassare Castiglione in his essay 'Cortigiano'.

During the Age of Enlightenment, a lot of polemicists would use the tool of essay writing to their advantage; these were people who aimed at convincing readers of their position; they also featured heavily in the rise of periodical literature, as seen in the works of Richard Steele, Joseph Addison and Samuel Johnson. Edmund Burke and Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote essays for the general public in the 18th and 19th centuries. The early 19th century, in particular, saw an exponential increase in the number of essayists in English - William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Thomas de Quincey all penned numerous essays on diverse subjects. In the 20th century, a number of essayists like TS Eliot tried to explain the new movements in art and culture through their essays. On the other hand some essayists used their essays for strident

political themes. Some essayists like Robert Louis Stevenson and Willa Cather wrote lighter essays. Virginia Woolf, Edmund Wilson, and Charles du Bos wrote literary criticism essays.

Modern Period in Essay Writing

Let us consider some of the modern writers and their contribution to essay writing.

• Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was one of the most prominent modern voices of the English literature and the greatest among the women writers of the twentieth-century. She was a member of the 'Bloomsbury group' (Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, Rupert Brooke, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Duncan Grant, Leonard Woolf and Roger Fry) which was a famous literary circle of the known writers and critics of the early twentieth-century in England.

• Marxist Criticism

The followers of Karl Marx (1818-1883*) believed in the historical past in order to shape up their present in its light. The disciples of Marx and Frederick Engels, the radical economists, were called Marxists 'who sought to prove that the mode of production of material life determined the social, political and intellectual processes of life'. Marxism philosophy came to be a pervasive wave on every aspect of art and life by the turn of the century and ushered a new era 'Marxism accepts that society and human behaviour are controlled by the economic forces operating at a certain moment of social development i.e. by the modes of production'. The principal texts influencing such ideologies were 'Critique of Political Economy,' 'Communist Manifesto,' etc. It is often said that the Marxists were propagandists and to them a writer is a 'prey of abstract economic forces'. In this philosophy, man becomes central figure whose emancipation is the most important task. They portray man as a whole with all possible perspectives of his life. The chief exponents of Marxist as well as sociological critics are George Lukacs, Christopher Caudwell, Ralph Fox, V. F. Calverton, Vernon Parrington, Michael Gold and Grandville Hicks. The Marxists showed relation of 'common people to a work of art'. They emphasised 'on the value, significance and richness of 'content''. They did not believe in mere ideologies and formalistic art.

• I. A. Richards

Ivor Armstrong Richards (1893-1979) was the pioneer of psychological criticism in English literature which is scientific in nature. He speaks of scientific analysis of poetry having proper speculation into its language, words, images, metaphor, etc. His major critical contributions are 'The Foundations of Aesthetics' (1921, with Ogden and Wood), 'The Meaning of Meaning' (1923, with Ogden), 'Principles of Criticism' (1924), 'Science and Poetry' (1925), 'Practical Criticism' (1929) and 'The Philosophy of Rhetoric' (1936). The modern critics explored the creative process and the psychological journey that a reader undergoes when he goes through a work of art. Man creates literature; and in literature, men voice out their experiences. Richards interprets literature with the help of psychology and science. He speaks of two uses of language scientific and emotive where the former is used for *reference* and the latter, for emotional expressions: 'A statement may be used for the sake of the *reference*, true or false, which it causes. This is the scientific use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the effects in emotion and attitude..... This is *emotive* use of language'.

To him, words are very significant which create picture when we read a poem: 'Misunderstanding and underestimation of poetry is mainly due to over-estimation of the thought in it. We can see still more clearly..... Why does the poet use these words and no

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others? Not because they stand for a series of thoughts which in themselves are what he is concerned to communicate....He uses these words because the interests which the situation calls into play combine to bring them, just in this form, into his consciousness as a means of ordering, controlling and consolidating the whole experience....a similar situation and leading to the same response'. Therefore the reason is unknown why a poet uses a certain set of words in a certain moment. He says that '....genuine poetry will give to the reader who approaches it in the proper manner a response which is as passionate, noble and serene as the experience of the poet, the master of speech because he is the master of experience itself'.

Richards looked for what is valuable in poetry. He said 'In the past, tradition, a kind of Treaty of Versailles assigning frontiers and spheres of influence to the different interests.....But Tradition is weakening. Moral authorities are not as well backed by beliefs as they were.....Only the rarest individuals hitherto have achieved this new order, and never yet perhaps completely. But many have achieved it for a brief while, for a particular phase of experience, and many have recorded it for these phases. 'Of these records poetry consists'.

• Thomas Stearns Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) is the most important man of letters in the modern age. He is an equally celebrated critic and law-giver along with I.A. Richards in the history of English literature. He is held 'as the liberator of modern literature, celebrated as the international cultural hero and eulogised as the greatest poet and critic of the twentieth century who himself is 'the unity of his work''. T. S. Eliot and I. A. Richards' ideas influenced many schools of poetry as well as criticism among which 'New Criticism' is of foremost importance. Eliot's texts under the name of criticism are of three types: the first is 'Theoretical criticism which is about the principles of literature poetry, drama and criticism;' the second is 'descriptive and practical criticism dealing with the works of individual writers and evaluating their achievements;' and the third is 'theological essays'. The important works in the first group are *Tradition and Individual Talent* (1919), *Rhetoric and Dramatic Poetry* (1919), *The Function of Criticism* (1923), *Education and the Classics* (1932), *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), *After Strange Gods* (1934), *Religion and Literature* (1935), *The Music of Poetry* (1942), *The Classics and the Man of Letters* (1942), *What is Minor Poetry?* (1944), *What is a Classic?* (1944), *The Social Function of Poetry* (1945), *Poetry Criticism* (1956). Eliot gave the theories on 'tradition, objectivity in poetry and impersonality in art'. In the second category, he evaluates many poets and schools of poetry amongst which his essays on 'The Metaphysical Poets,' 'Andrew Marvell,' 'Homage to John Dryden,' 'Dante,' 'Yeats,' 'Kipling' and 'Ezra Pound' are very important. In the third category, his essays on 'religion, culture and general human values' like 'Lancelot Andrews' (1926), 'The Idea of a Christian Society' (1939) and 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' (1949) fall.

Eliot reminds of the 'historical past': 'Tradition is not solely, or primarily the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rites or our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of 'the same people living in the same place''. To him, 'Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour.....And it is at

the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place, of his contemporaneity'. So he would assert on being conscious of the 'historical sense'.

Like all classicists, Eliot also pleads for disciplining the self: 'What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality'. He does not allow the creator to give vent to his own emotions. Art is an impersonal activity. He believes that 'It is part of the business of the critic to preserve tradition.....to see the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes'. For it is the sense of tradition or the historical past which will enable him to be a perfect critic, as a great critic is 'armed with a powerful glass'. A critic must see literature as a 'whole' and 'his job is 'to bring the past back to life'.

Eliot kept revising his own ideas and what he said in the early decades of the 20th century, he felt superfluous by the mid of the 20th century: 'Thirty years ago, I asserted that the essential function of literary criticism was 'the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste'. That phrase may sound somewhat pompous to our ears in 1956.....one emotional and the other intellectual'. He stresses on the needs of education and a critic should have 'a very highly developed sense of fact'. He asserts that impressionistic criticism may be valuable, but 'If poetry is a form of 'communication,' yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself, and only incidentally the experience and the thought which have gone into it'. He believes that 'the essential advantage for a poet is not to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror, and the glory'.

He believed in reality, but 'For it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of an order in reality, to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation; and then leave us as Virgil left Dante, 'to proceed toward a region where that guide can avail us no further'.

• Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) is a French philosopher and he is chiefly known for his contributions as a literary theorist who gave the analysis called 'Deconstruction'. He is a post-structuralist critic associated with the theory of post-modernism. His ideas influenced various subjects such as 'ontology, epistemology (especially concerning social sciences), ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics and the philosophy of language'. He influenced American critics Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, Barbara Johnson and Harold Bloom. Derrida denies however 'that deconstruction is not a theory unified by any set of consistent rules or procedures, it has been variously regarded as a way of reading, a mode of writing, and, above all, a way of challenging interpretations of texts based upon conventional notions of the stability of the human self, the external world, and of language and meaning'.

His ideas radiated internationally as soon as he published his first three books 'La Voix et le phénomène (Speech and Phenomena), concerning Edmund Husserl's theory of signs; *De la grammatologie (Of Grammatology)*, whose subject was the 'science' of writing; and *L'Écriture et la différence (Writing and Difference)*, which contained important essays on Hegel, Freud, and Michel Foucault. Later works included *La Dissemination (Dissemination)* (1972), which included a lengthy engagement with Plato's views of writing and sophistry; *Marges de la philosophie (Margins of Philosophy)* (1982), which included essays on Hegel's semiology and the use of metaphor in philosophy; *Positions* (1972), containing three illuminating interviews with Derrida,

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touching on his attitude to Marxism, Hegel, and other issues; *Circumfessions* (1991), an autobiographical work that engages with the text of Augustine's *Confessions*; and *Spectres de Marx* (*Specters of Marx*) (1994), which looks at the various legacies of Marx'.

Deconstruction shows the function of 'logocentrism' in any 'text' where the word logo refers 'the logos is the word as determined by and conveying a meaning. He also observes that the root of the Hebrew equivalent for *logos* means 'to speak,' and that this expression is used of God's self-revelation. Moreover, in Hebrew culture, the word once spoken was held to have a substantive existence. The word and concept *logos* may have derived in part from the Greek thinker Heraclitus and the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria; in its simplest meaning it can signify 'statement,' 'saying,' 'discourse,' or science'. He gave a graph to display its role:

'Logos

Language Reality

Signifier 1 - a - Signified 1 ————— b ————— Object 1

Signifier 2 - Signified 2 ————— Object 2

Signifier 3 - Signified 3 ————— Object 3

Signifier 4 - Signified 4 ————— Object 4

Ad Infinitum'

Any disorder in this arrangement may lead to its disorganisation. If such a 'disintegration' takes place, it will encompass many centuries to disintegrate this order. The substitution of one signifier for the other is called 'metaphor' by Derrida. Thus, according to him, language possesses metaphorical capacities. To say, 'Modern equivalents in Western society might be concepts such as freedom or democracy. All of these terms function as what Derrida calls 'transcendental signifieds,' or concepts invested with absolute authority, which places them beyond questioning or examination. An important endeavour of deconstruction, then, is to show the operation of logocentrism in all of its forms, and to bring back these various transcendental signifieds within the province of language and textuality, within the province of their relatability to other concepts'. Therefore, the basic function of deconstruction 'is to reinstate language within the connections of the various terms that have conventionally dominated Western thought: the connections between thought and reality, self and world, subject and object'. This thought is partly influenced by the Swiss linguist critic Ferdinand de Saussure. Derrida believed that 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte,' often translated as 'there is nothing outside the text,' means precisely this: that the aforementioned features of language, which together comprise 'textuality,' are all-embracing; textuality governs all interpretative operations'. Derrida asserts that 'oppositions, such as those between intellect and sense, soul and body, master and slave, male and female, inside and outside, centre and margin, do not represent a state of equivalence between two terms. Rather, each of these oppositions is a 'violent hierarchy' in which one term has been conventionally subordinated, in gestures that embody a host of religious, social, and political valencies'.

Therefore, 'a deconstructive reading of a text, then, as practiced by Derrida, will be a multifaceted project: in general, it will attempt to display logocentric operations in the text, by focusing on a close reading of the text's language, its use of presuppositions or transcendental signifieds, its reliance on binary oppositions, its self-contradictions, its *aporias* or points of conceptual impasse, and the ways in which it effects closure and

resists free play. Hence deconstruction, true to its name (which derives from Heidegger's term *Destruktion*), will examine all of the features that went into the construction of text, down to its very foundations'.

5.3 VIRGINIA WOOLF: A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

A Room of One's Own is a comprehensive composition by Woolf. Initially published on 24 October 1929, the composition was based on a sequence of lectures she gave at Newham College and Girton College, the two women's colleges at Cambridge University. Although this comprehensive composition actually make use of an imaginary storyteller and storyline to look at women, both, as writers of and characters in fiction, the text for the delivery of the series of lectures, named 'Women and Fiction' and consequently the essay, are regarded as non-fiction. The composition is by and large viewed as women-oriented and is well-known in its argument for both, a factual and outlining space for women writers in a literary practice governed by.

Chapter 1

The chapter opens with Woolf saying she has been asked to give a lecture on women and fiction. She tells her audience that the topic made her think on subject matters from a woman's viewpoint: what was it that made a uniquely female experience, what were the salient features of the fiction women themselves wrote and how was it different from the creative output of men when they talked of women in their works. She goes on to say that she could not come to any definitive conclusion in her ramblings. She did, however, come to one conclusion and that was 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction'. To further explain her point she decides to use the fictional narrator Mary Belton as her alter ego.

She goes on to say that a week ago she was sitting by the riverside and thinking about the topic. However, her thoughts were not very productive. She compares them to the measly catch of a fisherman who throws the half grown fish back into the water since it is useless to him. However she is excited by the simile and rushes over the lawns of Oxbridge to go to the library. However she is stopped and told that she cannot be there since only 'fellows' and 'scholars' are allowed. She forgets whatever she was thinking about at this interruption. Her thought changes direction and she wonders as to the creative genius of the literary giants like Milton and Shakespeare. She decides to research their creative minds in the library. However, she is denied entry again: women can enter only if they are accompanied by a scholar or if they can produce a Letter of Introduction written by one of them. She is angered by this denial and refuses to enter the library again. While leaving she passes the chapel and notices a service about to begin. However she doesn't contemplate entering: she would only be denied entry. At this point she looks at the wealth that was consumed to create these magnificent structures and realizes men can create these because they have money.

She goes to lunch and sees a huge variety laid out before her: soles, partridges, a delicious dessert, and excellent wine. The relaxed atmosphere and the food inspire 'rational intercourse' in the conversation. At this point she sees a tailless minx cat and feels as if something is lacking in the scene. When she goes back to Fernham College, where she is staying as a guest, she has a plain dinner. The food is starkly different from that served in Oxbridge: it comprises of plain soup, mediocre beef, vegetables, potatoes, bad custard, prunes, biscuits cheese and water. She starts a conversation with her friend

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Mary Seton. As the conversation meanders she thinks of kings and magnates and their contribution to the field of education. Looking at the bare food and surroundings she is reminded of the opulence she saw in the morning. The women wonder what lies beneath their building and Mary talks of the perpetual shortage of funds required to run the college.

Their strained circumstances make the women realize that their own mothers did not leave them any monetary legacy; had they done so they would have been financially independent and could have lived a life of luxury as enjoyed by their male counterparts in Oxbridge. However, as they discuss this the narrator realizes two things: one, women never had ownership of their own wealth and it passed from father to husband. The situation had changed only in the last 48 years. She also realizes that their mothers would have had gone into business to earn financial independence and there is a real possibility that they would not have been born. In other words it seems a Hobson's choice. On the way back to her inn, the narrator ponders over issues of wealth and poverty and how the former is assigned to men and the latter to women. This in turn leads her to think of the issue as to whether this has any impact on the literary tradition or the lack of it when it comes to creative writing by women. This is her last thought as she goes to sleep.

Chapter 2

The next day the narrator goes to the British Museum in London in an effort to get some answers to questions regarding men, women, creativity and wealth, that had occurred to her in her ramblings. When she reaches the hallowed halls of the Museum she realizes that there is no dearth of books on women. However, she is dismayed to learn that most of these are books about women, but written by men. In other words the male mind has been constructing the approved female mind and is playing it for consumption for a long time. In contrast she finds that there are very few books on men written by women. She selects some of these books randomly and studies them in order to get a satisfactory answer to the question as to why women are poor. Trying to come up with an answer for why women are poor, she locates a multitude of other topics on women in the books, and and imagines that these tomes expounding the inferiority of women have been written by a dour, angry looking professor. It is at this point that she realizes that it is the professor's anger towards women that is making her angry as well. She realizes her reaction would have been different if he had written about women 'dispassionately.' She returns the books since she finds them useless. When her anger dissipates she is left wondering as to why these men are all angry towards women.

During lunch while reading the newspaper she is struck with the realization that every news item and opinion in the paper underlines the fact that England is a patriarchal society. She realizes that men hold all the power and money in their hand. They are in the position to make decisions and the decisions they make are those that are in their interests. She wonders as to why men are angry when they hold so much power in their hands. One reason that she can think of is that they are fearful that their power may be snatched from them and this fear causes anger in them. She qualifies her statement when she realizes that men are angry only in their interactions with women. This leads her to the realization that when men claim women to be inferior to them, they are in effect laying claim to their own superiority. The narrator acknowledges that both the genders find life difficult. She believes that the only way to make some sense of the disappointments of life is to live it with a modicum of self-confidence. It is easier to generate this self-confidence if one considers the other to be inferior. Her belief is that

male self-confidence comes from their belief that women are inferior. Such a formulation immediately raises questions about the supposed innate inferiority of women and proves it false. The narrator states that throughout history, women have served as models of inferiority that enlarge the superiority of men: 'Looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size.' She extrapolates her argument to suggest that men become angry and violent with women whenever the latter criticizes them because such a criticism directly challenges their inferior status when compared to men.

At this point the narrator is grateful for her inheritance of 500 pounds a year which she receives from her aunt. She recalls that before she received this largesse she had to rely on menial degrading work to earn money. This work made her feel like a slave with no soul. Her inheritance serves as an antidote to this feeling of powerlessness. She further goes on to say that her money has changed the tenor of her relationship with men: since she does not rely on them for her well-being she does not fear or resent them anymore. She also goes on to point out a basic difference between men and women. She suggests that while she was happy and satisfied to be able to feel free and was happy to be able to 'think of things in themselves,' men do not respond to money and power in a similar way. They are never satisfied with the power or money they have and are constantly looking for ways to enhance it. On her way back home, she witnesses men working on the street. She ends the day's journey in the hope and anticipation that a day will soon come when women will no longer be considered the weaker sex in need of 'protection' and will have access to the same jobs and opportunities as men.

Chapter 3

This part of the essay begins with the narrator expressing her disappointment at failing to draw any conclusion as to why women are poorer than men. While she was wondering about this question her attention is drawn to the relative lack of female writers in the most fertile period of literary creation in British history. She suspects that this disjunction exists because there is a connection between living conditions and creative works: it is difficult to be creative if one is living in difficult and strained conditions. When she studies the history of the age she realizes that even though there were strong women during the age they did not have many occasions to express this strength of character simply because they did not have any rights. However she cannot arrive at any firm answer and her query remains incomplete.

At this point she recalls the bishop's statement that Shakespeare is the greatest creative genius of his age. His recognition leads her to conjecture as to what would have been the fate of his equally talented sister, if he had had one. This leads her to comparing the lives of Shakespeare and his mythical sister Judith. She realizes that while Shakespeare would have gone to school, married, gone to work in the theatre where he would have met interesting people and made a name for himself; his sister's life would have been radically different. Despite possessing an equal talent not only would it not have been acknowledged, in fact steps would have been taken to actively stifle it. She would not have been allowed to go to school and would have been forced to marry before she was willing to do so. Instead she would have been forced to become pregnant. The narrator conjectures that these disappointments in life would have so broken her spirit that she would have committed suicide. In other words there was no place for a female Shakespeare in the time. Despite this she agrees with the bishop's statement that no woman of the time could have been a comparable genius simply because a genius like Shakespeare's is not born among laboring, uneducated, servile people. Another point she

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makes that the age must have witnessed female talent of some sort, even if it was not of the calibre of Shakespeare. The tragedy is that even if this creative voice succeeded in surmounting obstacles and was successful in creating a literary work it would have survived as an anonymous piece.

This leads her to explore the question of what is the desirable state for the mind to reach the optimum creative level. She realizes that creativity is a very difficult process. The artist has to face a perpetual scarcity of privacy and money; at the same time the world is indifferent to the writer's ability or inability to write. The situation is even direr for women since the indulgence granted to male authors is denied to them. The world is indifferent to the female writers' creative desires and impulses which in time are subdued if not totally killed by an unsympathetic public. She believes that the male gaze is unsympathetic to the female desire for creativity simply because it gives him another item to express his superiority. However, she believes that the truly creative mind rises above such mundane matters and is 'incandescent.' It filters out personal 'grudges and spites and antipathies' to present the distilled essential human experience. Her argument here is that for all its supposed superiority a lot of the work the male mind produces is worthless since it is inspired by a desire to prove superiority over women. Such a work is not 'free and unimpeded' like Shakespeare's is.

Chapter 4

The narrator continues her search for an unimpeded creative mind during the Elizabethan Age. She fails to find any creative female voice. The only candidate she can find is Lady Winchelsea. However she discounts her because according to the narrator her writing is negative emotions she had the potential of writing brilliant verse. She finds the same drawback in the writings of Duchess Margaret of Newcastle. She believes that Margaret too would have been a better poet had she lived in the modern age. She finds that the letters of Dorothy Osborne another Elizabethan to reveal a similar insecurity. Though brilliant she was an insecure writer since looked for affirmation not within herself but from the patriarchal society. As long as women do this they will never succeed in creating a viable creative piece.

She considers Aphra Behn a milestone in the history of women's literature. She is the first middle class female voice who was forced to enter the public realm to earn money after the death of her husband. The narrator considers the first female writer who successfully achieved 'freedom of the mind' and surpasses even her own innate skill as an artist in her work. She further goes on to present Behn as a model younger women can use in their literary journeys. Though she did not influence her immediate descendents since being recognized as an author was considered nearly sacrilegious, nevertheless she did influence women writers from the 18th century onwards. Another importance of Aphra Behn lies in the fact that she was living proof that monetary stability made one immune to snide comments and unflattering statements which anyway decreased as a writer became financially successful.

The fact that nineteenth century women writing primarily produced novels, in spite of the fact that women began with poetry writing, confuses the narrator of the essay. She wonders why all women writers of the nineteenth century chose to write novels. She thinks about the four famous novelist of the said period — George Eliot, Emily and Charlotte Bronte, and Jane Austen — and concludes that they had little in common apart from the fact that they all were childless. The narrator tries to speculate

regarding their choice of novel form. All the four mentioned novelists belonged to the middle class, which meant the lack of privacy. Perhaps, it was this lack of privacy that prompted them to choose novel form, for they might have seen it as harder form than poetry or plays in the climate of middle class distraction. For example, it is a known fact that once when Austen was distracted in her family's sitting room whilst writing, she hid the manuscript. Another reason could have been that these writers might have found the novel form an absolute fit for her talents, given the customary training of nineteenth century women in the art of social observation.

The narrator does not find any sign in the work of Austen that might suggest that her work was affected due to her lack of privacy or her personal hatred or fear. She writes: her novels are 'without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching'. The narrator suggests that Charlotte Bronte might have had more genius than Austen but the reason that she is not able to write with the same incandescence is that her works bear the shadows of her own personal hatred and wounds. The narrator thinks that amongst the four mentioned novelist, Charlotte Bronte could have gained most from some travel, experience, and a better financial situation.

While talking about diverse effects of a novel on different readers, the narrator comes to talk about the integrity of a novel, which she thinks is the quality that makes a novel universal in nature. She defines integrity as 'the conviction that' a novelist 'gives one that this is the truth'. According to the narrator, integrity not only holds the entire novel together, but also makes the novel exciting and interesting. She then comes to the question of whether the sex of the writer affects the artistic integrity.

Considering the works of Bronte, the narrator thinks it certainly did. She writes: 'She left her story, to which her entire devotion was due, to attend to some personal grievance. She remembered that she had been starved of her proper due of experience. ...Her imagination swerved from indignation and we felt it swerve.' In Bronte's case, the gender residue leads not only anger, but also to fear, pain and ignorance. She asserts that Bronte was not the only novelist whose work was affected by her own personal grievances: 'One has only to skim those old forgotten novels and listen to the tone of voice in which they are written to divine that the writer was meeting criticism; she was saying this by way of aggression, or that by way of conciliation. ...She was thinking of something other than the thing itself.' The only two female novelists, according to her, who successfully maintained their artistic integrity in the face of misunderstanding, criticism, and opposition are Austen and Emily Bronte.

The narrator argues that tradition had masculine values, such as war, as the subject of novels and other forms of literature, instead of more feminine ones, like character studies in a drawing room setting. And because of such tradition the women writers of nineteenth century had to adapt by adjustments and compromises in order to escape the inevitable criticism of their works being insubstantial. The compromises affected their works, for they had to deviate from their original ideas to suit the critical and traditional demands. The narrator thinks that it is no less than a miracle that in such an uncongenial climate, writers like Austen and Emily Bronte were able to survive and thrive as a writer.

The greatest impediment for the women writers of the nineteenth century was the nonexistence of any literary tradition to follow, for they could not possibly have followed the existing male literary tradition. They might have had a little help from the male writers, but the narrator says that 'the weight, the pace, the stride of a man's mind are too unlike her own for her to lift anything substantial from him successfully'. 'There

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was no common sentence' for these women writers to follow. The masculine sentence of male writers like Johnson could not have done much to help her.'

According to the narrator, Austen successfully created her own 'natural, shapely sentence' which enabled her to articulate her deeper expressions, unlike Charlotte Brontë and Eliot, who could not successfully deal with the lack of feminine sentences. The narrator thinks that this could have been another reason for their inclination towards the novel form, for it was the only literary form 'young enough to be soft in their hands'. She predicts that in future women writers will move onto other forms of literature, for they have poetry inside them that is still unexpressed. This does not mean that women will begin writing poems. They may find some 'new vehicle' to express what resides within them still unexpressed.

Chapter 5

The narrator shifts her focus on the book shelf which contains books by her contemporary male and female writer on wide variety of topics. The number of books produced by women is nearly as much as men, and interestingly they are not only novels; they cover all sorts of subjects. She feels that women could not possibly have touched these subjects a generation ago. The narrator feels that women have grown past novels to express themselves. In order to assess the development in the contemporary women's writing, she picks a novel called 'Life's Adventure or some such title', by Mary Carmichael. This is the first novel of Carmichael. The narrator sees this young writer as a direct descendent of other female writers like Lady Winchilsea and Aphra Behn. She goes on to assess her novel to see that how this young female writer has inherited from the women writers of the past, both their 'characteristics and restrictions'.

The narrator finds the prose uneven and not as good as Austen's. She writes: 'The smooth gliding of sentence after sentence was interrupted. Something tore, something scratched.' She then corrects her previous remark and says that Carmichael is attempting something very different from that of Austen and that there is nothing common between the two writers. She then says that perhaps the unevenness of her prose style is a break away from the 'flowery' writing style that is so characteristic of women's writing. But she cautions that the breaking is good if it is done for the purpose of creating: 'First she broke the sentence; now she has broken the sequence. Very well, she has every right to do both these things if she does them not for the sake of breaking, but for the sake of creating.'

As the narrator continues her reading, she comes across a simple sentence — 'Chloe liked Olivia'. The narrator is surprised. She considers this to be a critical moment in the Carmichael's innovation as a writer. How rarely, she realizes, has literature viewed women in relation to other women. For centuries women in literature have been seen only in relation to other men, and that is why the narrator finds the idea of friendship between two women as something very innovating and groundbreaking. The romance, says the narrator, in the life of a woman has a role to play, but a minor one.

The problem arises when the writers have their fictional women characters concern excessively about it, for it is this excessive concern with romance that results in their portrayals as either beautiful and good or depraved and horrific: 'Hence, perhaps, the peculiar nature of woman in fiction; the astonishing extremes of her beauty and horror; her alternations between heavenly goodness and hellish depravity—for so a lover would see her as his love rose or sank, was prosperous or unhappy.' Such an attitude towards the women characters in fiction changed by the nineteenth century, and the women

characters grew more complex in novels and other forms of literature, but the narrator still holds that both men and women are limited in their knowledge about the opposite sex.

The narrator continues to read Carmichael's novel to find that the women characters in the novel are not confined in the limitation of their house, and that they have interests and pursuit outside the home. Both Chloe and Olivia have work in a laboratory. This little fact greatly changes the dynamics of their friendship. The narrator speculates about the significance of this detail and how important a transition this little detail could bring about, 'for if Chloe likes Olivia and Mary Carmichael knows how to express it she will light a torch in that vast chamber where nobody has yet been'.

The narrator contemplates on the destituteness of literature if men were perceived only in relation to the women. She firmly believes that a little more genius in her work, and Carmichael's book will have a significant place in the history of women's literature. She continues reading the novel and come to a scene that has both the women in it. The narrator reflects that it is a 'sight that has never been seen since the world began.' She has grown very fond and hopeful for the Carmichael's descriptions of the complexities and female mind, and it is this hope that makes her realize that she has betrayed her original aim, i.e. not to praise her own sex. She acknowledges that in spite of whatever genius or greatness they may possess, women have not yet made much of mark in the world when compared to the achievements of men. But still, the narrator thinks that all the great men in history received 'some stimulus, some renewal or creative power' from the women, something that they could not possibly have received from other men. She asserts that there is a vast difference in the creativity of men and women, and 'It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how we should manage with one only?'

The narrator is of the opinion that 'merely as an observer', Carmichael has much to do. She will have to explore the lives of 'courtesan' and 'harlot' who, for a long time, have been stereotyped by the male writers. The narrator, however, expresses her fear that while writing about these subjects controversial in nature, Carmichael will be self-conscious. While writing about the countless women, whose lives are still not recorded, Carmichael will have to resist the anger against men. As the narrator continues to read her novel, she feels that even though Carmichael's writing bears no traces of anger or fear, she is 'no more than a clever girl'. The narrator feels in a century or so, with a room of her own and a little money, Carmichael will evolve as better writer than she is now.

Chapter 6

In the last chapter the narrator is left wondering if her thoughts regarding the differences between men and women have had a negative impact on her view of the two sexes. She sees a young couple get into a taxi and their unity soothes her. Their unity forces her to question as what 'unity of the mind' actually means especially since it keeps changing. Remembering the couple in the taxi, she concludes that this unity could also mean that the two are in 'complete satisfaction and happiness' and are living in harmony. This leads her to the conclusion that what Coleridge meant by a creative mind being 'androgynous' is that it does not think as male or female. His belief was that the androgynous mind does not think in terms of gender. The narrator explains this when she says that the 'androgynous mind transmits emotion without impediment it is naturally

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creative, incandescent and undivided.' She considers Shakespeare to be the perfect example of such an androgynous mind and rues the fact that such minds are not found in the present age.

She believes the Suffrage campaign for the women's vote provoked men's defensiveness over their own sex. To prove this point she reads a novel by a respected male writer. She notes that though the writing is strong and clear it betrays a bias against women. She notes that he protests 'against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority.' This is destructive since it prevents the representation of women as viable creatures capable of expression in their own right. She uses his argument to state that only a truly androgynous mind can foster 'perpetual life' in its reader's mind. She finds both male and female writers at fault in this and posits the idea that as long as a sexual identity and a sexual bias permeates a text the writer and the writing is not free and will not be 'fertilized.' In other words there is a dire need in both sexes to rise above the self-consciousness of gender in their works.

The narrator says that women's suffrage campaign to gain the right to vote incited the men to be more defensive against their own sex. To illustrate further, she chooses a respected male author's novel to read. She points out the novel betrays a sense of bias against women, though she acknowledges that the writing is strong and clear. She highlights that in order to protest 'against the equality of the other sex,' he asserts the superiority of his own sex. According to the narrator, such an attitude is destructive, for it does not allow women to be represented as capable of expressing in their own right. She takes his own argument back to him in order to assert that it takes a true androgynous mind to further 'perpetual life' in the minds of the readers. She argues that both male and female writers should be blamed for this, and continues with the idea that there is no possibility for the writer and the writing to be free and 'fertilized' as long as the sexual identity and sexual bias continues to influence a text.

At this point in the text, Virginia Woolf takes over the narrative voice. She anticipates and responds to the two possible criticism of the narrator's voice. First, she points that it was not a mistake that's he did not express any opinions regarding the relative merits of the two genders, it was a deliberate decision, for such a judgment is neither possible nor desirable. Second objection that may come from the reader is that she excessively emphasized the importance of thing material in nature, while underplaying the role of mind, which is perfectly capable of overcoming poverty and lack of privacy. To respond to this objection she cites an argument of a professor claiming that only three amongst the best poets of the last century were well educated, and all but Keats was fairly well off. She asserts that without material freedom one cannot possibly imagine to have intellectual freedom, and without that creation of great poetry is impossible. Women who have been less fortunate as far as the material things are concerned, have not yet produced anything to be called as great. She writes:

Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time. . . . Women, then, have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry. That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own.

She then talks about her position on women's writing, and explains why she considers it to be important. She says that she is an avid reader, and of lately she has been disappointed by the writings that are masculine in nature. Besides, she believes that a good writer are good human beings, who are more close to reality than anyone else, and through their

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writings they can communicate this sense of reality to the readers of their works. She asks her readers to 'Think of things in themselves,' and write not only in the genre of fiction but in all kinds of genre. She urges her readers to remember what men have thought of women. She acknowledges that in spite of the various opportunities that presented themselves to the young women in the audience, they have taken but few steps ahead. But she is not disappointed, and asserts that Judith Shakespeare still lives in all women, and with little financial freedom and privacy, she will soon be reborn.

Critical Appreciation

A Room of One's Own (1929) is an extended essay by Woolf. In the essay she employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women in their role as writers of fiction and as characters in it. The title of the essay focuses on the author's need to create art and her need for poetic license. She also examines the question as to whether women can actually produce a viable piece of art. The central premise of the essay, which the title further exemplifies, is that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction'. In other words, it is the lack of independent financial resources and not an inability to create viable art that prevents women from creating it. It is not a woman's limitations but the limitations imposed on her from outside that prevent her from creating art. Here it should be pointed out that while Woolf never received a formal education, here audience was getting precisely such an education. So her purpose in the essay becomes manifold: on the one hand she wants her audience to understand the significance of the education they are receiving and not waste it; she also wants them to be conscious of the burden they carry vis a vis other women who are not present in the university with them; and she also wants them to realize that their education and freedom can easily be taken from them and so wants them to work to prevent such a thing from happening.

The essay is a partly fictionalized narrative that led her to the belief that 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.' The dramatic setting of the essay is that Woolf has been invited to speak on the topic of Women and Fiction. She creates a fictional narrator; the four Mary's who dramatize the process she took before she arrived at this conclusion.

The fictional narrator starts her exploration by delineating the different educational and material experiences of both men and women. She then talks of her experiences researching the British Library only to find that it is the male voice that presents the authoritative female experience. She also shares another discovery: most of these experiences are written in anger with an aim to control if not silence the subversive female voice. Another discovery she makes is that the female voice and persona is absent from history: it is almost as if women do not exist in the history. She uses this absence to justify her project of creating her own female history of the world. When she tries to do so she realizes that history is unforgiving to women. She uses the fictional character of Judith Shakespeare to prove this point. The intelligent woman faces a tragic future simply because she cannot reconcile her limited constraining reality to her unrealized potential. The fictional narrator then travels further into time to re-create a feminine canon which any aspiring authoress can draw inspiration from. When she does this she realizes that very few writers are expounding a truly female voice and experience and an only these need to be emulated. Then the narrator goes on to survey her contemporaries and finds them wanting. The essay concludes with the fictional narrator expounding her audience to build on the tradition they have been bequeathed and to enrich it further.

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In the essay Woolf argues that women be granted a literal and figurative space as legitimate writers within a male dominated literary tradition. In other words she stakes claim for the acknowledgement of female writers and their creative endeavors. The ideas propounded by the essay were revolutionary for their time, especially if we consider the fact that while men were encouraged to forge their own path in life, women were expected to do nothing more than support their men in this effort. The essay verbalizes the dissatisfaction and resistance to this discriminatory patriarchal system. In the essay she states: 'Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, and no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind.'

In the essay she insists the only way to ensure independence was having access to one's own money, i.e. money for which one did not have to give explanations to anybody. Since she spent her life on the 500 pounds per annum she received as inheritance from an aunt; she postulated that this was the amount necessary to achieve financial freedom. In the essay she asks the question 'What effect has poverty on fiction?' Her answer is that 'Intellectual freedom depends on material things. Poetry depends on intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time.' Her argument is that women are intellectually poor and unable to express themselves, not because they don't know how to do so but because they are not allowed to do so. She further states that if one's survival depends on the approval of the other, creativity will be stifled. To ensure creativity therefore material freedom is a must.

In the essay Woolf presents George Eliot, Emily Bronte, Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte as the 'four great novelists' to be studied, emulated and appreciated. Through these writers she attempts to create a female canon that can rival the patriarchal canon. She considers this attempt important also because she believes that only female writers can express female experience in all its shades. She considers them to be worthy of study and presents them as proofs that if allowed to be themselves women of any age can produce literary works which will not just stand the test of time but will also rival the literary creations of the best male writers. She also uses their example to point out the fact that it is only when women write of women that the true depth and complexity of the female mind and soul is revealed in the character they create. She further adds that when masculine writers present female characters in their works they project flat characters devoid of any richness of emotion and feeling. In fact these female characters serve as foils to the male protagonists. Instead of standing on their own they gain their identity and legitimacy within the text only in relation to their role with respect to the male protagonist. Therefore not only is the presentation of female characters flawed, such a representation detracts from the value and role of literature in society. In the essays she posits this idea when she says: 'Suppose, for instance, that men were only represented in literature as the lovers of women, and were never the friends of men, soldiers, thinkers, dreams; how few parts in the plays of Shakespeare could be allotted to them; how literature would suffer.'

Another argument she makes is that the writings of earlier women novelists can be attributed to either one of two reasons: either they wrote in defiance of masculine standards or in deference to them. In most of these authors we rarely find the true female voice. She argues that George Eliot and the Bronte sisters wrote as per the prevailing notions of a masculine idea of the novel. Hence their works are inferior. By contrast she considers Jane Austen's novels to be reflective of the female voice and experience. Virginia Woolf goes on to criticize her contemporary novelists of being sex-inhibited. She goes on to argue that though one's sex is important the effective artist is

androgynous. By this she means that the artist is harmoniously bisexual in comprehension (which affects a creative fusion). This argument links with her statement regarding lesbianism in the sense that the artists' sexual orientation is irrelevant while considering the efficacy of his/her work.

Therefore she conjectures that a great deal of literary wealth has been lost since women are unable to write as they deem fit. As proof of this she points out the fact that even Jane Austen a recognized canonical author was forced to hide her work because she feared that she not only would not be accepted but instead she would be ridiculed. In the essay she writes: 'Imaginatively [a woman] is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant.' This bold statement highlights the wealth of fiction and poetry written about women and the lack of it actually written by them. She highlights the difficulties women face in their effort to create art through Judith, Shakespeare's fictional sister. She argues that while Shakespeare is encouraged to go to school and learn new ideas and thoughts, Judith is confined to the life of performing household chores. Though she wishes to learn, she is scolded by her parents whenever they find her holding a book: they believe that any time she spends reading detracts her from completing here household tasks. As they grow up she is forcibly betrothed to a man she does not love. When she resists she is beaten into submission. After marriage she is condemned to a life of drudgery and more household work. In contrast Shakespeare is encouraged to go out in the world and make a name for himself. He succeeds spectacularly and his name is synonymous with literature.

In contrast Judith's talents are not just lost; tragically they are never even given an opportunity to be realized. She highlights the tragedy of Judith's life when she says that 'She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school.' The 'but' makes it clear that her desires do not matter and that she is considered valuable only in the degree to which she fulfils social roles assigned to her. Woolf's argument here is that it is a woman's gender and not her lack or presence of skills that closes doors for her. This is the reason she wants her listeners to be conscious of their role in history: they are the privileged few who have the opportunity to have an education and make intelligent choices. They should ensure that they do so that others may find it easier to follow. At the same time she does not deny the fact that the way will not be easy for them. Nevertheless, it is the one which has to be travelled to ensure that women receive their due not just in the field of art and literature but in other areas as well. The argument she makes here was used by later feminists to work against the glass ceiling in various professions and to demand for more inclusive policies in various fields of public life.

In addition to the four novelists she also refers to the feminist scholar Jane Ellen Harrison and also to Rebecca West. She presents them as proof of a woman's ability to think critically. At the same time she uses their example to present the extent to which the patriarchal set up is uncomfortable with decisive feminist voices and the extent to which it will go to discredit them. To support this claim she refers to Desmond MacCarthy's (referred to as 'Z') claim that West a mere 'arrant feminist' and need not be taken seriously. She also refers to F. E. Smith, 1st Earl of Birkenhead and his retrogressive attitude to women; especially his resistance in granting them suffrage. Through these examples she shows that women will only be indulged if they expect men to treat them seriously and with respect. These will have to be snatched from them and only the financially independent woman will be able to do this. She refers to the term Oxbridge, a not too subtle amalgam of the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge

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to suggest that such regressive ideas are shared by the intellectuals residing in these hallowed walls as well. The idea she wishes to put across is that the dice is laden against women since they can expect no support from either the intellectual or the political front. They will have to fight their battles on their own. Moreover, in this way they can rely only on their fellow sisters for support. In this too the essay lays a central argument of the feminist movement: the essential universality of the female experience and its discriminatory nature across class and social barriers.

To argue her viewpoint Woolf creates a fictional narrator. At several points in the text she is identified as 'Mary Beaton, Mary Seton, or Mary Carmichael.' This line refers to the 16th century ballad of Mary Hamilton, a woman who was hanged since she refused to don the socially accepted roles of wife and mother. This made her a subversive figure which needed to be silenced. It needs to be remembered that Judith too commits suicide when she becomes pregnant and is expecting an actor's child. Her death is the only way available to her to register her protest at the life imposed on her. Through all these examples Woolf is trying to underline the point that the imposition of socially sanctioned role on women while reprehensible will continue until women develop strategies to resist them. Art therefore becomes not just an expression of the essential female experience; it is also a tool of resistance.

The reference to the four Mary's is important on many levels. On a personal level it draws attention to Woolf's own position as someone who is not a mother, and so by extension someone who is not nurturing and can, therefore, be destructive. On another level this reference draws attention to the fact that the narrator's demand that her female audience chart their own path of freedom and redefine art and create the same according to a feminine sensibility is not without danger. It can have severe repercussions on the physical wellbeing of the individual since the exercise is a direct challenge to held patriarchal beliefs. The reprisal can take many forms ranging from being indulged as a child to being dismissed as being unimportant. To support this argument she gives the example of female critics and the reaction of the establishment to them.

Woolf acknowledges that fact that in her essay she offers no opinion and puts a lot of importance on material things. She justifies this by suggesting that creative output is possible only when one is financially secure. She also states the purpose of the essay is not so much to create an artifact for her; it is instead a clarion call to her sisters around the world to realize that the creative instinct lives in them as well and needs to be given voice. She justifies the right of women to create a literature about themselves and for themselves and says in the essay that even though Shakespeare's sister never wrote a word she 'lives in you and in me... For great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh.'

Woolf lays claim that women's attraction towards each other is a legitimate emotion. In other words she brings lesbianism to the free both as a sexual choice and as a political statement. She suggests that any sexual attraction women feel for each other is legitimate emotion since only they can truly understand each other. As a political statement it implies that women can only find comfort and a sense of self only in the community of other women. It is this idea that is later used to justify the creation of a purely female literature. Since only women can understand the deeper emotions of each other, therefore it is only in the literature of women that the true female experience will be reflected. The reference to lesbianism needs to be considered in the backdrop of the obscenity trial and public uproar resulting from the publishing of Radclyffe Hall's lesbian-themed novel, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Jane Marcus believes that in her talk of lesbianism and the way she approached it, Woolf was showing the way on how to treat this issue in

public: 'Woolf was offering her besieged fellow writer a lesson in how to give a lesbian talk and write a lesbian work and get away with it.'

Woolf's central premise and the justification of her call for a feminist fiction that presents the true female character and the true female experience is evident in the following extract from the tract. The tract also highlights her fundamental objection to the canon: it deifies the woman and in doing so do defamiliarizes her experiences from herself. A female fiction is the only solution to this: 'Women have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time. Indeed if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some would say greater. But this is woman in fiction. In fact, as Professor Trevelyan points out, she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room. A very queer, composite being thus emerges. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words and profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read; scarcely spell; and was the property of her husband.'

Alice Walker criticized Woolf on the grounds that in her assertion that a woman needed her own room and money in order to create art she was referring to a purely white female Anglo-Saxon identity. Her charge is that Woolf's conception of a primarily female art form excludes women of colour and so is reductive and discriminatory in its own way. Nevertheless Woolf's argument was an improvement on the current debates regarding women's issues and their capabilities and skills and paved the way for opening doors for them.

5.4 R.K. NARAYAN: *THE AXE*

It was Graham Greene's who in his introduction to *The Bachelor of Arts* drew comparisons between Chekhov and Narayan which eventually became the benchmark of successive critical analysis of Narayan's works. Both Chekhov and Narayan's prose style is full of pathos and humour, as Greene while speaking of Narayan says, 'Sadness and humour in the later books go hand in hand like twins, inseparable as they do in the stories of Chekhov.'

According to Thieme, Chekhov and Narayan exhibit a similar capacity 'to give voice to the languor of provincial life and ... artistry in rendering the mundane.'

However, the most abiding quality of his works is the ever pervading sense of irony; almost all his works are informed with the 'quintessential irony of what man can make of himself and of the entire business of living.' Nearly, all his novels are neatly structured and use the omniscient author method of narration. His protagonists are extremely appealing on account of their simplicity. To quote Naik, 'The protagonist in each of Narayan's novels is made to play his life-role during the course of which he or she either matures in the process or rebels, or simply drifts or gain is chastised or even destroyed by a characteristic inner weakness.'

Although not as popular as the novels, Narayan's short stories are remarkable for their workmanship and '... finish than for the quality of reading of life they offer... a persistent note of irony is, by and large, their distinguishing feature.' Deeply influenced by the various eminent writers whom Narayan had diligently pursued since early childhood,

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Check Your Progress

1. What does Virginia Woolf's dinner at Fernham College comprise?
2. How does Chapter 3 of the essay begin?
3. Why does the narrator mark down the literary work of Lady Winchilsea?

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Narayan's writings often illustrate the impact of various authors upon his writing. For instance, the endings of his short stories show a strong influence of O. Henry's celebrated technique of the trick finale.

Thematic connections between the short stories and the novels of Narayan are interesting. Almost in each work of Narayan, situations, characters and motifs from other works of his resurface making an interesting pattern. Although none of his short stories can be criticized on account of being dull or mundane yet none are of such merit that they can be compared to O. Henry's 'The Gift of Magi', Maupassant's 'The Umbrella', Chekhov's 'The Cherry Orchard', or Mulk Raj Anand's 'Birth'.

He has often been criticized for inadequacy of expression, for instance in his short story, 'The Axe' he concludes the story at a very vulnerable moment of Velan turning his back to his beloved garden, Narayan does not fully develop the situation. To quote Naik, 'The Axe,' the story of an old gardener attached to a sprawling house who is dismissed when the ownership changes hands. The gardener leaves as the garden is being demolished – a situation reminiscent of The Cherry Orchard, but here again, the reader gets the impression that in contrast to Chekhov, Narayan has not adequately met the challenge of his tragic theme here, and there is a failure of the imagination in apprehending with the requisite power the experience sought to be conveyed.

It is the simplicity of narration that has been most vehemently criticized by innumerable critics. For critic's Narayan's stylistic rendition is detached, concomitantly lacking in depth to the point of being benign. His writing lacks the imaginative flair displayed by Raja Rao. Instead it is his informal ease, directness, precision and readability which account for his popularity. He avoids use of figurative language which along with his limited capability to imaginatively evoke scenes often leads to colourlessness in his narrative. In fact to quote Shashi Deshpande, a prominent writer of Indian writing in English, 'Narayan's writings as pedestrian and naive because of the simplicity of his language and diction, combined with the lack of any complexity in the emotions and behaviors of his characters.' His works have also been criticized for being completely out of league with Indian politics and instead creating a parochial and chimerical town of Malgudi.

5.4.1 The Axe: Summary and Analysis

Velan is a village boy living with his family in a humble manner for the family had little means to support themselves. His life changes when one day an astrologer makes the prediction that Velan is destined to live in a palatial three storied building encompassed by a huge garden. This prediction elicits as lot of ill will among the villagers who taunt Velan and make fun of him. However, the prediction does come true although several decades later. When Velan was just eighteen years old he left his native village for good. He had been slapped by his father in front of the village men for bringing his mid-day meal late. This hurt Velan so much that he decided to leave his village and family for ever.

After walking for days on end, he reached the town of Malgudi. Having nowhere to go, he was distraught when an old man took him as an assistant for laying out a garden. Velan was set a very difficult and uphill task, he had to clear singlehandedly a few acres of land which was completely covered by weeds and plants. Working determinedly and continuously for days on end he finished the task satisfactorily. Hereafter, he started to help the old gardener with the laying of the foundation for a big garden. As fate would have it the old gardener fell ill and died. After his demise, Velan was made

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the chief gardener. Velan, a hardworking simple soul dedicated him completely to the task of creating a beautiful garden. In the meantime, adjoining the garden the majestic house being built for the master was also completed. As the plants were still tender Velan asked his beloved plants to grow faster and quicker. Nature responded to his call and the flower plants, the numerous trees he had planted grew up in abundance and beauty. The garden gave a very scenic and peaceful appearance to the mansion. The mansion came to be known as 'Kumar Baugh'. Velan tended to the plants with utmost love and care, innumerable varieties of plants grew in his garden.

One particular tree that Velan was very fond of was the Margosa tree. Velan treated this tree almost like his own child. He showered upon it his best attention and care.

Velan lived simply in a humble thatched hut but he was happy and content. Years quickly rolled by and with the passage of time Velan started growing old. Age and decay also claimed the once beautiful mansion which had for long now had lost its glitter and charm. Velan's master also started keeping ill health and was soon bed-ridden. After a few years of suffering the master died. The master's death came as a severe blow for Velan not only on compassionate grounds for his master but more so because Velan knew that his master's sons wouldn't care for his garden. Soon after the master's death the sons started quarrelling amongst themselves and went to live in another house. Thereafter, a few tenants came to stay in a big house but none of them stayed long in the house. Gradually, the house started to be known as a 'Ghost House'. However, Velan continued to live in his thatched hut. A few years passed this way until the master's sons entrusted the key of the mansion to Velan. When because of lack of repair Velan's hut began to leak, he had to recourse but to live in the verandah of the big mansion. In this way the astrologer's prophecy about Velan living in a three-storeyed building came true.

One day a group of people came to the mansion and examined the house very carefully. Velan heard them remark that the house and the entire garden had to be destroyed and in its place, new buildings would be constructed. Following their departure, within a few days, Velan was informed that the entire property had been sold out to a company and Velan's services were no longer required. Velan was asked to vacate the place within a fortnight. In a couple of days, even before Velan had time to vacate the mansion, the developers arrived with the wood cutters. Velan heard the harsh sound of the woodcutter's axe ripping through his beloved Margosa tree. Velan pleaded to them not to cut his favourite tree but to no avail. The woodcutter's were working under orders and could not pay heed to Velan's request. Velan was so saddened that he asked the woodcutters to wait until he had left the place. He quickly packed his meager belongings and left the place with tears in his eyes. Reaching some distance, he shouted back to the woodcutters saying to wait a little more till he had gone a little farther. The wood-cutters waited for a few more minutes in respect to the old man's wishes and felled the mighty Margosa tree to the ground.

5.5 J.L. NEHRU: SPEECH ON INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The Text

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially.

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At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.

It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.

At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.

The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity.

The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for anyone of them to imagine that it can live apart.

Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.

The appointed day has come - the day appointed by destiny - and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent. The past clings on to us still in some measure and we have to do much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. Yet the turning point is past, and history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act and others will write about.

It is a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises, the star of freedom in the east, a new hope comes into being, a vision long cherished materialises. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed! We rejoice in that freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrow-stricken and difficult problems encompass us. But freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people.

On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the father of our nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us.

We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will remember this message and

bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.

Our next thoughts must be of the unknown volunteers and soldiers of freedom who, without praise or reward, have served India even unto death.

We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good and ill fortune alike.

The future beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our endeavour? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India; to fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease; to build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be.

We are citizens of a great country, on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action.

To the nations and peoples of the world we send greetings and pledge ourselves to cooperate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy.

And to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service. *Jai Hind* [Victory to India].

5.5.1 Overview of 'Tryst with Destiny'

Some words and speeches by great men are always remembered by people for generations. They become timeless because of their universal appeal. They always have a unique place in the hearts of the people for ages. Their words serve as a torch bearer for generations to come. Abraham Lincoln's 'Gettysburg Address', Thomas Jefferson's 'Declaration of the Independence', Martin Luther King's (Jr.) 'I have a Dream', have gone down in the history as memorable events. These addresses are quite brief but enormously inspiring. In this particular speech by Nehru, the tone, substance, style render ample scope for a range of interpretations.

'Tryst with Destiny' was a speech made by Nehru to the Indian Constituent Assembly, on the eve of India's Independence towards midnight on 14 August 1947. It is considered one of the greatest speeches of all time. Nehru points out though the rest of the world is in deep sleep, for this moment little matters for them, but India finally awakes to life and freedom.

This forced slumber that India finally woke up from was due to colonial suppression for one and a half century. Millions in the nation took a pledge to make India free at that long awaited moment. The speech signifies a kind of phase of salvation which comes after retribution. It is a stage of redemption and reawakening.

Nehru describes the mission in the speech as 'a pledge', 'an unending quest', 'the ideal', 'the triumph', 'a challenge', 'a responsibility', 'an ambition', 'a dream', 'a noble mansion', 'a great adventure', a bold advance', and the like. Throughout his speech,

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Nehru outlines the vision for an ideal India. Nehru says, 'we had made a tryst with destiny long ago and now we are to redeem the pledge.' Therefore, making India free from the foreign rule was a pledge that India took long back and when India becomes free, Nehru questions how this sort of freedom would actually work. The speech brilliantly answers this very question. It has become relevant once again as the task of freedom has been accomplished now the next step is to wipe tears from the face of the poor citizens in the country. The idea of freedom and nation remain incomplete if the poor are in tears. His main motive now will be to find out means to improve the lot of the common men, peasants and workers. This is the challenge he puts to the public during his freedom speech. Thus, we have redeemed the first pledge now it is the time to take another pledge to serve nation and her people. The pledge can be redeemed only when the fruits reach to the grassroots in this nation.

Nehru terms this freedom as another opportunity as a bright future awaits the nation. Freedom is a means not an end. Such transitions do not happen again and again. The end of the freedom should be accomplishments and achievements and these opportunities bring both material and spiritual prospects. We all have to forget the harrowing experience of the past and we should focus on future and its possibilities fully. We should focus on the future very positively.

India had always been powerful in mind through the times of hardships. It has always been striving for 'unending quest'. India has great culture since pre-historic dawn. This is the reason why great civilization called Harappa flourished on the banks of rivers in the subcontinent. Nehru therefore, asks them to live up to that high standard. Indians have always been hard-working by nature; they have to maintain that hard-work. Their first priority should be to give a helping hand to millions who are suffering. Until the last man is happy, the hard work will continue.

Nehru magnifies the idea of nationalism saying that the dream of India for the cause of suffers is also the dream of the whole humanity. The suffering of the people has been called 'disaster'. We cannot split peace, freedom and prosperity into fragments as they are the common property of the whole world.

Nehru embraces a broad idea of profound change beyond the stereotypes of social and economic connotations. He believes that approaching freedom is the first step and even the first step assumes importance. He also says that the unity of all nations should be considered as 'one world'. He integrates the idea of nationalism with universal brotherhood. The appeal here is for universal peace as freedom of every single individual is at stake. Therefore, it is the pledge to serve India and her people to a larger cause of humanity. There are certain universal ideas that connect all. It hardly depends where we are living. Thus dreams for India are actually for the world. Hence, the well-being of Indian is connected to the well-being of the whole world as no nation can progress in isolation. He says:

'In finding the solution of our problem we shall have helped to solve the world problem as well. What India has been, the whole world is now.'

Nehru is also aware of the fact that on such occasions, people criticize and blame others and how we should not indulge in such practices as this is a very crucial time. We should not focus our energy on past now as this is the time to think of future only. We should respect the future which stores innumerable opportunities. We have to discard 'narrow-mindedness' as it is the major obstacle in nation building. Broad-mindedness is the need of the hour. He also narrates how on the strength of the principle of non-violence that 'the greatest man of our generation', Mahatma Gandhi endowed us and

led us to the luminous path of freedom. He is also, deeply pained over the partition that is dividing the people who fought together for this dream. Thus, in this hour of rejoice, the 'clouds surround us'.

The speaker also insists that freedom brings responsibility to build the destiny of India and this is not, in any way, different from that of the people living in the rest of the world. This relationship is reciprocal as whatever happens in India will impact the other parts of the world. He also emphasizes that India has an important role of leadership for the cause of the larger humanity. His sole intention is not that we must turn a blind eye to the past; rather he expresses great reverence for the past, to the history in terms of its inspirational and educational value.

Therefore, we can say that Nehru's thrust towards independence was more political. He was a visionary who wanted India to succeed in all her missions and that can only be possible through unity.

5.5.2 Critical Analysis

The phrase 'tryst with destiny' is inspired by the phrase 'rendezvous with destiny' used by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his Democratic National Convention speech in 1936. In his own speech, Nehru acknowledges the role of Satyagraha leading to the never-ending struggle for Independence. The speech was so powerful that it instilled the spirit of patriotism in the heart of any Indian who listened to it as Gandhi's contribution through Satyagraha was quite acknowledged he was the Father of Nation whom everyone respected. The speech was deeply imbibed with devotion to his country and his people. Every word and sentence of it was filled with pride. Nehru expresses at one point in his speech:

'A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.'

The Indian who had been a part of that oppression and suppression since ages, or the exploitation faced by his or her ancestors, felt a sense of pride that he or she was one of those thousands, who brought peace, sovereignty to his or her nation. Throughout his speech, Nehru maintained his sensibility and at no point did he make any reference to the freedom movement as being an intense struggle due to the injustice meted out by the British. He uses very positive words full of positive connotations. He also mentions that this was not the time for the discussion of petty and trivial things. People should not waste their energy now on destructive criticism nor should they blame each other. India is proud enough to have a reawakening after a long slumber and struggle.

Throughout his speech, Nehru cultivated the feelings of humility in his fellow-men. He also paid homage to all people and their efforts to bring about the position of self-governance to India. Nehru makes an appeal to the newly-independent populace to dedicate themselves to the service of India and to the service of the whole mankind.

Nehru recognizes the stupendous efforts made by abundant freedom fighters of several generations. He knows that the people of India will imbibe courage from past examples and the success celebrated on 15 August is only an opportunity for greater success in the coming future. He asks Indians to accept this challenge to serve the future generations of India.

Nehru reminds the people that now India is her own master. It can no longer lean on England for any sort of guidance or leadership. Now his country is able to take her own decisions, learn from her mistakes and move forward, for India has to mature and

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5.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the different types of essays.
2. On what grounds has Alice Walker criticized Woolf?
3. State some of the similarities between Chekhov and Narayan.
4. Write a short note on Velan and margosa tree.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the different forms of non-fiction prose.
2. Critically examine the story *The Axe* by Narayan.
3. 'Narayan's writings are pedestrian and naive because of the simplicity of his language and diction, combined with the lack of any complexity in the emotions and behaviors' of his characters.' Discuss.
4. Provide an overview of Nehru's *Tryst with Destiny*.

5.10 FURTHER READING

- Panda, H. 1997. *Selections from Modern Prose*. Hyderabad: Universities Press (India) Private Ltd.
- Liebler Naomi Conn. 2006. *Early Modern Prose Fiction: The Cultural Politics of Reading*. London: Routledge.
- Hudson, W.H. 2006. *Introduction to the Study of Literature*: New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd.