INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IDE
Rajiv Gandhi University

BAENG102
INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE-II

BA (ENGLISH ELECTIVE)
2ND SEMESTER

Rajiv Gandhi University
www.ide.rgu.ac.in

Introducing English Literature II

(English Elective II)

BAENG102

BA

II Semester

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)
Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999
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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.

About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education. Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14.

The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:

(i) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counselling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counselling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counselling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University, The Counselling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counselling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Syllabi

UNIT I: Explanation from Texts

UNIT II: Poetry III

Andrew Marvel : *To His Coy Mistress*

George Herbert: *Prometheus Unbound*

UNIT III: Poetry IV

Louis MacNeice: *Prayer Before Birth*

Mathew Arnold; *Longing*

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UNIT IV: Short Stories II

Graham Greene: *The End of the Party*

Hector Hugh Manro: *The Open WIndow*

UNIT V: Literary Terms II

Synecdoche, Irony, Antithesis, Imagery, Oxymoron, Onomatopoeia, Paradox, Metonymy, Pun

UNIT I *THE NECKLACE:* GUY DE MAUPASSANT

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Structure

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*

3.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 yatch 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

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 Éduard Manet were deeply influenced by realism.

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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.

Check Your Progress

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

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

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

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!

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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

Check Your Progress

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.

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.

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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-Elysees 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

ExplanationReference 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.

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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 do ..... the 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 have ……or 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

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.

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Reference to Context

7. 'She danced with rapture..... wives 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 friend .....to 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 thousand ..... whether 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.

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.

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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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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 Loisels 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.

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?

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

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.

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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 contended 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.

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.

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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.

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

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- **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-Anwer 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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Courthope, W. J. 1962. *A History of English Poetry*. New York: Russell & Russell.

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UNIT 4 *THE BET:* ANTON CHEKOW

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Structure

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 ofcapital 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 Chekov'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

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.

Check Your Progress

1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:
   (a) Anton Chekov's first story appeared in a Moscow paper in_____.
   (b) _____and _____are known as Chekov'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 Chekov is a French short-story writer.

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."

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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 l4th, 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 bums 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.

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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, hut 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 be 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 hanker 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'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 wordly 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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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.

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*.

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

4.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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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?

4.8 FURTHER READING

NOTES

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

NOTES

Structure

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

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.

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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*

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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 'Geeneland'. 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

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.

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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 polarityand 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. AChristian 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

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.'

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Uncertainly seems to be the driving force for Greene. He is, therefore, particularly attracted to characters who inhabits 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,

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.

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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, uncompanioned 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.

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.

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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, pigtails 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-collar 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, "Cowardy cowardy custard," turning torturing faces with the vacancy of wide sunflowers towards Francis Morton.

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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 stockinged 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.

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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'.

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.

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5.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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

NOTES

Structure

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, l*i*ve-th*i*n, r*o*pe-d*o*ll. 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.

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UNIT OBJECTIVES

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 it's 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.

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Check Your Progress

1. Define a simile.
2. Give an example of a metaphor.

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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 g**i**ves h**i**s harn**e**ss b**e**lls a shake*

   To ask if there is some mistake.

   The onl**y** other sound's the sw**ee**p

   Of eas**y** wind and down**y** flake.

   The woods are lovel**y**, dar and d**ee**p.

   But I have promises to keep,

   And miles to g**o** bef**o**re I sleep,

   *And miles to g**o** bef**o**re 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. 'P**oe**try is old, ancient, g**oe**s back far. It is among the oldest of living things. S**o** old it is that n**o** man k**no**ws how and why the first p**o**ems 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 h**o**st, of g**o**lden daff**o**dils;

   Beside the lake, ben**ea**th the tr**ee**s,

   *Fluttering and dancing in the br**ee**ze*

   (*Daffodils by* William Wordsworth)

   In these lines, William Wordsworth employs assonance to create an internal rhyme in his poem *Daffodils*.

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.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. What is alliteration?
4. Give one example of assonance.

NOTES

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.

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.

Check Your Progress

7. What is an epithet?
8. Define an epigram.

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

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.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

9. Give one example of the use of irony.
10. Give two examples of the use of synecdoche.

NOTES

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-crickets 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.

NOTES

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.

NOTES

Everyday examples:

- The **buzzing** bee flew away.
- The sack fell into the river with a s**plash**.
- 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 chanticleer

   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

NOTES

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.

NOTES

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.

NOTES

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:

   'P**oe**try is old, ancient, g**oe**s back far. It is among the oldest of living things. S**o** old it is that n**o** man k**no**ws how and why the first p**o**ems 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)

NOTES

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 s**plash**.
    - 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.

Long-Answer Questions

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.

NOTES

6.23 FURTHER READING

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