BNEN401DCT

Introduction to World Literature

B.A. (Hons.)
4 Year Programme
Fourth Semester (English)

Centre for Distance and Online Education
Maulana Azad National Urdu University
Hyderabad-32, Telangana- India

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Message

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) was established in 1998 by an Act of the Parliament. It is a central university with NAAC Grade A+. The mandate of the university is: (1) promotion of Urdu language, (2) accessibility and availability of professional and technical education in Urdu medium, (3) providing education through traditional and distance learning mode, and (4) a specific focus on women's education. These are the points that distinguish this central university from all other central universities and give it a unique feature. It has been emphasized even in the National Education Policy 2020 to achieve education in mother tongues and regional languages.

The very objective of promotion of knowledge through Urdu is meant to facilitate the accessibility of contemporary knowledge and disciplines to Urdu knowing community. For a long time, there has been a dearth of course material in Urdu. Urdu University now has a repository of more than 350 books in Urdu and the number is increasing with each semester.

Urdu University considers it a privilege to be part of the national mission of providing material in mother tongue/home language as per the vision of NEP 2020. Further, the Urdu speaking community is no longer at a disadvantage in gaining updated knowledge and information in emerging areas or newer knowledge in existing fields due to non-availability of reading material in Urdu. The availability of content related to the above domains of knowledge has created new awareness of attaining knowledge that could significantly impact the intellectual growth of the Urdu knowing community.

To facilitate the teaching-learning process for the distance and online learners, the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) of the university ensures the preparation of self-learning material (SLM) in Urdu and the concerned language subjects.

MANUU makes available SLM to the students of Distance and Online Learning free of cost. The same is also available for sale at nominal cost to anyone interested in gaining knowledge through Urdu. To further provide access to learning, eSLM in Urdu/Hindi/English/Arabic is available for free download from the University website.

I am immensely pleased that due to the hard work of the concerned faculty and full cooperation of the writers, the process of publications of books for the FYUG B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com has begun on a massive scale. To facilitate the students of Distance and Online Learning, the process of preparing and publication of Self Learning Material (SLM) is of paramount importance to the University. I believe that we will be able to meet the requirements of a large Urdu knowing community through our Self Learning Material and will fulfill the mandate of this University and justify our presence in this country.

With best wishes,

Prof. Syed Ainul Hasan
Vice Chancellor
MANUU, Hyderabad

Message

In the present era, distance education is recognized as a very effective and useful mode of education all over the world and a large number of people are benefiting from this mode of education. Maulana Azad National Urdu University also introduced the distance learning mode since its establishment in view of the educational needs of the Urdu speaking population. Maulana Azad National Urdu University started in 1998 with the Directorate of Distance Education and the regular programmes commenced from 2004, and subsequently various departments have been established.

The UGC has played a vital role in efficiently regulating the education system in the country. Various programs running under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode at Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) are approved by UGC-DEB. The UGC-DEB has emphasized on synchronizing the syllabi of distance and regular mode to enhance the level of distance learning students. Since Maulana Azad National Urdu University functions as a dual-mode institution, offering both distance and conventional modes of learning, it develops in-house Self-Learning Materials (SLMs) to support its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. These materials are structured into blocks and units in accordance with the credit distribution of each course and the guidelines prescribed by the UGC-DEB.

The Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) offers a total of nineteen (19) programmes comprising of UG, PG, B.Ed., Diploma, and Certificate programmes. Along with this, programmes based on technical skills are also being started. The CDOE has now launched 4-year UG program for July 2025 as per the NEP-2020. The honours programs B.A., B.Sc. & B.Com are design as per the NCF and it will help students in pursuing honours degree. From the year 2025-2026, the MBA program is introduced in ODL mode.

A huge network of nine Regional Centers (Bengaluru, Bhopal, Darbhanga, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Patna, Ranchi, and Srinagar) and six Sub-Regional Centers (Hyderabad, Lucknow, Jammu, Nooh, Varanasi, and Amravati) was established to facilitate the students. Apart from this, an extension center has also been established in Vijayawada. More than one hundred and sixty Learner Support Centres (LSCs) and twenty Programme Centres are run simultaneously under these Regional and Sub-Regional Centers to provide educational and administrative support to the students. The Centre for Distance and Online Education makes full use of ICT in its educational and administrative activities, and offers admission to all its programs through online mode only.

The soft copies of Self Learning Material (SLM) for students are made available on the website of the Centre for Distance and Online Education and the links of audio and video recordings are also made available on the website. In addition, facilities of E-mail and WhatsApp groups are being provided to the students through which the learners are informed about various aspects of the program such as course registration, assignments, counselling, examinations, etc. In addition to regular counseling, additional remedial online counseling is being provided from the last two years to improve the academic standards of the students.

It is expected that the Centre for Distance and Online Education will play a vital role to bring educationally and economically backward population into the mainstream of contemporary education. Changes are made in various programmes as per the New Education Policy (NEP-2020) in view of the educational needs and it is hoped that this will help in making the Open and Distance Learning system more efficient and effective.

Prof. Mohd. Razaullah Khan
Director, Centre for Distance and Online Education
MANUU, Hyderabad

Introduction to the Course

The course *Introduction to World Literature* (BNEN401DCT) is prescribed as a core course for the fourth semester undergraduate students of B.A. with English as a Major. It aims at providing the students an insight into a basic understanding of world literatures in English. It aims at providing the students an insight into a basic understanding of literature written in English, including British literature, Latin American literature, African literature, and Indian English literature. English translated texts from other languages also have been included in the course.

The course is divided into blocks and units. There are a total of 14 units. The first block covers British literature. The second and third blocks focus on Latin American and African American literatures in English. The fourth block deals with the Indian English literature. The course aims at familiarizing the learners with a wide range of writings in world literature.

In this SLM, under each unit the objectives, key points of the topic, learning outcomes, glossary and sample questions are listed. At the end, a question paper is attached for giving the students an idea of the paper pattern. It is hoped that this Self Learning Material (SLM) will be helpful in appreciating the world literature.

Prof. Gulfishaan Habeeb
Course Coordinator

Unit-1: Victorian Poetry – Characteristic Features

Structure

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1.1 Objectives
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- **1.2.1** Characteristic Features of Victorian Poetry
- **1.2.2** Victorian Dilemma or Spiritualism versus Materialism
- **1.2.3** Dramatic Monologue
- **1.2.4** Pessimistic and Realistic Poetry
- **1.2.5** Scepticism
- **1.2.6** Victorian Morality
- **1.2.7** Sensuous, Pictorial and Symbolical Poems of the Pre-Raphaelite

1.3 Learning Outcomes
1.4 Glossary
1.5 Sample Questions
1.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1.0 Introduction

Victorian poetry refers to poetry written during the reign of Queen Victoria in England during 1837 to 1901. This period in English literature is preceded by the Romantic period. Victorian poetry is considered as the beginning phase of modernism in English literature. These poems were strongly influenced by the existing social, political and cultural conditions in England. Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-89), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), Matthew Arnold (1822-88), Edward Fitzgerald (1809-83), Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94), William Morris (1834-96) and Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) are the prominent poets in Victorian period. These poets exhibited the Victorian living condition or the life in general of the Victorian people in their poems. Of them Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning are considered as the popular poets in Victorian poetry. This unit broadly discusses the characteristic features of Victorian poems.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- identify the major characteristic features of Victorian poetry.
- understand the social and political structure that existed in England during Victorian period.
- become familiar with the major Victorian poets and their poems.
- analyse selected Victorian poems to recognize their key features and themes.

1.2 Victorian Poetry: Characteristic Features

The poems written during the Victorian period in England are termed as Victorian poetry in English. The major Victorian poets are Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-89), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), Matthew Arnold (1822-88), Edward Fitzgerald (1809-83), Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94), William Morris (1834-96) and Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909). The characteristic features exhibited in the poems of these poets are generally termed as the characteristic features of Victorian poetry.

1.2.1 Characteristic Features of Victorian Poetry:

The major Victorian poets exhibited some features in their poems. These features are prominently political, sociological and stylistic in nature and structure. The major characteristic features of Victorian Poetry are given below:

- Victorian Dilemma or Spiritualism versus Materialism
- Dramatic Monologue
- Pessimistic and Realistic Poetry
- Scepticism
- Victorian Morality
- Sensuous, Pictorial and Symbolical Poems of the Pre-Raphaelite

During the Victorian period, the people were in great confusion. This sociological confusion or dilemma is discussing under the title of “Victorian dilemma or Spiritualism versus

Materialism." Dramatic monologue was actually a new form of poetry started during this period. This is broadly discussed under the title "Dramatic Monologue." One of the major striking features of Victorian poetry was its pessimism and realism. It is discussed in the subsection, "Pessimistic and Realistic Poetry." Scepticism was one of the features of Victorian period. It is abundantly reflected in Victorian poetry. It is discussed under the title "Scepticism." The characteristic feature of Victorian morality is discussed under the title "Victorian morality." Victorian poets abundantly used sensory devices and imagery. This is discussed further in the subsection "Sensuous, Pictorial and Symbolical Poems of the Pre-Raphaelite."

Check your progress:

1. What is Victorian English poetry?

   _____

2. Mention two major features of Victorian poetry?

   _____

3. Name two major Victorian poets?

   _____

1.2.2 Victorian Dilemma or Spiritualism versus Materialism:

The word dilemma means confusion. Cambridge dictionary defines the term as "a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two different things you could do." The word also signifies "a difficult situation or problem." Victorian dilemma was a major sociological feature of Victorian England. Charles Darwin's remarkable scientific text "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for life" was published in 1859. The publication of this text (shortly named as "On the Origin of Species") was a bolt out of a clear sky in Victorian society. The publication of this text and its theme questioned the spiritual and divine aspects in the society. The text stroked the very foundation of theological discourses in human life. Moreover, scientific and technological advancement was also contributed for the emergence of blatant materialism in England. The Victorian people were in a great confusion. This dilemma is powerfully presented in Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach.*

The sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world

The poet examines the world of belief and disbelief. According to the poet, 'the Sea of Faith,' which means the world of religion and spirituality, was once at its peak. That world of faith was just like a bright girdle furled around earth shore. However, that is not seen now. The poet could only hear its melancholy and long withdrawing roar. The advancement of science and technology vehemently questioned the spirit in religion and faith. Victorian period was the period of advancement of science and technology and the withdrawing of religion and faith. Here, the Victorian people became confused. Both spiritualism and materialism thrived in front of them. They do not know what to choose and what to reject. This dilemma or confusion is termed as the Victorian dilemma. This sociological feature is prominently reflected in Victorian poetry. Poets like Matthew Arnold are suggesting the subject of "Love" as a major solution to this chaotic world.

1.2.3 Dramatic Monologue:

Dramatic Monologue is a form of poetry popularised by the major Victorian poet Robert Browning. It was one of the major features of Victorian poetry. In Dramatic monologue one character alone speaks while one or more characters silently hear the words of the speaker. It is a mono (single) speech (logue). In this situation, the listeners are mute spectators. Dramatic monologue also exposes the inner psychological mind of the speaker too while he/she talks to the listeners. M. H. Abrams in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* specifically says that a dramatic monologue has the following features:

(1) A single person, who is patently not the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment.

(2) This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people.

(3) The main principle controlling the poet's formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal the reader (...) the speaker's temperament and character.

In short, dramatic monologue is a lyrical poem through which the solo speaker exposes his/her character and temperaments to the mute listeners.

Robert Browning was a prominent Victorian poet who composed many of his poems in Dramatic Monologue. His poems *My Last Duchess, Fra Lippo Lippi*, and *Andrea del Sarto* are dramatic monologues. In his poem *My Last Duchess* the Duke, the speaker, says to the listeners:

Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whenever I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then.

The Duchess was a jovial lady and hence she smiled at everyone without any reservation which was against the wish of her husband. So, the Duke gave the commands and all her smiles stopped together. Her portrait is hanging in the wall. The portrait is as beautiful as she is alive. Here, the poet is exposing the mind of a psychopath Duke and the innocence of his wife, the last Duchess. The poem delineates the inner psychology of urbanism in Victorian period. This psychological study of Victorian period became so powerful in the hands of Robert Browning through his Dramatic Monologue.

1.2.4 Pessimistic and Realistic Poetry:

Victorian poems are generally considered as pessimistic and realistic poems. The word pessimism means negative thinking. Cambridge dictionary defines pessimism as "emphasizing or thinking of the bad part of a situation rather than the good part, or the feeling that bad things are likely to happen than good things." With the advent of industrialization and science and technology stiff competition arose in the societal life. The condition of human life became so stark with the advent of machines in his/her work environment. The outlook was pessimistic in general during this era. Matthew Arnold exemplifies this pessimistic nature of Victorian England in his poem *Dover Beach:*

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

The poet is delineating the world as a land of dreams which is so various, beautiful and new. However, the new world has neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude and peace. The advent of industrialization brought blatant materialism in Victorian England. But it only made lucrative material advancement. It failed to bring joy, love, light and peace in the world. The poet is comparing such a world to a darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night without knowing who the friend is and who the foe is. Realism is another characteristic feature of Victorian poetry. Realism is a movement in literature which presented the world as it is in literature. Realism was actually a revolt against romanticism. Realistic presentation of life in literature is named as realism. There were many realistic poets in Victorian period. Alfred Lord Tennyson was the prominent realistic poet in Victorian period. His poem *Ulysses* vividly marked the features of Industrialization and the following geographical explorations. Tennyson presented the Victorian England as it is in his poem *Ulysses.* The poem was an exemplary dramatic monologue. In the poem the speaker Ulysses says:

I am a part of all I have met;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough

Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move

The poet Alfred Lord Tennyson marks the advent of industrialization and the following geographical explorations in England. Expansion of the kingdom was a prominent motto of Victorian England. Different explorers began to explore at different unknown nations. Ulysses says that he became the part of all that he had met as an explorer. However, all these explorations and its experiences are an arch where through he could see the untraveled world. The poet means that each exploration and its experience is an impetus for the next exploration. Victorian English poems are the reflection of the Victorian England.

Check your progress:

1. What is the Victorian Dilemma?

_____

2. Define the term “Dramatic Monologue.”

   _____

3. Is there pessimism in Matthew Arnold’s poem *Dover Beach*?

   _____

1.2.5 Scepticism:

The word scepticism means doubt. Merriam Webster dictionary defines scepticism as “an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object.” The Victorian poems specifically exhibited the theme of scepticism. The advent of industrialization brought blatant materialism in England and the people were in a great void. They were sceptical about the existence/role of institutions like religion. This scepticism, according to poets like Alfred Lord Tennyson, was essential in order to open the world of reason and to fight against their uncertainties. In his remarkable poem *In Memoriam*, Alfred Lord Tennyson says:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt, Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai’s peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho’ the trumpet blew so loud (Tennyson).

In Memoriam was a poem written over the untimely demise of the poet's close friend Arthur Henry Hallam. Here the poet exclusively describes the role of doubt and scepticism to bring light. According to the poet faith lives in honest doubt. He says that his friend gathered strength by fighting against doubts. He made his judgment not blindly but rationally. According the poet that his friend confronted the ghosts/threats of his mind rationally without any institutional prejudices. *In Memoriam* was a poem in search of identity and meaning by rejecting the age old institutionalized meanings of life. It took place by bringing sceptical thought. It was this sceptical thought which brought in later the rational/scientific spirit in the societal discourses.

1.2.6 Victorian Morality:

Victorian morality is another prominent feature of Victorian poetry. The industrial revolution and the following advancement in science and technology made a leviathan form of social advancement in Victorian England. This social advancement brought some kinds of repressive and suppressive moral codes in Victorian England. This is commonly known as Victorian morality. Robert Browning in his dramatic monologue *My Last Duchess* portraits the picture of a morality ridden man: the Duke. He was too severe and harsh towards his wife, the Duchess. She hasn't the freedom even to smile at strangers due to her feminine identity.

Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whenever I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then.

Here, the Duchess unconsciously smiles at strangers out of innocence. However, the moral ridden society takes it as a crime. Hence, her husband, the Duke, commanded her death. The same Duke is now talking about his second marriage with a new woman.

Check your progress:

1. Whose untimely demise inspired Alfred Lord Tennyson to write the poem *In Memoriam*?

   _____

2. Do you think that the Duke in the poem *My Last Duchess* is a representative of Victorian Morality?

   _____

1.2.7 Sensuous, Pictorial and Symbolical Poems of the Pre-Raphaelites:

One of the striking features of Victorian poetry is its sensuous, pictorial and symbolical quality. Such a genre in Victorian English poetry was actually introduced by the Pre-Raphaelites. Pre-Raphaelites are the group of painter poets who wrote sensuous, pictorial and symbolical poems. The themes of these poems could be painted very easily. This group includes the remarkable Victorian English poets Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, William Morris and Algernon Charles Swinburne. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed by three English painters: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt in 1848. Amongst them Dante Gabriel Rossetti and some of his companions like William Morris and Algernon Charles Swinburne were poets too. Hence, they were popularly known as "painter poets." They made "painting" effects to their poetry by inserting sensuous, pictorial and symbolic elements in their poetry. This movement was an escape from the materialism of the Victorian period. The main aim of their poetry was nothing but pure enjoyment. Hence, they totally rejected the didactic purpose of poetry. The pictorial effect of Victorian poetry could be seen in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel:*

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven

This group of Victorian poets followed themes of medieval lore and spirit. Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel, Rose Mary, Sister Helen,* and *Mary Sister's Sleep* are some of the prominent Victorian Pre-Raphaelites poems which are deeply steeped with the themes of medieval spirit. The medieval touch in theme and presentation could be seen in the poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne. His poems like *The Garden of Prosperpine, Venus and Adonis* and *Hero and Leander* exhibit the theme of medieval lore. One of the striking qualities of Pre-Raphaelites poems is its musicality. Algernon Charles Swinburne's *Chorus from 'Atlanta'* exhibits this musical quality of Victorian poems:

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;

The wild vine slipping down leaves bare

Her bright breast shortening into sighs;

The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,

But the berried ivy catches and cleaves

To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare

The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies (Swinburne).

It was Robert Buchanan who called the Pre-Raphaelite poetry as "the fleshy school of poetry." They made their poems too voluptuous and sensuous as part of their ornamentation of poetry. Usually they decorated the feminine beauty with such voluptuous and sensuous language. Dante Gabriel Rossetti brings such a sensuous language in the second stanza of his poem *The Blessed Damozel:*

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,

No wrought flowers did adorn,

But a white rose of Mary's gift,

For service meetly worn;

Her hair that lay along her back

Was yellow like ripe corn

The poet in the eighth stanza of the same poem pictorially represents the blessed damozel in the following language:

And still she bowed herself and stooped

Out of the circling charm;

Until her bosom must have made

The bar she leaned on warm,

And the lilies lay as if asleep

Along her bended arm

The sensuous and voluptuous language in Victorian poetries mostly abounds in the poems of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In his another poem titled *Troy Town,* the poet explicitly presents the heroine as:

See my breast how like it is,

See it bare for the air to kiss;

Is the cup to thy heart's desire

O for the breast, O make it his

The same poem begins with a sensuous, voluptuous and pictorial representation of Helen of the Troy. It follows:

Heavenborn Helen, Sparta's queen,

Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,

The sun and moon of the heart's desire:

All Love's lordship lay between

We can see abundant of examples for sensuous, pictorial and symbolic elements in Victorian poetry. This group of poets who wrote sensuous, pictorial and symbolic poems during the Victorian period is popularly known as Pre-Raphaelite poets.

In essence, Victorian English poetry abounds with innumerable characteristic features. All of these characteristic features are essentially reflects the Victorian society in general. Scientific and technological advancement brought vehement changes in England like Industrialization and colonization. The scientific outlook in society made a direct clash with religious and spiritual institutions in the Victorian England. People became so confused what to choose and what to reject. The blatant urbanization forced to infuse some ludicrous moral aspects in society which were totally against minority sections like women. Poets wrote about these realistic and pessimistic undercurrents in society. New forms of poetries like Dramatic monologue became so popular. The Pre-Raphaelite poets wrote sensuous, pictorial and symbolic poems that could be "painted" with equal effect. Victorian poetries were the exact representation of Victorian England tinged with the artistic and aesthetic qualities.

Check your progress:

1. Name any two Pre-Raphaelite poets in English literature?

   _____

2. Why the Pre-Raphaelite poets are called the "painter-poets"?

   _____

3. Mention any two characteristic features of Victorian English poetry.

   _____

1.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the main characteristic features of Victorian poetry.
- identify these features through the works of Robert Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
- become familiar with important poetic forms such as the dramatic monologue.
- recognize the Pre-Raphaelite poets and their contribution to Victorian poetry.

1.4 Glossary

Victorian Dilemma: A confusion of Victorian people about what to choose and what to reject; either science or religion.

Dramatic Monologue: A form of poem in which one character alone speaks while one or two characters silently hear the talk of the speaker.

Pre-Raphaelite Poets: A group of painter-poets who wrote sensuous, pictorial and symbolic poems that could be painted with equal effect.

Scepticism: The attitude of doubting knowledge claims set forth in various areas.

Pessimism: A tendency to see the worst or negative aspects of the things.

Realism: Presenting the world as it is instead of presenting the world as it appears to the state of mind of the writers.

1.5 Sample Questions

1.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. *My Last Duchess* is a poem written by_____. (**Robert Browning**)
2. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* is published in _____. (**1859**)
3. Identify the given lines of the poem: _____. (**My Last Duchess**)

   Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,

   Whenever I passed her; but who passed without

   Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together.

4. Whose untimely demise inspired Alfred Lord Tennyson to write the poem *In Memoriam*? (**Arthur Henry Hallam**)
5. Who was the poet of the poem *Chorus from 'Atlanta'*? (**Algernon Charles Swinburne**)
6. Among the following poets who is not a Victorian poet?
   (a) Dante Gabriel Rossetti
   (b) Alfred Lord Tennyson
   (c) Elizabeth Barrett Browning
   (d) William Wordsworth
7. Who called Pre-Raphaelite Poetry as "fleshy school of poetry"?
   (a) William Morris
   (b) Dante Gabriel Rossetti
   (c) Matthew Arnold
   (d) Robert Buchanan
8. "She had three lilies in her hand,
   And the stars in her hair were seven"
   This is taken from the poem _____.
   (a) *My Last Duchess*
   (b) Ulysses
   (c) *The Blessed Damozel*
   (d) Dover Beach
9. Among the following themes which is the most appropriate and suitable theme of the poem *Dover Beach*?
   (a) Victorian Dilemma
   (b) Love-hate relationship between husband and wife
   (c) Pollution in Dover Beach
   (d) Romance
10. Who is the speaker in the poem *My Last Duchess*?
   (a) the Duchess
   (b) the Duke
   (c) the Emissary

(d) none of the above

1.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Give a brief description of the characteristic features of Victorian poems.
2. What is Victorian Dilemma?
3. What is Pre-Raphaelite School of poems? Who are the prominent Pre-Raphaelite School of poets?
4. What is Dramatic Monologue? Explain with suitable examples.
5. Write a short note on Victorin morality.

1.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Which are the major characteristic features of Victorian poetry? Illustrate with suitable examples from various Victorian English poems.
2. "Victorian English poems are the reflections of the Victorian England." Discuss this statement in relation with the advent of industrialization and science and technology in Victorian England.
3. What is Pre-Raphaelite School of poems? Illustrate with suitable examples from the various Pre-Raphaelite poems.

1.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Arnold, Matthew. "Dover Beach." *Whispering Reeds: An Anthology of English Poetry*, edited by D. K. Barua, Oxford University Press, 2002, 81-82. Print.
2. Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. Bangalore: Thomson Heinle, 2003. Print.
3. Browning, Robert. "My Last Duchess." *Whispering Reeds: An Anthology of English Poetry*, edited by D. K. Barua, Oxford University Press, 2002, 74-75. Print.
4. Buchanan, Robert. The Fleshy School of Poetry. London: Strahan & Co., 1872. Print.

Unit-2: Robert Browning – 'My Last Duchess'

Structure

2.0 Introduction
2.1 Objectives
2.2 'My Last Duchess'
- **2.2.1** About the Poet
- **2.2.2** Summary
- **2.2.3** Critical Study
- **2.2.4** Themes
  - **2.2.4.1** Jealousy and Self-importance
  - **2.2.4.2** Discernment Hierarchy
  - **2.2.4.3** Art and Truth
- **2.2.5** Dramatic Monologue
- **2.2.6** Poetic Devices
  - **2.2.6.1** Imagery
  - **2.2.6.2** Language and Form
  - **2.2.6.3** Irony

2.3 Learning Outcomes
2.4 Glossary
2.5 Sample Questions
2.6 Suggested Learning Resources

2.0 Introduction

The poem "My Last Duchess" is a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning and was published for the first time in 1842 in his poetic collection entitled *Dramatic Lyrics*. It is a well-known example of Browning's masterpiece contribution to dramatic monologue. Duke of Ferrara is indicating the portrait of his late wife to the representative of a count, whose daughter duke is intended to remarry. Through the description of different events and ideas, the inner self of the duke is revealed to the readers. The poem opens with duke's description of the portrait of his late wife who was very kind, courteous and can easily be pleased by anybody. It seems that duke does not like the manners and the likes of her wife and that is why she is murdered. The culmination of

the poem indicates the intention of the duke who is now interested to remarry with the daughter of count.

The poem is set in Italy during Renaissance but it tells more about Victorian notions towards the era. The narration in the poem is a dramatization of Spanish nobleman, Alfonso II, who was duke of Ferrara in Italy during 16th century. The name of his wife was Lucrezia who died three year after her marriage. The poem is the inner voice of the speaker, duke, who out of jealousy and pride is showing the art gallery to his would-be father-in-law's agent. Initially, it shows the gentle aspect of his life but as soon as he starts talking about his late wife the inner resentment, jealousy, pride, and cruel nature of the duke is revealed.

As the initial part of the poem indicates that the duke is soft and sophisticated as he uses the tone, diction, and surrounding. But as soon as he starts pointing to the follies of his late wife the entire impression on the mind of the readers begins to collapse. The mindset of the duke is a typical mindset of an aristocratic background. It seems duke is a disturbed person who is talking to himself as there is no response or comments from the addressee or the listener in the poem. "Will't please you sit and look at her?" is indicative of his authoritative outlook which is culminated with the view that later he orders the listener to sit down and have a glance at what he wants to show to him.

"I gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together."

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, London in the year 1812. At the beginning he was instructed by private tutor but later on he went to London University. *Pauline* was the first long poem by him that was published in 1833 but it was the publication of *Men and Women* in 1855 that made him a famous and well-known poet. In 1846, he was married to Elizabeth Barrett and after that next 15 years of his life was spent in Italy. It was the period when most of his poetic works were inspired and composed by him. The poem 'My Last Duchess', one of his best dramatic monologues, published in *Dramatic Lyric* in 1842. Initially, it was titled 'Italy' but later it was given the title 'My Last Duchess' in 1849.

Browning's utilization of diction can be best termed as "monstrous angels" in the words of John Schad. While talking about the language of the Browning Amrollah Abjadian is of the view that "Browning was … very individualistic. Therefore, he allowed himself considerable license with the language. His English was not that of the universities, and it appeared eccentric to his

contemporaries … Browning's grammar is his own. His sentences are frequently interrupted by a long parenthesis. His most characteristic punctuation is the impatient dash. He omits articles and relative pronouns, and he likes to heap alliterations on his verse". In addition, his style of narration is distinctive as compare to his contemporaries. In the words of Wilfred L. Guerin, style or manner is more significant than the words present on the pages when he says, "Only to the extent that the reader understands that what the Duke is saying is revealed largely by how he says. It can he really fathom the full implications of the Duchess' story. One of the beautiful ironies of the poem, after all, is the reader's awareness of implications that the Duke does not consciously intend".*

Though the language is simple, conventional and direct but implied thoughts are so deep that it shows the complexity of Browning's form of poetry. The poem is indicative of the incidents that are dramatized and centered around the 5th Duke of Ferrara and his wife who died at the age of mere 17. Through the effective utilization of the technique of dramatic monologue, Browning was able to unleash the character traits of duke and duchess of the time of Renaissance in Italy. Their psychological and apparent traits are being depicted by the poet. Keeping in view the mood, thought process and feelings of inner self are elaborated through the Duke of Ferrara, the speaker and agent of count.

Gender role and cruelty of men towards women is indicative from the way duke has treated his late wife. He does not like either of her traits or her likes. He treats her as an object rather than human being. Some critics are of the views that duchess was neither the first of his wife who met the same fate and nor will the last to be treated like this as the mindset of men especially of aristocratic class will never be changed. Browning has exposed the inner self and self-projected image of the duke who has hanged the portrait of duchess. The duke points towards her follies as she can't speak so he satiates his pride and assertiveness by self-speaking ill about her. Hence, men are projected as victorious, arrogant, jealous, and assertive while women are portrayed as submissive, looser, and doom to face all this on the hand of men.

Check your progress:

1. In which collection of poetry 'My Last Duchess' was published first?

   _____

2. To which century the Duke of Ferrara belonged?

   _____

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- know the dramatic monologue, a poetic form.
- comprehend the nature of elite in the Renaissance Age.
- understand the dominance and cruelty of patriarchal society towards women.
- analyze and appreciate a literary work from various angles.

2.2 'My Last Duchess'

2.2.1 About the Poet:

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was a Victorian poet, playwright, and master of dramatic monologue. Some of his other well-received dramatic monologue poems are 'The Last Ride Together', 'Porphyria's Lover', 'Fra Lippo Lippi', 'Andrea Del Sarto', and 'The Laboratory'. He married Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a well-known poet and six years older to him. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is best known for her *Poems*, a collection of poems published in 1850. Immense popularity of this collection made her a serious contender for the position of Poet Laureate in 1850, after the death of William Wordsworth. Eventually, the position went to Alfred Lord Tennyson. Due to the health issues of his wife, they moved to Italy after their marriage and resided there till the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. After her death, Browning came back to England with his only son. Few of the best known works of Robert Browning are *Men and Women* (1855), a poetic collection, *The Ring and the Book* (1868), a long blank-verse poem, *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper* (1876), a poetic collection, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society* (1871), a long poem,*Bells and Pomegranates No. III: Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), a poetic collection, *Bells and Pomegranates No. I: Pippa Passes* (1841), a play, *Bells and Pomegranates No. II: King Victor and King Charles* (1842), a play, and *Bells and Pomegranates No. IV: The Return of the Druses*, (1843) a play.

2.2.2 Summary:

The poem 'My Last Duchess' is a dramatic monologue. While discussing about dramatic monologue, we readers must remember three characteristics- there will be a single speaker, audience may be one person or more than one, even the reader can be the addressee, and while

talking the speaker reveals his/her personality consciously or unconsciously. The poem begins with a subtitle indicating the very tone and setting of "FERRARA". In the very initial line of the poem, the speaker points toward a portrait of his last duchess which is affixed with a wall. The phrase 'last duchess' in the first line is indicative of the notion that the speaker in the poem is the "duke of Ferrara" and he is talking about his deceased wife. The duke is very much fascinated by the artistic skills of the artist Fra Pandolf who has painted such a portrait. The duke is delighted that every stranger including the addressee who when looks at the portrait tries to pose a question to him with regard to "depth and passion" of duchess expressional charm. At this point, the duke draws the attention of the readers that he keeps the portrait behind the curtain with an objective that only he may cast aside her.

In the second stage, the duke answers the question posed earlier. He hints out the "spot of joy" on the cheeks of duchess and the blush she was having was not merely due to his presence over there. As the painter was working on the portrait, she might have covered her wrist and later on it might be noted that portrait is unable to depict the exact "half blush" of her cheeks. Then, the duke notices that duchess had a heart "too soon made glad." Hence, she did not have any discernment and reacted to each and every one with the same note of joy. Here, duke quotes some instances of things that got similar appreciation and compliments such as the necklace given by him, the scene of sunset, "cherry branch" that was gifted to her by any fool, and the mule she used to ride on. These objects had the same favorable look, blush or sign of approval from duchess. Duke then mentions the most cherishable gift given to her that is the "nine-hundred-year-old name." But for innocent duchess the gifts given by the duke and others had same importance or appreciation which could not be tolerated by the duke.

With regard to duchess inability to distinguish, the duke is of the view that he will not raise that issue before her. He thinks it is such a trivial thing if he will point to her in order to criticize her, it will be a matter of embarrassment for him. Even if the duchess is ready to correct her manner, it will be a matter of debasement for him to point out her behaviour. At this point, the duke terminates the idea with the comment "I choose, never to stoop." Here, the duke adds the notion that whenever he happened to pass by her, she used to smile. At the same time, he is embarrassed as her smile was same for everyone who happened to pass by her, not for him alone. But now, she and her smile exist only in painting and she is standing "as if alive" and is unable to do whatever she used to do in her life.

At this culminating point the duke asks the envoy to come with him downstairs so that they can have meeting with others people. He comes to the point of business to discuss for which his addressee has come to his estate. The addressee is the representative of a count who is unnamed. Here duke comes up with his hidden motive to marry the lovely daughter of the count. Keeping in view the property and prosperity of the count, the duke is expecting a handsome dowry. But prior to heading towards the downstairs, the duke asks envoy to have a glance at another art work that is of bronze sculpture of "sea horse" which is tamed horse of Neptune. It is a rarest piece of art that is crafted for duke by "Claus of Innsbruck". The poem started with the appreciation of duchess portrait and culminated with his plan to remarry.

Check your progress:

1. Who is the addressee in the poem 'My Last Duchess'?

   _____

2. To which English Age did Robert Browning belong to?

   _____

2.2.3 Critical Study:

There are diverse elaborations of the poem 'My Last Duchess', as duchess seems to be presented as a victim of an outrageous act done by the Duke who slayed her. Secondly, the dramatic monologue has ironic role to play in the poem. The Duke outbursts and the more he talks about the more sympathies of the readers he loses instead of gaining any favor from them. It is necessary to note the use and ability of Browning to inculcate the technique of monologue in order to portray the inner and psychological trauma of duke. It is further shown how a particular person acts and behaves in a specific situation when he or she is entangled in it.

William Raymond while talking about 'My Last Duchess' considered it as an influential poem due to "fuses character and incident, thought and emotion." Through the utilization of dramatic monologue the entire stature of the character is shown before the readers. The Duke does not merely tell all in a moment but also leaves no stone unturned to attempt to justify it. In the process of justification, he goes far ahead in revealing and unearthing about himself and he seems to be fully exposed. Some critics are of the view that by setting the poem in renaissance context the poet has affixed historical context to it. On the contrary others have talked high about the historical context and relevance of the poem.

The poem is a psychological depiction of Duke's mind who is always suspicious and have doubts with the faithfulness of his wife. When he says that she can easily be pleased and carried away by men and foolish things it is indicative of his jealousy, pride, and resentment which ultimately led him to take violent act of slaying his wife. Another significant aspect of his character is that he is always filled with negative and black thought in his mind with regard to duchess and he never tries to understand her in true sense who is innocent, kind, and courteous.

The Duke thinks it as his disregard that duchess' appreciation for the precious gifts that he gave to her is same as the trivial and ordinary things like branch of cherry, mule, and things like that. He is always class and status conscious but duchess is least concerned about these things rather she is pure and genuine at heart. Lastly, the dismay and frustration of duke can be seen at apex when he comes up with the remark:

"……. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whenever I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? ....."

Check your progress:

1. Who is full of pride and arrogance in the poem?

   _____

2. Who is innocent and kind-hearted in 'My Last Duchess'?

   _____

2.2.4 Themes:

2.2.4.1 Jealousy and Self-importance:

After going through the poem, it can easily be noted that there are three major themes i.e. jealousy and pride, discernment of status, and truthfulness of art. Although, the poem is a presentation of an eponymous duchess but it is a tale of a jealous duke at the same time. There is a shift between what duke wants to portray himself in the poem and what is being seemed to be portrayed about him. He is shown pointing towards duchess for her pride and openness to please anyone and draw attention of everyone but actually he is showing his own pride and jealousy. The Duke always tries to draw attention towards the dual side of duchess. When she blushes for the painter, he shows that she is unable to comprehend his compliment as she is "too soon made glad."

But showing this the duke is showing pride, jealousy, and discomfort of his own nature as stated subsequently:

"'twas not

Her husband's presence only, called that spot

Of joy into the Duchess' cheek."

The amount of jealousy and dismay on the part of duke can be measured from the very fact that whatever pleases and gives solace to duchess gives discomfort and displeasure to duke. From this perspective a psychological feature of pride, jealousy and displeasure arises in the life of duke due to her same response towards the necklace given by him, delightful sunset, gifted cherry bough by any fool and ride on mule. These activities later lead duke to self-projection and resentment. He considers all these activities of duchess are of trivial nature which he cannot "stoop to blame." He does not show his resentment before duchess as he deems it will lower his esteem. All these resentments later lead him to slay duchess as is the implied meaning of the poem. Hence, the poem can be taken as a study of consequences that pride and jealousy can lead a man even to take the life of his beloved.

2.2.4.2 Discernment Hierarchy:

Another prime theme in the poem is the ladder of discernment. At one hand is the duchess who is joyous and can easily be pleased and obliged. She looks at every one with pleasing and smiling face but on the other hand is the duke who is opposite to it. Instead of being happy and jolly in her company he grows feelings of regret and discomfort which later forces him to take violent action. The very portrayal of duchess by duke is indicative of above stated fact:

"Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

Sir, 'twas all one!"

The same is in the case of all the things that favor and please her lead him to anguish and dismay. Although he articulates these things trivial but these have drawn him mad and he murders his beloved wife. There is implied meaning that this strict discernment on the part of duke is due to his elite background. He is aware of his social status and hence, considers it trivial to point out the behaviour of duchess.

2.2.4.3 Art and Truth:

The other recurrent idea in the poem is the concept of art and truth. 'My Last Duchess' is a piece of art and its truth. The idea of art is reflected through the portrait of duchess and the bronze Neptune and how these pieces of art have multilayered truths of contradictory nature. The portrait of duchess contains such contradictory truths and the main among them is the concept of life and death. Although, she is physically dead as she is slayed by her own husband but she stays alive in the portrait. The concept of this life is figurative yet the duke repeatedly articulates as "as if she were alive". In fact she used to live in his imagination and he has never come out of her thought. Blush and smile too have contradictory influence; for duchess this is a tool of pleasure and getting favour while it puts jealousy and resentment in duke. Another contradictory truth is duke is pleased with the portrait of Neptune but the things that please his wife is not acceptable for him.

2.2.5 Dramatic Monologue:

The poem is a dramatic monologue where there is a solo speaker and a specific listener or listeners termed as addressee or addressees. It is essential for the readers to read in between the lines to comprehend what he or she is trying to convey. From these two angles we realize that duke of Ferrara is the speaker of the poem; one through the setting of Ferrara, a city in Italy and the other from the concept of "last duchess." The listener to whom the speaker is conveying his tale is the agent of a "count." It is dramatic monologue in the sense that one character is talking to another and there is a certain action going on. While talking to the envoy the personality of speaker is revealed which is one of the characteristic features of dramatic monologue. Hence, we can say that Browning used dramatic monologue to give vent to what he wants to express. It is made known to the readers about the death of duchess in the poem. As the poem opens, we come across that the duke, who is the speaker, is talking to someone and hinting him towards the portrait of the duchess.

While admiring the painter who has painted it the duke says "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall." Then the speaker talks about the reaction of the people when they come across to this portrait and he also tries to guess the reaction of the addressee. Perhaps he observes in other people's eyes what he himself tries to visualize. Then, the tale of the speaker continues and he talks about her late wife and even criticizes her for being pleased by everything. He also points towards the things that please her i.e. gifts from men, sunset, pet mule and the branch of cherry gifted to her by any fool. As the tale goes on the readers come across the personality of the duke, duchess and the addressee. He informs the readers about the nature and likes of her lady

when he says “too soon made glad.” Through the use of dramatic monologue Browning was able to obtain two purposes; he reveals the character of late duchess and the psychological state of the duke.

Check your progress:

1. Does the speaker reveal his personality in a dramatic monologue?

   _____

2. Can the readers be audience in a dramatic monologue?

   _____

2.2.6 Poetic Devices:

Imagery

The analysis of the poem reveals that Browning has used numerous poetic and figurative devices to make his idea more refined which has added aesthetic flavor to this poem. The use of concrete images makes the context of this poem more absorbing. Subsequent are the instances of the imagery in the poem ‘*My Last Duchess*’:

“That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,”

“…, Notice Neptune, though”

“Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity”

“Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!”

There is an instance of using simile when the duke reveals that his late wife is seemed alive in the painting:

“That's my last Duchess painted on the wall”

“Looking as if she were alive.”

Language and Form

The language used to convey poet’s thoughts is simple, conventional and direct. However, there is a use of interrogative poetic expressions that are found in the poem:

“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,”

“Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said”

“The curtains I have drawn for you, but I)”

“Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet”

“She had /A heart--how shall I say?”

The poem is composed in the form of heroic couplet with a regular rhyme scheme in each couplet.

Irony

The poem has hints of irony. We are informed that duke gave mere a day to painter to paint the portrait. It is not because he has some busy schedule rather it was only due to the doubts duke had towards the character of duchess. While talking about the follies of duchess, the duke comments that he will not complain to duchess as these are trivial matter, it is also ironic because it was not a trivial matter for him. It gave vent to feelings of dismay, resentment and displeasure in his heart and mind which ultimately led him to murder his wife. When duke says that duchess was easily pleased by anyone, implied meanings are that he projected her as unfaithful but ironically in the culminating lines we are informed about his own intention to remarry with the daughter of a count.

2.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- appreciate the poet Robert Browning.
- understand dramatic monologue, a literary form.
- analyze and appreciate a literary work, particularly a poem.
- realize the pathetic condition on women in patriarchal society.
- recognize the penchant for art in the age of the English Renaissance.

2.4 Glossary

Duchess: The wife of duke

Fra Pandolf: A fictitious artist

Countenance: Appearance, expression of face

Earnest: Intense, sober

Glance: Look

Durst: Dare

Mantle: Cloak

Laps: A border or loose part of a cloak

Flush: Blush, glow, redden

Courtesy: Politeness, civility

Favour: Gift

Officious: Wearisome, meddlesome

Trifling: Trivial, petty

Forsooth: Indeed, really, truthfully

Count: Earl, male ruler of a county

Munificence: Generosity, Kindness

Neptune: The God of the ocean and of earthquakes

Claus of Innsbruck: A fictitious sculptor

2.5 Sample Questions

2.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Robert Browning was a poet of _____.

    (a) Romantic Age

    (b) Modern Age

    (c) Victorian Age

    (d) Elizabethan Age

2. Robert Browning was born in _____.

    (a) 1822

    (b) **1812**

    (c) 1912

    (d) 1712

3. My Last Duchess is a/an _____.

    (a) Epic Poem

    (b) Elegy

    (c) Dramatic monologue

    (d) Sonnet

4. The poetic collection *Men and Women* was published by _____.

(a) Elizabeth Barrett Browning

(b) **Robert Browning**

(c) Alfred Lord Tennyson

(d) William Words Worth

5. The setting of the poem ‘My Last Duchess’ is _____.

(a) London

(b) Greece

(c) Italy

(d) Rome

6. Who is the speaker in the poem ‘My Last Duchess’?

(a) The envoy

(b) The Duchess

(c) The Duke

(d) None of these

7. Fra Pandolf was a/an _____.

(a) English sculptor

(b) **Fictitious painter**

(c) Musician

(d) Singer

8. ‘My Last Duchess’ was first published in the year _____.

(a) 1842

(b) 1942

(c) 1824

(d) 1855

9. In which poetic collection ‘My Last Duchess’ appeared for the first time?

(a) *Men and Women*

(b) ***Dramatic Lyric***

(c) *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper*

(d) None of the above

10. How many years was Robert Browning younger to his wife?

(a) 8 years

(b) 10 years

(c) 6 years

(d) 4 years

2.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Write a short note on dramatic monologue.
2. Is the poem ‘My Last Duchess’ a dramatic monologue? How?
3. Analyze the character of the Duchess in ‘My Last Duchess’.
4. Discuss the tone of the poem in brief.
5. What does the Duke want to tell the messenger?

2.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Analyze the character of Duke in detail.
2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem ‘My Last Duchess’.
3. Can the poem ‘My Last Duchess’ be read from a feminist perspective? Discuss.

2.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Bloom, Harold (2001) *Bloom’s Major Poets: Robert Browning*. New York: InfobasePublishing.
2. Browning, Robert (1898) *Dramatic Romances*. New York: Crowell and Company.

Unit-3: Modern Poetry – Characteristic Features

Structure

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Objectives
3.2 Modern Poetry: Characteristic Features
    3.2.1 The Emergence of Modern Poetry
    3.2.2 Movements in Modernism and its Impact on Modern Poetry
    3.2.3 Style and Technique of Modern Poetry
    3.2.4 Themes of Modern Poetry
3.3 Learning Outcomes
3.4 Glossary
3.5 Sample Questions
3.6 Suggested Learning Resources

3.0 Introduction

The term "modern poetry" is used to refer to poetry that was created in the latter part of the 19thand early part of the 20thcenturies. It is distinguished by a departure from conventional forms and structures, as well as a focus on free verse and linguistic exploration. Many contemporary social, political, and cultural developments had an influence on modern poets since they frequently attempted to represent the complexity and fragmentation of the modern world in their works. T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, E.E. Cummings, and Langston Hughes are a few well-known contemporary poets. Modern poetry, often known as poetry of the 20th century, is a varied and complex literary form that includes a variety of styles, themes, and literary devices. Breaking from established forms and frameworks and emphasizing free verse are two characteristics of this avante-garde poetic age.

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- understand the historical and cultural context of the time period that led to the rise of modern poetry.
- analyze the themes, techniques and styles used in modern poetry.
- develop critical thinking and analysis skills by understanding the modernist movement.
- appreciate the artistic value of modern poetry.

3.2 Modern Poetry: Characteristic Features

3.2.1 The Emergence of Modern Poetry:

Modern poetry can be dated to the late 19th and early 20th century, a time characterized by social and cultural change.

Rise of the Modern Poetry:

The beginning of modern poetry can be seen in the late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} centuries, a period marked by social and cultural upheaval. The Industrial Revolution brought about significant changes to society, including urbanization, mass migration, and technological advancements. These changes led to a sense of alienation and disorientation among many individuals, which is reflected in the poetry of the time.

The growing dissatisfaction with conventional forms and methods was one of the main elements that contributed to the creation of modern poetry. Many poets began to reject the strict rhyme and meter of previous eras, in favour of more free-form styles. This was partly due to the influence of Walt Whitman, who wrote in free verse and celebrated the individual and the common person in his poetry.

Another important factor was the influence of Symbolism and the Romantic Movement. Symbolist poets, such as Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé, emphasized the use of symbols and imagery to convey deeper meanings. They also sought to break down the barriers between different art forms, such as poetry and music, and to create a new kind of poetry that was more dreamlike and symbolic.

The rise of modernism in art and literature also played a role in the development of modern poetry. Modernists sought to capture the chaos and complexity of the modern world, and they used new techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, collage, and fragmentation to do so. They also experimented with new forms and themes, such as the long poem and the urban landscape.During this period, the role of the poet was transformed as well. The traditional role of the poet as a detached observer was replaced by a new role of the poet as a participant in the world. Poets like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and W.H. Auden sought to express the inner thoughts and feelings of the individual, rather than focusing on grand themes or epic stories.

Another important development was the emergence of new literary movements, such as Imagism, which was in stark contrast to the often vague and abstract language of traditional poetry.

Impact of World War on Modern Poetry:

The impact of World War I on modern poetry was significant and far-reaching, both in terms of the themes and styles of the poetry, as well as in the way in which poetry was received and understood by the public. The war had a profound effect on the poets of the time, many of whom were directly involved in the conflict, and their experiences and observations of war shaped their poetry in significant ways.

One of the most notable impacts of the war on modern poetry was the shift in tone and themes. Prior to the war, poetry was often characterized by romantic and pastoral themes. However, the war brought with it a new sense of disillusionment and despair, which was reflected in the poetry of the time. Many poets wrote about the horrors of war and the futility of human existence. Wilfred Owen, for example, wrote poems that depicted the brutal realities of trench warfare and the suffering of soldiers. His poem “Dulce et Decorum est” is one of the most famous anti-war poems of the time. It is a powerful and evocative poem that describes the horrors of chemical warfare and the physical and psychological effects on soldiers. The poem is a stark contrast to the patriotic and jingoistic poetry that was popular before the war.

Another impact of the war on modern poetry was the development of new styles and forms. Poets began to experiment with new forms of expression, such as free verse, which allowed them to convey the chaos and confusion of war. This was a significant departure from traditional forms such as the sonnet, which had strict rules for rhyme and meter. Free verse, with its lack of formal structure, allowed poets to convey the disordered and fragmented nature of war. This was evident in the poetry of Ezra Pound, whose poem “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley” is a long modernist poem

that uses a variety of imagery and symbols to depict the disillusionment of a generation after the war. The poem is a complex work that reflects the disordered nature of war and the disillusionment of those who experienced it.

The war also had a significant impact on the way in which poetry was received and understood by the public. Prior to the war, poetry was seen as a form of escapism, but the war changed this perception. Poetry became a way for people to understand and cope with the reality of war. The impact of the war is evident in the poetic style as many of them were directly involved in the conflict, and their experiences and observations of war shaped their poetry in significant ways. The war brought with it a new sense of disillusionment and despair, which was reflected in the poetry of the time.

3.2.2 Movements in Modernism and its Impact on Modern Poetry:

The following movements shaped the unique and distinct style of modern poetry:

Imagism:

As an early 20th-century movement, Imagism focuses on precision and the economy of language. Imagist poets sought to capture the essence of a moment or image in a single line or phrase, and often used simple, everyday language to convey their ideas. Some of the most notable imagist poets include Ezra Pound, H.D., and Amy Lowell.The goal of imagist poetry is to re-create the physical experience of an object through words. Imagism was one of the first Modernist literary movements in the English language. It rejected the sentimental verse more typical of Romantic and Victorian poetry and instead focused on the economy of language, characterized by sharp, clear use of words.The imagist poets sought to use precise, concrete imagery to evoke a sensory experience in the reader, rather than relying on emotional or intellectual associations. They aimed to use language in a way that was direct and unadorned and focused on the visual aspect of the subject.

One of the key figures in the imagist movement was **Ezra Pound**, who is often considered the founder of imagism. Pound's poem “In a Station of the Metro” is a prime example of imagist poetry. In it, he describes a scene in the Paris Metro, in which the faces of the people seem like petals on a wet, black bough. By using this simile, Pound is able to create a powerful visual image that evokes the scene for the reader.

Another imagist poet is Hilda Doolittle whose poem “Oread” uses imagery to create a sense of the wild, untamed nature of the speaker. The speaker in the poem describes herself as an oread,

a mountain nymph, and uses imagery of rocks, cliffs and the sea to create a sense of the wild and untamed nature of the speaker.Some of the most well-known Anglo-American poets and works of poetry in history emerged from the English language Imagist movement. Imagist writers and poets from the early 20th century include Amy Lowell, T.S. Eliot, F.S. Flint, Hilda Doolittle, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, John Gould Fletcher, and Ford Madox Ford.

Imagist poet F. S. Flint outlined the principles of imagist poetry in a manifesto, quoting Pound:

a) Direct handling of the object, whether it be subjective or objective.

b) Use only words that are necessary for the presentation; nothing else.

c) With regard to rhythm, it is best to compose in the order of the musical phrase rather than the metronome.

Surrealism:

Surrealism has had a significant impact on modern poetry. The movement which began in the 1920s and was led by André Breton emphasizes the use of the irrational and the unconscious in art and literature. This aesthetic can be seen in the works of many contemporary poets writing in English, such as James Tate, John Ashbery, and Michael Palme. The movement was founded by **André Breton**, who defined its aims in his Surrealist Manifesto (1924). Surrealism is characterized by the "supremacy of the disinterested play of thought and the omnipotence of dreams rather than reason and logic."

It is based on the idea that the subconscious mind holds greater truths and insights than the conscious mind and aims to tap into that realm through various techniques such as automatic writing, collage, and the use of unexpected juxtapositions. Breton defined surrealism as "Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought."

The movement has had a profound influence on modern poetry, as poets have used surrealist techniques to explore the depths of the subconscious mind and express their innermost thoughts and feelings. Surrealist poetry often features disjointed, dreamlike imagery and unexpected associations, which serve to challenge the reader's perceptions and stimulate the imagination.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot written in 1915, is considered one of the earliest examples of surrealist poetry in the English language. It features a stream-of-

consciousness narrative which uses surrealist technique to explore the subconscious mind and the irrationality of human thought.

The Beat Generation was another movement that emerged in the 1950s. This group of poets were characterized by their rejection of traditional forms and themes, and a focus on personal experience, spontaneity, and the use of everyday language. They were often associated with the counterculture of the time and their work often reflected their interest in jazz, Buddhism, and drug use. Some of the most notable beat poets include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and William S. Burroughs.

One of the key characteristics of Beat Generation poetry is its emphasis on individuality and personal expression. The poets of the Beat Generation were not interested in traditional forms or themes and instead sought to break free from the constraints of traditional poetry. They were interested in expressing their own unique experiences and perspectives, and in doing so, they often used unconventional language, imagery, and structures.

An example of this can be seen in Allen Ginsberg's poem “Howl, “This iconic poem is a long, free-form, stream-of-consciousness work that explores themes of sexuality, drugs, and the nature of existence. The language is raw and direct, and the imagery is often visceral and disturbing. The structure of the poem is also unconventional, with long lines and a lack of traditional rhyme or meter.

Another characteristic of Beat Generation poetry is its focus on the inner self. The poets of the Beat Generation were interested in exploring the depths of their own consciousness and the inner workings of their minds. They sought to express the raw, unfiltered thoughts and emotions that they experienced, and in doing so, they often used techniques such as stream-of-consciousness and automatic writing.The Beat Generation poets also often incorporated elements of jazz and improvisation into their work with an emphasis on spontaneity, improvisation, and free expression.

3.2.3 Style and Technique of Modern Poetry:

Modern poetry is characterized by a number of key features that distinguish it from traditional poetry. The techniques used in modern poetry reflect the diversity and experimentation that characterizes the genre. Poets use a variety of techniques to convey their ideas and emotions and to create new and innovative ways of expressing the human experience. These features include:

Free verse:

Many modern poets reject traditional metrical and rhyme schemes, and instead opt for free verse, which allows for more freedom and flexibility in the use of language. It is characterized by its lack of regular meter and rhyme and instead relies on the natural rhythms of speech.It is a technique that is commonly used in modern poetry and its structureis much more open and flexible, allowing poets to express themselves in a more natural and spontaneous way. Its use in modern poetry can be seen as a reaction to the formal constraints of traditional poetry, which is seen as restrictive and limiting.

One of the main advantages of free verse is that it allows poets to focus on the content and meaning of their work, rather than being constrained by formal rules. This technique gives poets greater freedom to experiment with language and explore new forms of expression. It also allows for a more conversational tone and a more personal style of poetry, which is in line with the focus on the individual and the self in modern poetry.Poets such as Walt Whitman, who wrote "Leaves of Grass," and Langston Hughes, who wrote "The Weary Blues," were some of the earliest adopters of free verse in the 19th century and set the stage for the development of free verse in the 20^{th}century.

In the 20^{th}century, poets such as E.E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, and Carl Sandburg further developed the technique of free verse. William Carlos Williams in his poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" used free verse to create a sense of intimacy and to focus on the small details of everyday life.

Collage:

This technique involves the use of multiple forms of text, such as newspaper articles, song lyrics, and photographs. Poets use this technique to create a sense of fragmentation and to reflect the complexity of modern society. Collage is a technique that is commonly used in modern poetry. It refers to the way in which poets combine different elements, such as images, words, and sounds, to create a new whole. This technique allows poets to create new meanings and associations by combining different elements in unexpected ways.One example of this technique can be seen in the work of the poet T.S. Eliot, who wrote "The Waste Land." In this poem, Eliot uses fragments of other texts, such as advertisements and popular songs, to create a collage-like effect. By combining these different elements, Eliot creates a new whole that reflects the modern experience.

In “anyone lived in a pretty how town.” Cummings uses unconventional capitalization and punctuation to create a collage-like effect. By breaking the traditional rules of grammar and syntax, Cummings creates a new whole that reflects the modern experience. By combining different elements, poets are able to create new and innovative ways of expressing themselves and challenge the conventions of traditional poetry.

Experimentation with Language and Form:

Modern poets often experiment with language, using unconventional syntax, wordplay, and imagery to convey meaning. They also employ techniques such as stream of consciousness, fragmentation, and collage to reflect the complexity and fragmentation of the modern world.Experimentation with form and language is a key technique that is often used in modern poetry. This technique is used to push the boundaries of traditional poetry and explore new forms of expression. Modern poets use this technique to challenge the conventions of traditional poetry and to create new and innovative ways of expressing themselves.

One example of this technique can be seen in the work of the poet Gertrude Stein, who wrote “Tender Buttons” and uses a stream-of-consciousness style and unconventional grammar to create a sense of confusion and disorientation. The poem is written in a series of short, disconnected phrases that do not follow traditional syntax or grammar. This experimentation with language and form creates a sense of disorientation and confusion that reflects the modern experience.

Another example of this technique can be seen in the work of the poet Ezra Pound, who wrote “The Cantos.” which uses a wide range of literary and historical references to create a sense of fragmentation and disjunction. He also uses a collage-like technique, where he cuts and pastes different texts together to create a new and unique form.

Subjectivity:

Modern poetry often focuses on the inner experience and emotions of the poet, rather than on objective reality. This emphasis on subjectivity can be seen in the confessional poetry of Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath, as well as in the imagist poetry of Ezra Pound and H.D.Subjectivity is a technique that is commonly used in modern poetry. It refers to the way in which poets use their own personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives to create a unique and individual voice in their work. This technique allows poets to create new meanings and associations by expressing their own personal experiences and emotions in their poetry.

Subjectivity in the form of psychological and personal detailscan be seen in the work of the poet Sylvia Plath, who wrote “Daddy.” In this poem, Plath uses her own personal experiences of her father's death and her feelings of abandonment to create a powerful and emotional voice. By expressing her own personal experiences and emotions, Plath creates a new confessional style of poetry.Another example of this technique can be seen in the work of the poet Langston Hughes, who wrote “The Weary Blues” where he uses his own personal experiences of growing up in Harlem to create a unique and individual voice.

Intertextuality:

Modern poetry often makes reference to other texts, whether they be literary, cultural or historical. Poets like T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden make frequent allusions to other literary works, while poets like Langston Hughes refer to historical and cultural contexts.Intertextuality is another technique that is commonly used in modern poetry. It refers to the way in which poets draw upon, reference, or allude to other texts in their work. This technique allows poets to create new meanings and associations by connecting their work to other texts, be it literary, historical, cultural, or personal.

Intertextuality can be seen in the work of the poet T.S. Eliot, who wrote “The Waste Land.” In this poem, Eliot references a wide range of literary and historical texts, including the Bible, Shakespeare, and classical mythology. He also uses fragments of other texts, such as advertisements and popular songs, to create a collage-like effect. By referencing these other texts, Eliot creates new meanings and associations that reflect the modern experience.Margaret Atwood also uses intertextuality, in her poem “Siren Song,” she references the myth of the sirens from Homer's Odyssey to explore themes of seduction and temptation. By referencing this myth, Atwood creates new meanings and associations that are relevant to her own experiences and to the modern experience.

3.2.4 Themes of Modern Poetry:

Modern poetry is characterized by a focus on individual experience and free expression, which has led to a wide range of themes and subjects. Some of the key themes found in modern poetry include:

The Search for Self:

Many modern poets have explored the theme of the search for self, both in terms of the individual's place in the world and in terms of their own identity. This theme can be seen in the

work of poets such as W.B. Yeats, who wrote about the search for a sense of self in the midst of political and social upheaval, and T.S. Eliot, whose poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” explores the speaker's feelings of inadequacy and fear of rejection. The theme of the search for self is a prominent one in modern poetry, reflecting the individualistic and introspective nature of the modern era. Many poets wrote about their own personal experiences, exploring the themes of identity, self-discovery, and personal growth.

W.B. Yeats: Yeats's poetry is characterized by a deep exploration of the self and the search for personal identity. In poems such as “The Second Coming” and “Sailing to Byzantium,” Yeats explores the theme of self-discovery, capturing the sense of uncertainty and confusion that characterized the search for self in the modern era.

T.S. Eliot's poetry is defined by a deep exploration of the self and the search for personal identity. In poems such as “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and “The Waste Land,” Sylvia Plath's poems such as “Lady Lazarus” and “Daddy,” the search for ‘self’ is problematised through conflicting personal relationships. In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, T.S. Eliot uses vivid imagery and a stream-of-consciousness style in a struggle to understand his own identity and place in the world. Uncertainty and inaction remain the hallmark of “self”.

Disillusionment and the Collapse of Traditional Values:

Disillusionment is a prominent theme in modern poetry, reflecting the disillusionment and scepticism that many poets felt towards traditional values and societal norms during the early 20th century. Poets such as T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, W.B. Yeats, E.E. Cummings, and Langston Hughes were some of the poets who explored this theme in their work. Their poems depicted the sense of hopelessness, despair, loss of innocence, and uncertainty that characterized the era.The disillusionment theme can be seen in the work of many modern poets.

The poem “The Waste Land” by T.S. Eliot is a potent representation of the sadness and disillusionment that characterized the post-World War I era. The poem captures the sense of futility and despair that many people experienced in the years following the war through the use of vivid imagery and connections to mythology and literature. The issue of the demise of conventional values, the loss of innocence, as well as the sense of despair and hopelessness that many people felt in the face of the war, are all explored in Auden's poem “September 1, 1939.” Another potent portrayal of the disillusionment and ambiguity that characterized the post-World War I era is found in W.B. Yeats' poem “The Second Coming.”

The Urban Experience:

The rise of industrialization and urbanization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a profound impact on modern poetry. Poets such as T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden wrote about the experience of living in the city, depicting the alienation and loneliness that often accompanied urban life. They also wrote about the hustle and bustle of city life, and the feeling of being lost in a crowd. The urban experience is a prominent theme in modern poetry, reflecting the changing nature of city life in the early 20th century. Many poets wrote about their experiences in the city, capturing the sights, sounds, and feelings of urban life. Carl Sandburg's poem "Chicago" is a powerful portrayal of the city of Chicago. Through the use of vivid imagery and a colloquial style, the poem captures the gritty, industrial nature of the city, as well as the sense of energy and vitality that characterized it.

Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem (A Dream Deferred)" is a reflection on the experience of African Americans in the city of New York during the 1920s and 30s. The poem explores the theme of urban life, capturing the sense of frustration and disappointment that many African Americans felt in the face of discrimination and racial inequality.

"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens is a reflection on the experience of living in the city. In a meditative style, the poem captures the feeling of alienation and isolation of city life.

War and conflict:

The two World Wars of the 20th century had a profound impact on the world and on modern poetry. Poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon wrote about their experiences of war, depicting the horror and inhumanity of conflict. Other poets, such as W.H. Auden, wrote about the political and social upheaval caused by war and the impact it had on individuals and society as a whole. War and conflict have been recurring themes in modern poetry, reflecting the political and social upheaval of the modern era. Many poets have used their work to comment on the devastating effects of war and conflict on individuals and society, as well as to critique the political and social systems that led to these conflicts.

Wilfred Owen is considered one of the greatest war poets of the 20th century, and his poetry is known for its powerful and moving descriptions of the horrors of war. His poems such as "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Anthem for Doomed Youth" depict a disturbing portrayal of the brutality of the First World War and the tragic loss of life.Derek Walcott's poetry reflects the impact of war

and conflict on the colonial and postcolonial world. His poem “Omeros” is an epic poem in which he explores the trauma of war and the search for identity and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict.

Nature and the Environment:

Many modern poets have written about the relationship between humans and nature, depicting the ways in which the natural world is affected by human actions. Poets such as Robert Frost and W.B. Yeats wrote about the beauty and majesty of nature, while others, such as D.H. Lawrence, wrote about the destructive impact of industrialization on the environment. Nature and the environment have been recurring themes in modern poetry, reflecting the growing awareness of the impact of human activity on the natural world. Many poets have used their work to comment on the beauty and fragility of the natural world, as well as to critique the destructive effects of human activity on the environment.

Margaret Atwood is a Canadian poet and novelist, her poetry reflects the relationship between humans and nature. Her poems such as “The Moment” and “The City Planners”is a powerful and moving portrayal of the destructive effects of human activity on the environment, capturing the loss of natural beauty and the disconnection between humans and nature.

3.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- analyse and interpret the themes, style, form and language of the modern poetry.
- understand and compare the literary and cultural context of modern poetry.
- exposed to diverse perspectives and avant-garde approaches to poetry.
- develop critical thinking skills through the interpretation and analysis of poetry.

3.4 Glossary

Avant-garde: A term used to describe the experimental and innovative elements of the modernist movement.

Alienation: The feeling of being separated or disconnected from one's surroundings and society.

Collage: A technique of modern poetry that uses a variety of texts, often from different sources, to create a new meaning.

Concrete poetry: A form of poetry that uses typography and layout to create visual effects and meaning.

Free verse: A form of poetry that does not adhere to traditional rules of rhyme or meter.

Fragmentation: The breaking up of traditional narrative and structural forms in modernist literature and art.

Imagism: A modernist movement in poetry characterized by its emphasis on clear, precise language and visual imagery.

Intertextuality: The relationship between texts, where one text refers to or alludes to another text.

Modernism: A literary and artistic movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, characterized by its rejection of traditional forms and its experimentation with new forms of expression.

Subjectivity: The use of personal experience and perspective in a literary work.

Stream of consciousness: A literary technique that aims to capture the unedited thoughts and feelings of a character.

Surrealism: A modernist movement in poetry characterized by its use of dream-like imagery, symbolism, and the manipulation of reality.

3.5 Sample Questions

3.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. What is the main characteristic of free verse poetry?
    (a) Adherence to traditional rules of rhyme and meter
    (b) Use of stream of consciousness
    (c) Lack of adherence to traditional rules of rhyme and meter
    (d) Use of collage
2. Imagism in poetry comprises can be best described as?
    (a) Use of dream-like imagery
    (b) Use of symbolism
    (c) Emphasis on clear, precise language and visual imagery

(d) Use of objective, rather than subjective, experience

3. What is the main characteristic of surrealism in poetry?

(a) Use of dream-like imagery

(b) Use of symbolism

(c) Emphasis on clear, precise language and visual imagery

(d) Use of objective, rather than subjective, experience

4. Which literary technique is used to capture the unedited thoughts and feelings of a character?

(a) Free verse

(b) Stream of consciousness

(c) Imagism

(d) Surrealism

5. What is intertextuality in poetry?

(a) The relationship between texts

(b) Meant to be performed

(c) Use of symbolism

(d) Use of objective, rather than subjective, experience

6. How is collage created in poetry?

(a) Use of a variety of texts, often from different sources, to create a new meaning

(b) Meant to be performed

(c) Use of symbolism

(d) Use of objective, rather than subjective, experience

7. How is subjectivity achieved in poetry?

(a) Use of personal experience and perspective

(b) Meant to be performed

(c) Use of symbolism

(d) Use of objective, rather than subjective, experience

8. What is the main theme of W.H. Auden's “September 1, 1939”?

(a) Love and relationships

(b) War and conflict

(c) Disillusionment and despair

(d) Nature and the environment

9. Who is considered the father of the “Imagist” movement in modern poetry?
   (a) T.S. Eliot
   (b) W.B. Yeats
   (c) Ezra Pound
   (d) Robert Frost
10. What is the main theme of T.S. Eliot's “The Waste Land”?
   (a) Love and relationships
   (b) War and conflict
   (c) Disillusionment and despair
   (d) Nature and the environment

3.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. How did the modernist movement in poetry challenge traditional forms and structures?
2. How does the use of stream of consciousness and fragmentation in modern poetry affect the reader's understanding of the text?
3. What are some of the key characteristics of modern poetry, and how do they differ from traditional forms of poetry?
4. How did the political and social changes of the early 20th century influence the development of modern poetry?
5. Explain the role of experimentation and innovation in modern poetry, and give some examples of poets or movements that exemplify these qualities?

3.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Discuss the impact of the world war on modern poetry.
2. Discuss the concept of alienation is central to the modernist movement and can be seen in the work of many modernist poets with reference to TS Eliot.
3. Critically analyse the predominant themes of modern poetry.

3.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Hamilton, Ian, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry in English.* Oxford University Press, 1994.
2. Herd, David and Alex Davis, eds. *A New History of Modern Poetry*. Harvard University Press, 2017.
3. Marcus, Laura, ed. *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
4. Nicholls, Peter, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Modernist Poetry.* Blackwell Publishing, 2010.
5. Saint-Amour, Paul, ed. *Modernist Poetry, Modernist Poetics.* Oxford University Press, 2011.

Unit-4: Sylvia Plath – 'The Moon and the Yew Tree'

Structure

4.0 Introduction
4.1 Objectives
4.2 'The Moon and the Yew Tree'
    4.2.1 Introduction to 'The Moon and the Yew Tree'
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4.3 Learning Outcomes
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4.0 Introduction

Sylvia Plath was born in 1932 in Boston, Massachusetts. As an American poet and novelist, she is hailed for perfecting the genre of Confessional Poetry. Known for her collection of poems *The Colossus and other poems* (1960) and *Ariel* (1965), Plath also wrote a semi-autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar* which came out in 1963. It traces Plath's life and her descent into clinical depression. The novel is seen as a *roman de clef* as it mirrors the journey of Sylvia Plath. She spent her early life in Winthrop, Massachusetts where she exhibited extraordinary talent and wrote extensively for many magazines. She studied at Smith College where she won numerous prizes, edited the young women's magazine *mademoiselle* and later on joined The Newham College at Cambridge. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1982, posthumously. Plath married Ted Hughes in 1951 but the marriage was fraught with abuses which she has expressed uninhibitedly in her journals and poems.

While *The Colossus* and *The Bell Jar* had established Sylvia Plath as a formidable writer, it was her collection of poems *Aerial* that catapulted her into instant fame. The images used by Sylvia Plath transmogrify household objects into terrifying symbols that inhabit and haunt her

everyday life. The looming image of death and darkness in Plath's works takes a final shape in her suicide in 1963. She was survived by her husband and two children. The short but tumultuous life of Sylvia Plath is marked by creative outbursts on one side and a sad, lonely and fragmented self on the other whose desperate attempt to make sense of the world around her fails.

Recent interest in Sylvia Plath has moved beyond the suicidal impulse and discovered other attributes of her poetry.

4.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- understand modern confessional poetry.
- explore the autobiographical elements of Sylvia Plath's *The Moon and the Yew Tree.*
- analyse the images and symbols used in Sylvia Plath's The Moon and the Yew Tree.
- compare Sylvia Plath's The Moon and the Yew Tree with her other poems.
- comprehend Sylvia Plath's poetic technique.

4.2 'The Moon and the Yew Tree'

This is the light of the mind, cold and planetary
The trees of the mind are black. The light is blue.
The grasses unload their griefs on my feet as if I were God
Prickling my ankles and murmuring of their humility
Fumy, spiritous mists inhabit this place.
Separated from my house by a row of headstones.
I simply cannot see where there is to get to.

The moon is no door. It is a face in its own right,
White as a knuckle and terribly upset.
It drags the sea after it like a dark crime; it is quiet
With the O-gape of complete despair. I live here.
Twice on Sunday, the bells startle the sky ----

Eight great tongues affirming the Resurrection
At the end, they soberly bong out their names.

The yew tree points up, it has a Gothic shape.
The eyes lift after it and find the moon.
The moon is my mother. She is not sweet like Mary.
Her blue garments unloose small bats and owls.
How I would like to believe in tenderness ----
The face of the effigy, gentled by candles,
Bending, on me in particular, its mild eyes.

I have fallen a long way. Clouds are flowering
Blue and mystical over the face of the stars
Inside the church, the saints will all be blue,
Floating on their delicate feet over the cold pews,
Their hands and faces stiff with holiness.
The moon sees nothing of this. She is bald and wild.
And the message of the yew tree is blackness -- blackness and silence

4.2.1 Introduction to 'The Moon and the Yew Tree':

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" was published posthumously in 1965 in the collection of poems called *Ariel.* The poem is widely interpreted as a personal idiom of what is often labeled as a dysfunctional family. As with most of her work, the poem is autobiographical in nature lamenting the loss of her father and a fractured relationship with her mother. The poem is the portrayal of loss, despair, dejection and loneliness. The poem also carries elements of gothic horror and Christian images of spiritual hollowness.

Written at the behest of Ted Hughes, the poem according to him was "a statement from the powers in control of our life". Plath was asked to describe the setting of a full moon behind a large yew tree in the churchyard which resulted in "The Moon and the Yew Tree". It was originally written shortly before her death in 1961, the time when Sylvia Plath was under tremendous mental and physical exhaustion of domestic drudgery and deteriorating marriage. Despite the challenging

marital situation and failing health, this period is also marked by her creative outburst that resulted in many of her finest works.

The poem is set in North Tawton, in South-West of England where Sylvia Plath had lived. The moon is symbolic of Sylvia Plath's mother and the Yew tree stands for her father. Neither of them provides her with any comfort or consolation. The calamity of the death of her father at an early age coupled with a lack of maternal bond made a permanent scar that continued to fester in her poetry. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" is in a series of many such poems of personal grief bordering on neurosis. The poems in *Ariel* have generally considered in a pattern as a movement affirmed in Plath's creative work as a fall.

In poems like "Lady Lazarus"or "Daddy", one can see how Sylvia Plath deploys personal predicaments into horrors that prevail the society. In equating "Daddy"with Nazi symbols, personal resentment and trauma is elevated into gigantic proportions of brutal force against her puny self. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" also traverse into the personal symbols of affliction and abuse. The poem is bleak as most of *Ariel* poem foreboding Sylvia Plath's impending and sensational suicide.

4.2.2 Themes:

The themes of "The Moon and the Yew Tree" require an understanding of the biographical details of Sylvia Plath especially her lifelong influence of her father and a complex love and hate relationship with her mother. Plath's love for Ted Hughes and subsequent separation from him acted as the final nail in the coffin. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" written on Ted Hughes's suggestion to describe the moon behind the yew tree as could be seen from her window, however, became a metaphor of death and despair much to Hughes's dislike. Three broad themes are discussed below that constitute most of Plath's work and hence become seminal to our understanding of "The Moon and the Yew Tree."

Confessional Poem:

M.L Rosenthal was the first critic to use the term confessional poems critically. He also classifies Sylvia Plath's work as confessional because she places herself at the centre in a manner that her "psychological vulnerability and shame becomes an embodiment of *her* civilisation".

Confessional poetry emerged in America in 1959 with the publication of Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*. Apart from Sylvia Plath, Alan Ginsberg, John Barryman, Ann Sexton, and Robert Lowell are considered major exponents of confessional poetry. Despite so many confessional poets

making their mark, Sylvia Plath remained one of its kind by directing confessional poetry into new facets of expression. The innate subjectivity of her poetry along with personal images made her creative output largely autobiographical. On the *World Socialist* website, Margaret Rees observed, "Whether Plath wrote about nature, or about the social restrictions on individuals, she stripped away the polite veneer. She let her writing express elemental forces and primeval fears. In doing so, she laid bare the contradictions that tore apart appearance and hinted at some of the tensions hovering just beneath the surface of the American way of life in the post-war period." Devoid of any constraint, Plath's uninhibited expression of self, full of pain, shame, and agony in a broken and wounded self is characteristic of any confessional poet. Sylvia Path's complex relationship with her father prefigures in her poetry as an Electra complex of obsessive love and hate.

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" is deeply personal in tone. "The moon is my mother. She is not sweet like Mary/Her blue garments unloose small bats and owls". Here the poet recalls her strained and troubled relationship with her mother. She is like a moon which is cold and distant. Plath's mother Aurelia is seen as narcissistic and fails to connect with her daughter. Her commanding ways did not allow her to grow confidently. She is made to feel like a 'dark crime', shamed and guilt-ridden. As she yearns for her mother's love, 'tenderness', 'gentled', bending' and 'mild eyes', the sadness grows into deep despair. The poem is Psychobiographical as it unravels the hidden recess of her mind in tracing her alienated self. Plath does not find any comforting spot between the Yew tree and the Moon. Detached from her mother, Plath floats in the space of dejection and insecurities, seeking approval by communicating her tortured mind to the readers.

The poem ends in silence and darkness denoting a combined effect of her parental influence. The untimely death of her father resulted in infinite silence and darkness exemplifies the influence of her mother as a moon that shines in the dark. "The moon and the Yew Tree" thus become a confession of her deeply disturbing childhood where with no anchor for support and succour, she is lost and directionless as she states "I simply cannot see where there is to get to."

Relationship with the Parents:

Sylva Plath shared a troubled relationship with her parents. According to Butscher, Sylvia always felt that her father wanted a boy instead of a girl and thus worked hard to impress him. She was unhappy when her brother was born because she felt she won't remain the central focus of her parents. She even memorised all the Latin names of insects to gain his father's attention and also

succeeded in it. Her precocity was admired by her father and she continued to impress her father to get his attention and love. In suppressing her feelings and going out of the way for her father's undiluted attention, Plath's childhood was mired with emotional void and psychological instability. Plath resented her mother as often saw her as a rival vying for her father's love. Thus Otto Plath's untimely death due to diabetes and amputation of his leg left an eight-year-old Sylvia Plath shattered and directionless. The love of her father was one of the major driving forces in her life, in its absence, Plath resorted to seeking attention outside. In seeking public approval for her lost love, Plath laid bare her soul without any hesitation. Her attempted suicide in 1953 is termed by many as a bid for public attention where she was found and treated in the hospital.

Sylvia Plath's father's fixation also led to an unhealthy relationship with her mother. In her journals and diaries, she openly criticizes her mother.

My mother turned from a foggy log into a slumbering, middle-aged woman, her mouth slightly open and a snore ravelling from her throat. The piggish noise irritated me and for a while, it seemed to me that the only way to stop it would be to take the column of skin and sinew from which it rose and twist it to silence between my hands. (Plath, 1991, pp. 137- 138).

It is rightly believed that Plath's work carries the burden of her unhappy childhood. According to Schwartz, Plath's relationship with her father became a defining quality of her poetry. In her poem "Daddy", Plath uses Nazi symbols for her father. Despite her father's death long back, she is unable to free herself from his 'God-like, authorial command. "Daddy" was an attempt to free herself of her father's influence and to kill his memory. Plath wrote "Medusa" with her mother Aurelia in mind where a daughter tries to escape through her mother's attachment and control. She used the image of Medusa to describe her mother's characteristics. The mother-daughter relationship is like drudgery as "Old barnacled umbilicus, Atlantic cable, Keeping itself, it seems, in a state of miraculous repair"." The abhorrence is seen as "Green as eunuchs, your wishes, Hiss at my sins. Off, off, eely tentacle! There is nothing between us". Written before "Daddy", Medusa is an effort to flee the biological cord which she finds impossible to be liberated from, the exhaustion and fatigue are clear in her inability to claim her "self".

Both "Daddy" and "Medusa" then become a metaphor for Sylvia Plath's deeply troubled and disturbing childhood leading to her neurosis and eventual suicide. If "Daddy" was a release from her father's strong grip, "Medusa" was a rejection of her mother's dominance.

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" is in keeping with the childhood pain and angst of drifting apart. While the Yew tree finds the moon as it hides behind it, "I" as the poet persona, is drifted apart with no anchor for support.

Sylvia Plath puts it best in a radio on BBC:

Here is a poem spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. Her father died while she thought he was God. Her case is complicated by that fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyse each other – she has to act out the awful little allegory once over before she is free of it.

Death and Darkness:

Death and Darkness are some of the predominant themes of Sylvia Plath's poems. Much like Emily Dickenson, Sylvia Plath's poetry delves into the mind's deep recess. Mostly confessional, her work speaks of her depression and gloominess. She describes her struggle as a 'fig tree' in *The Bell Jar* with all its fruits rotting away. Death has been one of her morbid obsessions and fascinations which is reflected in most of her work. With the vocabulary of doom and nihilism, Plath weaves a despotic world where death becomes a release from its tyranny.

Sylvia Plath could never really recover from her father's early death, she was often torn between the girl who was driven and striving endlessly to achieve perfection on the one hand disconnected and isolated from the same society where she wants to be an overachiever on the other hand. The split selves of Plath were diagnosed by her general practitioner John Horder as "ill" and "out of her mind". Sylvia Plath notes down her dark moods in her diary as "Very depressed today, unable to write a thing. Menacing Gods. I feel outcast on a cold star, unable to feel anything but an awful helpless numbness" (3rd October 1959)

Plath evokes death not only in her poems but in her real life with two suicide attempts as s he maintains in her poems "I know the bottom, she says. I know it with my great tap root: It is what you fear". The easy familiarity with death creates an artistic longing of a 'transformed identity' and is nowhere accompanied by fear or mystery. In *Elm,* she describes death as

"I am terrified by this dark thing

That sleeps in me;

All day I feel its soft, feathery turnings, its malignity".

Death becomes soft and comforting for Sylvia Plath, and the poem ends with "That kill, that kill, that kill." (*Elm)*, which has been invariably interpreted by many critics as her 'death drive' to which she eventually succumbs.

Death also figures in her poetry as a repetitive performance, an act that requires skill and perfection. And being a perfectionist herself, Plath will rehearse till she masters her death "I am only thirty. And like the cat I have nine times to die." (Lady Lazarus) In the same poem, she continues,

Dying

Is an art, like everything else.

I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.

I do it so it feels real.

I guess you could say I've a call. (Lady Lazarus)

Death for Plath is a creative escape into self-discovery where she can find/lose herself. It's the therapy for the violent death of her soul that she experiences every day. Plath expresses her alienation from her body in the poem Tulip written shortly before her death.

I am nobody; i have nothing to do with explosions

I have given my name and the day clothes to the nurses

And my history to the anesthetist and body to the surgeons.

Her wilful resignation and quiet submission to "statis" and limbo is her desire to embrace death and leave the emptiness of her body. In "The Moon and the Yew Tree", death is symbolized through the image of the Yew Tree which remains in primordial "blackness and silence". The Yew Tree as a gigantic but muted image of her dead father is a haunting inescapable figure and Plath's morbid obsession with death. The setting of the poem is a graveyard of the church surrounded by a "row of headstones" erected on the dead. The church exists in ghostly figures of saints who are "cold" and "stiff" akin to a corpse. The image of the moon as indifferent, cold and distant is white and lifeless. Death is also evoked through womb-like darkness 'O-gape of complete despair' in the form of the strangulating presence of Sylvia Plath's mother in her life.

4.2.3 Setting of the Poem:

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" is a first person account. The poet uses "I" as an expression of self and hence like in many other poems, the thin line between the poet and persona is dissolved

making the poem a window into the poet's deep dark mind. The poet/speaker is in the church graveyard on the full moon night. The house is not far away yet the poet feels lost, abandoned and homeless. The predominant mood of the poem is ominous silence and the stillness of the night described through trees which are not green but shrouded in grief and appear 'black'.The only other colour that accompanies blackness is the 'cold' and 'planetary' blue which is also the light and hence opposite of blackness. Traversing between light and darkness, Sylvia Plath sketches the sight of Moon meeting the Yew Tree through the flashes of her traumatic memory. Hence the moon becomes her mother and the Yew Tree her father. The symbolic meeting of the mother and father is dark, foreboding, and gloomy and is a 'crime' that has trapped the poet "i live here" with utter despair. In the second stanza, the setting of the poem moves to the church which does not seem to provide any comfort or relief to her torn soul. "I have fallen a long way", the poet affirms her fall without any hope or salvation. The absence of emotional stability from the parents and home is replicated through the 'stiff', 'cold' holiness of the church. If the mother is the blank and the impenetrable white face of 'moon' then the saints are the unreachable, cold 'stars'. The huge and imposing Yew Tree stands with a bleak message of 'silence'. The conspicuous absence of Yew Tree even in its presence as a messenger of 'silence' is the reflection of the lingering and looming presence of Plath's father and its shadowy presence in her life long after his death.Thus metaphorically, the setting of the poem is the mind and memories of the poet through which she sketches the images of the Moon and the Yew Tree.

4.2.4 Symbols and Images:

"The Moon and the Yew Tree" follows the unique pattern of Sylvia Plath's myth-making much like W.B. Yeats. The world of Sylvia Plath is housed with objects and mundane things that are associated with her traumatic childhood and repressed feelings.

The Moon:

The Moon is one of the most recurring images in Plath's poem. In this poem, Moon questions the attributes of motherhood. The conventional Christian notions of motherhood as loving, warm, selfless, nurturing and kindness is all subverted to an inescapable, torturous and all-consuming possession of the 'self'.

Sylvia Plath's relationship with her mother Aurelia has been an important aspect of understanding her work. In her letters to her mother, one can see a cheerful and 'eager to please'

Sylvia trying her best to impress her mother while the entries in her journal and diaries reveal hatred and rejection of her mother

I may hate her, but that's not all. I . . . love her too. 'After all, as the story goes, she's my mother.' 'She can't encroach unless you're encroachable on.' So my hate and fear derive from my own insecurity. Which is? And how to combat it? (26 December 1958) WHAT DO I EXPECT BY 'LOVE' FROM HER? WHAT IS IT I DON'T GET THAT MAKES ME CRY? I think I have always felt she uses me as an extension of herself; that when I commit suicide, or try to, it is a 'shame' to her, an accusation: which it was, of course. (27 December 1958)

The Bell-Jar is also read as a novel of Plath's conflict with her mother. The character Esther Greenwood's anger and resentment against her mother is primarily because her obsession with perfection which she wanted to live vicariously through her daughter. Many critics have pointed out that Sylvia Plath's early suicide attempts were fueled by the pursuit of greatness and perfection steered by her mother. However as Adrienne Rich maintains in her book *Of Women Born* where she discusses the mother-daughter relationship, it is pointed out that Aurelia Plath's expectations from her daughter were part of the growing-up experiences of many women of that time.The poem describes the moon in the second stanza as 'no door', 'white as a knuckle' and 'terribly upset' indicating the impenetrable and formidable exterior without any warmth or love. In the third stanza, the moon is directly compared to her mother. 'The moon is my mother. She is not sweet like Mary'. Plath declares her longing for maternal affection and care by invoking the image of Mary 'bending' on her 'its mild eyes'. On the contrary, Aurelia 'drags the sea' like a 'dark crime' with her firm and inevitable grip, she wishes to escape and be liberated.

The moon appears in many of her other poems like in the "Elm" it echoes a similar image

The moon, also, is merciless: she would drag me Cruelly, being barren.

Her radiance scathes me. Or perhaps I have caught her.

In "The Munich Mannequins" and "The Rival", the moon symbolizes female anatomy and its mensuration cycle. Judith Kroll in *Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath,* reveals that moon has been one of the most recurring symbols in Plath's poetry and is used as a source of poetic inspiration. The moon goddess with her three phases of female existence is depicted in three colours white, red and black. The colours that predominate Sylvia's poetic expression.

The Yew Tree:

The Yew Tree in the poem symbolically refers to Otto Plath, Sylvia Plath's father who died due an infection in his legs that became gangrene owing to his diabetes and his persistent refusal to seek timely medical help. Born to German and Polish parents, Otto Emil Plath was a Professor at the University of Boston. Otto Plath married his student, Aurelia. His demanding and domineering presence in the house had a great impact on the young Sylvia who worked hard to be worthy in her father's eyes. It was not easy to impress Otto Plath with his superior intellect and Sylvia remained in the shadow to achieve greatness like him.

Otto Plath's early death left eight-year-old Sylvia lost and directionless and her poetry becomes a resurrection of her father. Her inability to accept her father's death led to various bouts of clinical depression and suicide attempts. The image of the death of his father prefigures in many ways. In "The Moon and the Yew tree it assumes the image of the "Yew Tree" that stand tall, still but has no message to give. The disturbing 'silence' and 'blackness' of the Yew Tree with its 'gothic shape' just after the 'row of headstones in the church graveyard is as if the Yew tree has grown on her father's grave like a ghost continues to haunt her.

Sylvia Plath's relationship with her father is noted in 'Electra on Azalea Path, written in March 1959 where she recounts her visit to her father's grave.

Biblical Images:

The poem is set in the church graveyard and hence the biblical images are used extensively throughout the poem. The first stanza begins by equating the I with God, 'as if i were God' but unlike God, the I/ poet/speaker is lost, hopeless and in utter despair. While 'the grass unfolds their grief' as the poet walks through the night, she sketches a universe without love, mercy and kindness hence without God. The absence of God in the first stanza is followed by 'dark crime' and 'despair' in the second stanza. The bells of the church are not the celebration of Christ's resurrection but 'startle' the sky. It appears as disturbing the primordial silence and darkness. The biblical allegories fail to dispel the darkness of the poem. The third stanza shows the 'face of the effigy' but the poet's mother is not like Mary. Instead of 'mild eyes' there are 'bats and owls' that can be seen in the moonlit night. As bats and owls accompany the Moon, there is an oblique reference to the diabolical portrayal of the devil.

The last stanza is the affirmation of the final 'fall'. 'I have fallen a long way is a reference to the fall from grace with no hope for salvation. The saints inside the church are also 'floating'.

‘Floating on their delicate feet over the cold pews, Their hands and faces stiff with holiness.

The distant statuesque stillness and coldness make the church and with all, it’s bearing a place devoid of any true meaning and thus incapable of providing any salvation. The poem despite its phase of the declared fallen state nowhere assumes a lament for the loss of salvation. The moon remains indifferent to it and the tree has nothing to say. The unresponsiveness of the moon and the stubborn stillness of the tree predominates biblical allusion as they are woven into Sylvia Plath’s universe.

4.2.5 Poetic Technique:

Sylvia Plath’s poetry is always considered as deeply personal and autobiographical as she observes In *London Magazine,* 1962, she states:

My poems do not turn out to be about Hiroshima, but about a child forming itself finger by finger in the dark. They are not about the terrors of mass extinction, but about the bleakness of the moon over a yew tree in a neighbouring graveyard. Not about the testaments of tortured Algerians, but about the night thoughts of a tired surgeon.”10

Writing for Sylvia Plath is like a religious act that keeps on evolving. Every poem is “relearning, “reforming” and “revolving of people”. However, despite being overtly personal, Plath uses the events of the day and the current affairs in her images to communicate her deeply felt personal distress. The political is made personal and that becomes her unique poetic technique. In one of her interviews, she maintains that personal pain needs to be correlated on a larger scale.

“I think that personal experience is very important, but certainly it shouldn’t be a kind of shut-box and mirror-looking, narcissistic experience. I believe it should be relevant to the larger things, the bigger things such as Hiroshima and Dachau and so on”

Sylvia Plath’s attention to the meticulous details of mundane things that often remain either unnoticeable or taken for granted acquires new layers of meanings and are often repeated so much that it becomes part of her myth-making world. Recording minute details of her life have been not just Sylvia Plath’s routine but also the process of her writing. Remembering and Recording thus become very crucial to creative output. Her journals and diary entries are thus very important in understanding her poetry.

Another striking feature is Plath’s use of the first person in all her work as not only suggestive of her autobiographical accounts but as she mentions in one of her journals as

“My one salvation is to enter into other characters in stories: the only three stories I am prepared to see published are all told in the first person. The thing is, to develop other first persons”.

Her poetry is not just about biographical incidents but the images like Moon, tree, quest, death, foetus, motherhood, war and myths that are reinterpreted circulate in her work creating an alternate universe for Plath. “The Moon and the Yew Tree” from her collection of *Ariel* poems is one of her more mature poems where Plath has perfected her technique and skill of creating a kaleidoscope of thoughts filtered through memory. The intersection of memories with present events creates a unique metaphor for comprehending the changing realities of our lives.

It is a 28-line poem with seven-line stanzas with no formal rhyming scheme. The poem is full of images; personal, Christian and pagan. Despite a linear progression, the poem revolves like a moon in circularity. The first and the last stanza show the circular nature of the poem. It starts with the ‘light of the mind’ and “cannot see where there is to get to” in the first stanza while the last stanza ends with “Blackness and Silence” affirming that there is nowhere to go. The second and third focus on mother and father respectively. The moon moves from being “it” to “she” in its fluidity and different phases of femininity while the Yew Tree stand upright as a phallic symbol of egotism and “find the moon”. Thus poem structure in terms of the images and symbols is organized despite uncontrolled and fleeting thoughts that inhabit Sylvia Plath’s world. The Masculine and the Feminine fail to be productive just like the ‘cold pews’, “effigy” and “stiff” saints of the church.

The poem is replete with metaphors like “The moon is no door” indicating her mother’s unresponsive nature. “I have fallen a long way” suggesting the poet’s fall from grace and despair invoking biblical salvation by its absence. “Their hands and faces stiff with holiness” making holiness a physical condition of stiffness which is devoid of any spiritual guidance. The poem also uses many similes like “as if i were God” where the bending grass on the poet’s foot is imagined as outpouring their grief. “white as knuckle” shows fear and terror of the moon that “drags the sea” “like a crime”. Here the lunar tidal effect is reimagined as a burden and crime, again things that are associated with darkness like the “bats and the owls”.

The use of alliteration like “hands and faces stiff with holiness”, “the moon is my mother” and “Sunday, the bells startle the sky” adds the musical rhythm to the poem. Assonance is also used to organize a distinct sound pattern like”eight great”, “blue pews” and “light of the mind”

The stanzas are deliberately closed and not flowing into each other to convey the feeling of entrapment and inability to escape which is also reinforced by the frequent use of small sentences like “The light is blue”, “The moon is no door”, “ I live here” and “She is bald and wild”. The poems also maintain the uniformity of colour. Although the light is blue yet it can only see the blackness. The blue moon is shrouded by the tall and imposing black tree.

4.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the nature and characteristics of confessional poetry.
- develop a deep insight into the life and important incidents of Sylvia Plath’s life through her Journals and Diary entries to comprehend her poetry.
- appreciate the unique poetic technique and the skilful use of images and symbols used in Sylvia Plath’s poetry.
- critically examine and compare “The Moon and the Yew Tree” with the other poems in *Ariel* and *The Colossus* .

4.4 Glossary

Confessional Poetry: It is used to refer to poets who use intense psychological experiences and childhood memories openly discuss mental illness and breakdown. It was first used by the critic M.L.Rosental in his review of Robert Lowell’s *Life Studies*

Gothic: It refers to mystery and horror. It is manifested in literature and architecture:

Headstones: refers to the stones that are used to mark the grave in the church graveyard.

Moon: Moon is a recurring image in Sylvia Plath’s poetry. It represents femininity. In the poem, it is used to describe her mother Aurelia with whom Sylvia shared a complex and burdensome relationship.

O -gape: It refers to the open space and emptiness. This term is invented by Sylvia Plath and is also used to describe the round and unresponsive moon.

Planetary: It refers to anything related to planets.

Spiritous: It is archaic English, it is to related to alcohol and spirit, it refers to pure, distilled.

Yew Tree: Yew Tree in the poem is representative of the looming and lingering presence of her father whose untimely death left a void in her life.

4.5 Sample Questions

4.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. When did Sylvia Plath receive the Pulitzer Prize?

(a) 1955

(b) 1965

(c) 1982

(d) 1963

2. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" is part of _____.

(a) *The Colossus*

(b) *The Bell Jar*

(c) *Ariel*

(d) *The Birthday Letters*

3. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" is about _____.

(a) World war

(b) Lack of maternal bond

(c) Memories of childhood

(d) Dreams

4. The moon stands for _____.

(a) Aurelia Plath

(b) Sylvia Plath

(c) Otto Plath

(d) Death

5. The predominant theme of the poem is _____.

(a) Hope after despair

(b) Death and darkness

(c) Unity

(d) Redemption and salvation

6. The immobility of the yew tree is symbolic of _____.

(a) The nature of the tree

(b) Fixity of life

(c) Death of Sylvia Plath's father

(d) Silence

7. Which of the following is not used to describe the moon?

(a) Planetary

(b) White as knuckle

(c) Bald and wild

(d) Upset

8. What are the biblical images in the poem?

(a) Pews

(b) Dark crime

(c) Blue garments

(d) Both a and c

9. What is the message of the Yew Tree?

(a) Hope and faith

(b) Terror and agony

(c) Peace

(d) Silence and darkness

10. O-gape refers to _____.

(a) The shape of the moon like an open mouth

(b) Darkness of the sea

(c) Emptiness

(d) Universe

4.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. What is the setting and tone of the poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree" by Sylvia Plath?
2. What are the dominant colours that are used to convey the mood of the poem and why?
3. Why is the Yew tree gothic in shape?
4. Write a short note on the symbol of Yew tree in the poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree".

5. How is the moon described in the poem?

4.2.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Discuss the important themes of the poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree" by Sylvia Plath.
2. Sylvia Plath is a confessional poet. Critically comment by analyzing the poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree".
3. Explain the images and symbols used in the poem "The Moon and the Yew Tree" and what they signify and represent.

4.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Bassnett, Susan. *Sylvia Plath: An Introduction to the Poetry*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
2. Bronfen, Elizabeth, *Sylvia Plath* (Plymouth, Northcote House, 1998).
3. Gill, Jo. *The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2008.
4. Wagner-Martin, Linda. *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Unit-5: Introduction to Latin American Writing

Structure

5.0 Introduction
5.1 Objectives
5.2 Introduction to Latin American Writing
- **5.2.1** Latin America
- **5.2.2** Romance languages and their Connection with Latin-America
- **5.2.3** Pre-Colombian Period
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- **5.2.5** Sixteenth Century Literature
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- **5.2.11** Twentieth Century Literature and Avant-garde (Vanguardia) Movement
- **5.2.12** The Boom Novels

5.3 Learning Outcomes
5.4 Glossary
5.5 Sample Questions
5.6 Suggested Learning Resources

5.0 Introduction

Latin American literature has a rich history starting with the Pre-Colombian period and working all the way up to the modern day. With each period of Latin American history, came a genre that dominated the literary field. In this lesson, we will look at the main periods of Latin American literature, the genres that fueled those periods, and the significant authors of this literature. Before moving further, it is significant to understand what constitutes Latin America and how the authors of varied cultures come under this category of Latin American literature.

5.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- introduce you to Latin American literature and remove your doubts or misconceptions if any
- give you a glance of Latin American history along with literary history and movements

5.2 Introduction to Latin American Writing

5.2.1 Latin America:

Latin America geographically consists of the southern region of America along with Mexico, Central America, and the Islands of the Caribbean. It is the Romance languages that bind the people of these regions together.

5.2.2 Romance Languages and their Connection with Latin America:

The connection dates back to the Roman Empire. People of the Empire used to speak and write in two different versions of Latin. It is not something novel for us to understand that when it comes to the developed forms of languages there are almost always two versions of the same language. One version of it is used in everyday life by commoners in carrying out their routine activities while the other version is used by the literates to produce literature. Nevertheless, the simplified version of Latin that they used in their day-to-day communication is known as Vulgar Latin. 'Vulgar' here does not denote the meaning of the English word rather it is the adjectival form of the Latin word that means 'crowd'. In other words, the term Vulgar Latin denotes the language of the crowd or common people.

Romance languages originated from vulgar Latin which is the spoken form of Latin. It is the soldiers of the Roman Empire whose interaction with other native language users or invaders gave birth to Romance languages. There are twenty different cultural countries that fall under Latin America. For instance, Spain, Portugal, France, etc. It was not from the beginning the region was identified as Latin America. It happened only after it freed itself from Spanish and Portuguese rule. Spain dominated the region for more than three centuries.

"Latin America" is a name that appeared after independence, and its referent is spatial, cultural, and linguistically historical, alluding to the common origin of the Romance vernaculars, the language of imperial Rome. Anticipated by Ranke, Hegel, and Tocqueville, the concept "Latin America" was formulated by a young French intellectual, Michel Chevalier, and the explicit term was coined by South Americans living abroad in exile." (*Introduction to Latin American Literature*, 2-3)

Jose Maria Torres Caicedo once in 1875 said that exiled members of the Spanish American community including himself called Spanish- speaking America Latin America. The purpose was to acknowledge the presence of the varied cultural communities, not just the Spanish language and cultural heritage. (Introduction to Latin American Literature, 3-4)

When it comes to the beginning of its literature then the credit goes to the "Courtly humanist scholars, tonsured friars, conquistador captains, ordinary foot soldiers, colonial functionaries from Spain, indigenous Americans for whom Spanish was not the first language, learned nuns, exiled Jesuits, and erudite promoters of political and cultural independence created this heterogeneous literary tradition." (*Introduction to Latin American Literature,* 3-4)

However, the history of Latin American literature is very huge and rich. It dates back to the Pre-Colombian times. Further, like in any other literature of the world in Latin American literature too, different genres came into the limelight and dominated in different literary periods.

5.2.3 Pre-Colombian Period:

Christopher Columbus's ships crossed the horizon on 12th October 1492 and found the New land. The people of this land had their own expressive and artistic verbal expressions in the form of prayers, hymns, and myths. But they did not discover the writing form yet. Thus, their literature was only in oral form and preserved by the community members more specifically by the bards as they are one of the traditional bearers of oral literature of communities. However, the oral literature was preserved later on by the friars, nuns, priests, chroniclers, and native historians who also made an effort to save it who were men of letters. Later on gradually the themes and topics and so on of this oral literature interested the writers as well and they began to incorporate it in their writings as well.

Before Christopher Columbus discovered this New Land. People of this land, Mesoamerican civilization like Olmec, Aztec, etc, had their own oral tradition. The dominant themes of their oral literature were agriculture, religion, mythology, history, and so on and so forth.

Though the literature of this civilization was mostly oral in nature, some of the communities like Aztecs and Mayans had codices wherein they recorded their socio-cultural life.

5.2.4 Colonial Period:

This period is significant for two things (1) the Spanish colonized the region and (2) it was the beginning of Latin America's written tradition. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish reached the lands and began to colonize the regions. The period of colonization is significant because it was during this period their written literature began. It consists of European explorers' personal experiences of the land, recordings of priests, and documents by natives who preserved in writing the changes the land has seen after it was colonized. However, gradually, the literature began to form.

Like in any other work of literature in the world, Latin American literature's journey too began with poetry. Initially, it was poetry that followed the rhyme schemes, meters, themes, and so on of the Italian Renaissance began to appear. It was basically written in the regions like the capitals of the viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru. These places of America were the centers where European culture thrived. During this time, the viceroyalty of New Spain existed in the regions like Mexico, some parts of the southwestern United States, and Central America. It also existed in Peru. These places were similar or equivalent to European royal courts, all the literary, cultural, and theatre gatherings and recitations used to take place here.

The arrival of the printing press in the 15th century made the Spanish empire dependent on it. In everyday life specifically in court's daily activities. It became very significant as they began to rely on written records more specifically in matters of law and religion. Further, the need to create an educated elite who can imitate the western culture to ease the matters of the empire various universities and colleges were established. For instance, in 1536 a college was established in Mexico, during the same time, in 1538, a university was also established in Hispaniola, and in 1551 in Lima and in Mexico.

During this period, in Mexico the poets like Sevillian Gutierre de Cetina and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the Spanish-born poet along with them there was Mateo Alemán, the novel/prose writer, also lived in Mexico. They were already recognized for their art in Spain. The first Mexican poet was Francisco de Terrazas who composed the Petrarchan style of sonnets.

5.2.5 Sixteenth Century Literature:

The first Mexican-born poet to attain renown was Francisco de Terrazas, who composed fine sonnets in the Petrarchan style, probably during the last half of the **16th century**. Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga is one of the significant poets of Spanish and Latin American literature. His *La Araucana* (The Araucaniad) is an epic poem of Renaissance style. Similarly, an epic poem of the same tradition is *Espejo de Paciencia* (Model of Patience) by Canarian Silvestre de Balboa y Troya de Quesada, a Caribbean poet.

The significant writings of this period, the 16th century, is about the discovery of new lands and conquest of them. It is specifically the writings of Columbus, letters, reports, legal documents, and so on and so forth that constitute a major source of this literature. The earliest account of it was written by Peter Martyr d' Anghiera entitled *De Orbe Novo decades* (*De Orbe Novo: The Eight Decades of Peter Martyr d'Anghiera*). Another significant work *Cartas de relación* (*Letters from Mexico*) is by Hernan Cortes. In this work, he talks about the fall of the Aztec empire at the hands of Spaniards. Later, one of his soldiers, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, also wrote a detailed account of it in The *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (*The True History of the Conquest of Mexico*)

Bartolome de Las Casas, a Spaniard, was dismayed seeing the treatment of the natives at the hands of Spaniards. He penned *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*). Later in 1526, his work *Historia de las Indias* (selections appear in *History of the Indies*), a detailed account of the conquest of the New Lands. This work was published posthumously but during his life, he published a summary of it. He was hoping to bring a positive change in the conditions of the natives and it turned out to be fruitful. According to his expectation, it did have a great impact as it resulted in the issuance of New Laws.

5.2.6 Seventeenth Century Literature:

By the 17thcentury, the whole of America had been discovered and conquered. The literature of this period is all about these stories. The Spanish crown appointed historians to cover this entire picture. Some of the writers of this period are Las Casas, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas etc. These writers continued the work of Peter Martyr. The most significant writers of this time were Garcilaso de la Vega and El Inca. His father was a Spanish conquistador and his mother was an Inca woman. He shares a combined heritage of Peru and Spain. He spent his early life in Peru and his adult life in Spain. He was truly the first Latin American

writer. Some of his significant contributions are *Los comentarios reales de los Incas* (*Royal Commentaries of the Incas*), and its second part was *Historia general del Perú* (*General History of Peru*). This work is about the Inca Empire and various aspects of its culture. This is considered an authentic account of the Spanish conquest and the civil war as it uses oral and written narratives of the community members. More importantly, all the histories that were written before were by men who did not know the language of the community.

5.2.7 Baroque de Indies Movement:

During this time a native literary movement began specifically in the viceroyalties of Peru and Mexico. It was a distinct style of the Baroque art form. It has come to be known as the Barroco de Indians or Baroque of the Indies. The initial reflection of it was seen in the works of Luis de Gongora y Argote who later came to be known as the great Spanish poet of Baroque poetry. He brought watershed changes in the poetic language. His poem was filled with mythological allusions, metaphors, and complex language. Among the poets, he is the most admired and imitated poet. Soon he began to attract the attention of the viceroyalties.

Poetry is majorly known for its satire. Gongora was highly critical of his fellow writers. The form of poetry grew majorly also because of the viceroyalties who gave scope for the poets to employ satire in their works. Like Balbuena's *Grandeza mexicana* (1604) praised Mexico City, Mateo Rosas de Oquendo's *Sátira hecha por Mateo Rosas de Oquendo a las cosas que pasan en el Pirú año de 1598* (1598; "Satire Written by Mateo Rosas de Oquendo About Things Happening in Peru in the Year 1598") satirized Peru.

Juan del Valle y Caviedes, a Spanish-born, was the best satirical poet of the Barroco de Indias movement. His works predominantly focus on the human body. One of his significant works includes *Diente del Parnaso* ("The Tooth of Parnassus"), a collection of 47 poems.

Another significant poet of this time was Hernando Domínguez Camargo, a Jesuit born in Bogota. He wrote *Poema heroico de San Ignacio de Loyola* (Heroic Poem in Praise of St. Ignatius Loyola") but he is mostly remembered for A un salto por donde se despeña el arroyo de Chillo" ("To a Waterfall Where the Chillo Brook Crashes"), a short ballad.

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was a great poet of the Spanish language. She took the movement to its great heights. Her life was very dramatic. Nevertheless, she rose to fame and died while taking care of the victims of the epidemic. Nevertheless, she was a versatile writer. Some of her important works are: *Primero sueño* (1692; "First Dream," Eng. trans. *Sor Juana's Dream*), "The

Respuesta a Sor Filotea" (written 1691; "Answer to Sor Filotea," included in *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Poems,* 1985)

In the eighteenth century when the Spanish colonization ended, Latin American literature trod on the path of progress and saw its first novel. The novel was *El Periquillo Sarniento* by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi published in 1816. Similarly, many other writers began to explore this new genre and wrote on the themes of independence from Spanish and Portuguese. Further, during this period many essays and poems were also produced.

5.2.8 Nineteenth Century Literature:

During the 19th century, Latin American literature was under the sway of Romanticism. During this period one will observe that some of the writers were though under the influence of Neoclassical poetic forms but still produced literature that was Romantic in spirit. For example the poets like Jose Maria de Heredia and Andres Bello.

There were writers whose works were fully charged with Romantic spirit like Esteban Echeverria. He was from Argentine. Though he was a prolific writer he is primarily known for his poem "La Cautiva" (The Captive) and the short story "El matadero" (The Slaughterhouse). The most significant writer of the Romantic period of Argentine and Latin-American literature is Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. His great contribution is the *Civilizacion y barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (*Life in the Argentine Republic in the Age of the Tyrants*).

The themes of Romanticism were seen in the epic poems like *Tabaré* (*Tabare: An Indian Legend of Uruguay*) by Juan Zorrilla de San Martin, Jose Hernandez in the gaucho epic *Martin Fierro* (*Martin Fierro: An Epic of the Argentine,* also translated as *The Gaucho Martin Fierro*), the comical *Fausto* (*Faust*) by Estanislao del Campo and so on. In the genre of novel specifically in Cuban literature, the Movement was seen reflecting anti-slavery novels like *Sab* (*Sab: An Autobiography*) by Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda who was a lyric poet. *Francisco* (1839) byAnselmo Suarez y Romero, Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdes* (*Cecilia Valdes; or, Angel's Hill: A Novel of Cuban Customs*) Jorge Isaacs's *Maria* (*Maria: A South American Romance*), and *Amalia* (*Amalia: A Romance of the Argentine*), by Jose Marmol.

Essays:

During this time a new genre came into the light, that is, Essays. These essays were high in Romantic spirit simultaneously reflecting the touch of Realism. They were called the *cuadro de*

costumbres, or "sketch of local customs". Ricardo Palma wrote the Peruvian version of these essays and called them tradiciones (Tradiciones Peruanas).

5.2.9 Modernismo Movement:

In the early 19th century Latin American literature was dominated by Romanticism and in the middle of the century, it was swept away by the Modernismo movement. Further, during this time the writers were also resisting colonialism. There was also a change in the production of writing in terms of gender. During this time a large number of females began to write. The male writers were resisting colonialism whereas women writers were busy resisting patriarchy like Clorinda Matto de Turner, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Gabriela Mistral, and Juana Manuela Gorriti.

The Modernismo movement began in the middle of the 19th century and was also there in the 20th century. It was majorly a movement in poetry. The movement began with Ruben Dario's Azul, published in 1888. However, it was the Cuban poet Jose Marti who is considered the Father of the Modernismo movement. He was sent into exile many times.

He was one of the great Spanish poets. His poem Azul was significant in Latin American and Spanish literature. Dario was greatly influenced by the French Symbolist movement and took Rimbaud's words seriously when he said that "one must be absolutely modern". Under this influence, he chose to name the movement "Modernism" which means writing poetry of aesthetics and beauty by discarding the sentimentality and Rhetoric of Romanticism. Dario wanted to create a musical language in his works, so he experimented with verse, meter, rhythm, and stanzas. He explored various themes like eroticism, decadence, and with oriental subjects. The title of his works was daring and misleading like *Prosas profanas* ("Lay Prose," Eng. trans. in *Prosas Profanas and Other Poems*). His other works include *Cantos de vida y esperanza* ("Songs of Life and Hope") and "Oda a Roosevelt" a significant poem.

Other significant writers of this movement are: Jose Marti and Julián del Casal from Cuba, Jose Asuncion Silva, the Colambian, Manuel Gutierrez, and Nájera and Amado Nervo, the Mexicans.

Unfortunately, all these great poets died young and this led to the closure of the movement. However, Jose Marti was not a great poet of Dario's stature but he was a great journalist and orator. Nevertheless, his active political activities like the organization of the Cuban war of Independence and his death during the war have brought him to the stature of Dario.

His other writings include sketches of American life, articles for periodicals, edited his own newspaper called *Patria.* His works like *Versos sencillos* ("Simple Verses") and *Versos libres* ("Free Verses") were published posthumously. He also wrote an essay expressing his favor for Latin American culture and independence.

5.2.10 Twentieth Century Literature and Avant-garde (Vanguardia) Movement:

However, Modernismo did not give much scope for the poets to explore and experiment with new techniques or methods. It remained within the folds of traditional norms. Thus, soon the poets too began to look for innovative themes and techniques. During this time emerged the **avant-garde (Vanguardia) movement**. This was a huge movement that left a great impact not only on literature but also on other art forms like painting.

Among all the genres of literature, it was poetry that was quick to accept this change. Luckily, 20th century had also seen poets of excellent caliber like Gabriela Mistral, Vicente Huidobro, Nicanor Parra, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, Nicolás Guillén and José Lezama Lima; Puerto Rican Luis Palés Matos; Jorge Luis Borges and Oliverio Girondo; and Nicaraguan Ernesto Cardenal. Some of them also received Noble Prize as well. The most significant poets of this movement were Neruda Paz, Borges, and Lima.

The vanguard movement was first seen in poetry but it was seen later in the novel. The genre of the novel, however, needed to be renewed as per the 19th-century Realist form to be modern. The first modern novels were based on or about the Mexican Revolution, which took place from 1910-1920. These novels had tightly woven structures and plots, devoid of emotions or harshness, filled with cruelty, and full of action. One of the best novels of this period was *Los de abajo* (1915; *The Underdogs*), by Mariano Azuela. This went on for a good part of the 20th century. However, in other Latin American literature there appeared a new genre of a novel called *novelas de la tierra,* or *novela criollista*. They are called regional or local novels because of their regional context. For instance: *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926; *Don Segundo Sombra*) by the Argentine Ricardo Güiraldes, *Doña B`árbara* (1929; *Doña Bárbara*) by the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos, and *La vorágine* (1924; *The Vortex*) by the Colombian José Eustasio Rivera.

Similar to this, novels in Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay were based on rebellious issues or themes. The pioneer of it was Jorge Luis Borges. His version of Latin American reality was influenced by the Western tradition, one that does not come from reality but it is bookish. His first short story collection was *Historia universal de la infamia* (*A Universal History of Infamy*). Some

of his classic stories like "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "La muerte y la brújula" ("Death and the Compass"), and "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*" ("Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quijote*") published in the collection called *Ficciones* (1944; English trans. *Ficciones*).

However, the trend of the regional novels seems to have ended by 1944, and Avant-garde forms of narratives were seen to be drawn from Indian and African cultures. The primary purpose of this form of art form or the movement was to incorporate African and indigenous art forms into Latin American literature. The best example of it can be found in paintings wherein this incorporation led to the Mexican mural paintings. On the other hand in literature, the idea was to retell the stories in Spanish or make them part of a larger narrative.

Example of such narrative forms are: The Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias published in Paris his *Leyendas de Guatemala* ("Legends of Guatemala"), The Cuban Lydia Cabrera's *Cuentos negros de Cuba* ("African Stories from Cuba"). The Ecuadorean Jorge Icaza's *Huasipungo* (1934; *Huasipungo: The Villagers*).

The regional and Avant-garde movement was merged very successfully into the two novels that gave birth to the new forms of the genre of fiction, that is, magic realism. They are: Asturias's *El señor presidente* (1946; *The President*) and Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949; *The Kingdom of This World*). Carpentier published some more influential works like *Guerra del tiempo* (*War of Time*). Another significant writer was Juan Rulfo, Mexican. Some of his significant works are *El llano en llamas* ("The Plain in Flames," Eng. trans. in *The Burning Plain and Other Stories*) and *Pedro Páramo* (Eng. trans. *Pedro Páramo*), a novel.

The next half of the century was dominated by the poets like Pablo Neruda (Chile) and Octavio Paz (Mexico) and the novelists Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala) and Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia) and who also received the Noble Prize. Other writers were also recognized internationally like Cuba's Alejo Carpentier, Joao Guimaraes Rosa (Brazil), and most importantly Argentine Jorge Luis Borges, Juan Rulfo (Mexico) became the modern classic.

5.2.11 The Boom Novels:

The meaning of the word 'Boom' is significant for us to understand the Movement of Boom in Latin American literature. The moment one hears the word 'boom' it reminds us of a loud sound which is in fact one of the meanings of the word. Apart from this, there are other meanings of this word 'boom' as given in the Mariam Webster dictionary, like "to increase in importance, popularity, or esteem (b): to experience a sudden rapid growth and expansion usually with an

increase in prices…(c): to develop rapidly in population and importance (d): to increase greatly in size or number…" The meaning we are concerned about here is of increase in popularity and number.

During the second half of the twentieth century, there was a sudden increase in novels as well as in popularity. This increase in the number and popularity of the novels led to the increase in the popularity of the authors of Latin America. Significant authors of this movement are: Julio Cortázar, from Argentina, García Márquez from Colombia, Carlos Fuentes from Mexico, Juan Carlos Onetti from Uruguayan, Mario Vargas Llosa from the Peruvian, José Lezama Lima and Guillermo Cabrera Infante from Cuba, and finally Jose Donoso from Chile.

It is difficult to generalize and bring all the novels under one category. However, the novels written under this movement shared these features like they adopted the style and techniques of American or modern European novels. They were inspired by the writers like Ernest Hemmingway, Franz Kafka, William Faulkner, James Joyce, Jhon Dos Passos, Marcel Proust, and the like.

They employed the technique of Stream of consciousness technique with fragmented plots and multiple or unreliable narrators. Further, their stories were interwoven, with many other modern techniques along with the influence of cinema. This gave a new life to their writings.

5.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the concept of Latin America.
- learn about the brief history and origin of Latin America.
- recognise its connection with Romance languages.
- gain knowledge of major literary movements in Latin American literature.
- become familiar with important authors and their works.

5.4 Glossary

Magic realism: Magical realism is one of the literary genres specifically fiction. In a work of fiction that is based in the real world but within it fantastical elements are normal. For example, some of the pioneers of this genre are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Toni Morrison, and Aimee Bender.
Oral literature: Oral literature is the literature that is sung or performed. There are various genres of oral literature like myth, legend, songs, rituals, and so on and so forth.
Chronicle: Chronicle is a written record or account of any significant event.
Avant-garde: Avant-garde is basically a movement in art, culture, and politics. In general anyone or any piece of work that is unorthodox or radical or experimental in nature is considered avant-garde.
Regional: anything that has specific characteristics of a region or area

5.5 Sample Questions

5.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Which of the following is a Romance language?

    (a) French

    (b) Urdu

    (c) Tamil

    (d) Gurmukhi

2. The root of Romance languages is _____.

    (a) Vulgar

    (b) Vulgar Latin

    (c) Latin

    (d) Latin America

3. The pioneer writer of Magic Realism is _____.

    (a) Sylvia Plath

    (b) Hanief Kureshi

    (c) Gabriel Garcio Marquez

    (d) Sadat Hasan Manto

4. When did Columbus discover America?

(a) 15th August 1942

(b) 12th October 1947

(c) 12th January 1942

(d) 12th October 1492

5. Latin America geographically consists of _____.

(a) The southern region of America along with Mexico, Central America, and the Islands of the Caribbean.

(b) Mexico and Central America

(c) Central America and the Caribean

(d) The Southern region of America only

6. Legends of Guatemala is written by _____.

(a) Miguel Ángel Asturias

(b) Lydia Cabrera

(c) Jorge Icaza

(d) Sherlock Holmes

7. The vanguard movement was first seen in _____.

(a) Novel

(b) Poetry

(c) Drama

(d) Cinema

(d) Essay

8. An anti-slavery novel written by Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda is _____.

(a) Untouchable

(b) *Sab* (*Sab: An Autobiography*)

(c) Jhootan

(d) Roots

9. Who is the most significant writer of the Romantic period of Argentine and Latin-American literature?

(a) Robert Frost

(b) Wordsworth

(c) Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

(d) S.T. Coleridge

10. Ricardo Eliecer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto whose adopted pseudonym was Neruda became a significant international poet through _____.

(a) *Residencia en la tierra*

(b) *España en el corazon*

(c) *Tercera residencia*

(d) Las Furias y las penas

5.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. When did the Spanish Civil War take place?
2. Name the poets of the Avant-Garde movement.
3. Name the two poets of the Modernismo Movement.
4. What are the 16th-century writings?
5. When did Columbus discover the New Lands?

5.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Define Romance language and its relation with Latin American literature.
2. What is Romanticism? Explain its effects on Latin American literature.
3. Define any two movements of Latin American literature except Romanticism, and name the authors and their works.

5.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Gonzalez, Anibal. Journalism and the Development of Spanish American Narrative (1993).
2. Gonzalez Echevarria, Roberto. Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative (1990, reissued 1998).
3. Login Jrade, Cathy. Modernismo, Modernity, and the Development of Spanish AmericanLiterature (1998).
4. Luis, William. Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative (1990).
5. Sommer, Doris. Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America (1991, reprinted 1993).

Unit-6: Life and works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Structure

6.0 Introduction
6.1 Objectives
6.2 Life and Works of Gabriel García Márquez
- **6.2.1** Gabriel García Márquez: A Brief Life Sketch
- **6.2.2** Notable Works and Awards
- **6.2.3** Writing Style of Gabriel García Márquez
- **6.2.4** Themes in Gabriel García Márquez's Works
- **6.2.5** Gabriel García Márquez as Journalist
- **6.2.6** Conclusion

6.3 Learning Outcomes
6.4 Glossary
6.5 Sample Questions
6.6 Suggested Learning Resources

6.0 Introduction

Gabriel García Márquez was a great Columbian novelist, short story writer, journalist, and screenwriter. He is one of the well-known writers of Spanish language awarded with numerous awards including Neustadt International Prize for Literature and the Nobel Prize in Literature. He gave a new height to the literary style termed as 'magic realism' and mostly dealt with the theme of solitude. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* attained appreciation from all corner of the globe. It is a masterpiece that narrated the life cycle of a family that lived in Macondo, his mythical town. In addition to magic realism the themes of solitude, incest, elitism, and fluidity of time are worth mentioning. The story revolves around the conflict between need for love and desire for solitude and enriched with imaginative prose. Originally, it was written in Spanish in 1967 and was translated into English in 1970. It was his masterpiece which had stirred the literary world. It was followed by others literary success by him which ultimately nominated him for Nobel Prize in 1982. This piece became a classic in literary horizon and turned him as one of the most influential literary figures of 20th century.

He was the greatest Columbian writer who ever lived. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) influenced many other writers to follow the same line as that of magic realism. He was politically active besides being a writer and journalist though he never joined the party of his choice. He spent most of his active life in exile because he was strongly against the violence that was going on in Columbia. He was a social activist all through his life. He had a personal links and ties with the communist party of Columbia though he never joined it as a member. He was not even being awarded with tourist visa because of his leftist affiliation. Political activists in his own native land criticized him for not partaking actively in communist party and its activities. However, his first trip to USA took place due to the invitation that was given to him by Bill Clinton, the president of America, to Martha's Vineyard.

He published *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* in 1981 which was the narration of a horrifying murder of his childhood friend. In 1986, a romantic narrative titled *Love in the Time of Cholera* was published by him. It was about two lovers who met but were unable to connect for 50 years. In 1999, he was diagnosed with lymphoma but he continued his writing journey until 2004. It was the year when *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* came out which was banned in Iran. After that he was slowly sinking towards dementia and later on died on 17th of April 2014 in Mexican city. In addition to his literary and journalist contribution, he had also set up International Film School near Havana, and a school of journalism on the Caribbean coast.

His literary skills and universal appeal in general and the popularity of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in particular established his literary stature as a literary giant of 20th century. He was awarded with world most prestigious award Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. Though the backdrop of his fiction is Latin American landscapes yet his appeal and message were universal. He was acknowledged by Swedish Academy of Letter in Nobel Prize awarding ceremony as "Each new work of his is received by expectant critics and readers as an event of world importance."

Check your progress:

1. Where was Gabriel García Márquez born?

   _____

2. Which year did he receive Nobel Prize for Literature?

   _____

6.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Unit are to:

- know the biography of the writer, Gabriel García Márquez in brief.
- realize the socio-political scenario of his time.
- understand the literary style of the author and his contribution in Spanish literature.
- appreciate the author's understanding and contribution in the field of journalism.
- know the influence of Gabriel García Márquez on his contemporary writers and successors.

6.2 Life and Works of Gabriel García Márquez

6.2.1 Gabriel Garcia Marquez: A Brief Life Sketch:

Gabriel José de la Concordia García Marquez known as Gabo affectionately by Latin Americans was born on 6th of March 1927 in Aracataca, Colombia. He was the eldest son of his parents. When he was 8 years old, he was left with grandparents to be brought up. His grandfather was a liberal activist while his grandmother was attracted towards magic, supernatural world, and exaggeration. She was the one who filled the ideas of magic, ghosts, folk tales and superstition into the head of her grandson which later turned into his attachment with magic realism as a novelist. He himself believed that he had been a writer since his youth. Hence, all the elements of his childhood and youth had contributed in shaping his elements of fiction. He studied at Jesuit College and later studied law at Bogota University.

Though he studied law but he was of the view that law has nothing to do with justice. In the meanwhile, due to the civil war that broke up he had to discontinue his studied and joined the profession as a journalist. In between 1950 to 1955 he wrote column with the name "The Giraffe" for *El Heraldo*. His initial tone of writing was replete with irony and humour that later on set the tone of his fictional writing. Due to civil war he had not only to discontinue his study but had also to shift to Barranquilla. Here he had association with newsmen and journalists. He also joined journalistic tutorial over there which polished his skills and abilities as a journalist. Till 1954 he worked there as a columnist then moved back to Bogota as a film critic and news reporter in *El Espectador* which was a Columbian newspaper.

As he was brought up by his grandparents, the influence of his grandmother stories was far reaching in shaping the persona of his fictional depiction and style. The folk tales and exaggerated tales of his grandmother played an important role for the development of his magic realistic notion as a novelist and short story writer. He himself admitted the influence of these factors as contributor towards his literary nourishment as "the most decisive literary influence for me. After the death of my grandfather [when García Márquez was eight years old], nothing really happened to me anymore." When a reporter once asked him where he got his rich, yet pungent style, he replied: "It's the style of my grandmother." The influence of his grandfather was also eminent in his novels and short stories. The reference towards the real village Aracataca and Macondo is also highly autobiographical in his writing.

In 1959, García Márquez got married to Mercedes Barcha, his childhood girlfriend and he had two kids. Rodrigo, his first kid, was born in 1959 and currently is a well-known US TV and film director. Gonzalo was born to him in 1962 and is a graphic designer now. His most celebrated and illustrious work *One Hundred Years of Solitude* got published in 1967. The first edition of the book in Spanish sold out in a single week and in the next 30 years more than 25 million copies of the book had been sold. It had been translated into as many as 30 languages of the world. It was so influential that Robert Keily in 1970 in a review published in The New York Times talked about it as "so filled with humor, rich detail and startling distortion that it brings to mind the best of [William] Faulkner and Günter Grass."

Check your progress:

1. Who has written One Hundred Years of Solitude?

   _____

2. Which year One Hundred Years of Solitude was published?

   _____

6.2.2 Notable Works and Awards:

His first collection of short stories titled *Eyes of a Blue Dog* published in a liberal magazine named *Espectador*. The initial success was diminished due to the incident that suddenly took place. The president of Columbia Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated. He left everything during civil war and became a journalist as an Investigating reporter. In 1954, he published a story about a sailor who just managed to survive in a shipwreck of Columbian Navy. This news later turned into a scandal and Márquez was exiled to Europe where he continued his journey as a journalist and

magazine writer. In addition, he also continued to write short stories. In 1955, he published his first novel titled *Leaf Storm*. It was written much earlier but he could not find publisher before.

His notable works included novels such as *Edit in Evil Hour* (1962), *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975), *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), *The General in His Labyrinth* (1989), *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994); Novellas such as *Edit Leaf Storm* (1955), *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981), *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004); Short story collections titled *Edit Eyes of a Blue Dog* (1947), *Big Mama's Funeral* (1962), *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972), *Collected Stories* (1984), *Strange Pilgrims* (1993), *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (1968) and non-fiction included *Edit the Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* (1970), *The Solitude of Latin America* (1982), *The Fragrance of Guava* (1982), *Clandestine in Chile* (1986), *Changing the History of Africa: Angola and Namibia* (1991), *News of a Kidnapping* (1996), *A Country for Children* (1998), *Living to Tell the Tale* (2002), and *The Scandal of the Century: Selected Journalistic Writings, 1950–1984* (2019).

As he was one of the most well-known literary figures of the 20th century so he was awarded with numerous awards other than Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. Few of the other awards and distinctions that Garcia Marquez received included "Novel Award for La Mala Hora" (1961), "Doctor Honoris Causa of the Columbia University in New York" (1971), "Romulo Gallegos Award" for *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1972), "Medal of the Legion of Honor of France in Paris" (1981), "Aztec Eagle Award in Mexico" (1982), and The Bank of the Republic of Colombia announced a new series of tickets (nomination of 50,000 pesos). On this ticket his image was inscribed and it began its circulation in 2016.

6.2.3 Writing Style of Gabriel Garcia Marquez:

Garcia Marquez inherited the traditions of tales from his grandmother who used to relate exaggerated tales in such a manner that these tales looked real. He adopted such a narrative style that juxtaposed unusual and unnatural events in such a way that these looked natural and real. For that reason, he is deemed to be the founder and pioneer of the genre magical realism. In addition, he used the language that was mostly derived from folklore and culture of the place and people of Arcata. Another Significant aspect is that he wrote about the events happened in Colombia mixing them with supernatural events in such a way that these events of his fictional work looked real.

It was obvious that he never boasted off as the pioneer of magical realism, he merely hinted out that such elements existed in Latin American Literature. But none can deny the fact that no one prior to him had used this genre with such masterful manner and depictional power. It was he who later inspired other writers to try their hands in magic realism. He was of the view that reality is also the myth that existed in the mind of common people.

Besides using magical realism there are numerous other techniques that had added flair in his writing and appeal. He implied the techniques of intertextuality and suspense also widely in his writing. Being an influential artist, he had combined space, time and behaviour with the concept of suspense to maximize the impact of suspense. One thing be noted about his style that he adopted no specific style for his writing. He did not devise any style rather it was adopted as per the demands of the situation and context. His fictional techniques were matchless and inspired other writers. It was these stylistic aspects that made him a writer of high caliber.

With regard to his style he was best known for his ability to create engaging, highly creative, interwoven, and tightly knitted plots in both in his short stories and novels. He had the capacity to project the complex themes and matters in a flawless easy manner in fictional as well as in non-fictional works. Utilization of literary tools like irony, humor, metaphor, and simile were also frequent in his work. Most of his fiction was set in the background of Columbia where medieval and modern beliefs and traditions clashed with each other. These projection at one hand had realistic touch and historical on the other hand. The autobiographical hints were also recurrent features of Garcia Marquez's fictional style. This made him not only a rarest novelist but also a highly skillful crafter of short stories. All these stylistics qualities of Garcia Marquez had established him not only the greatest Columbian novelist but also one of the greatest novelists of the 20th century. Due to his superb craftmanship he has not only attained fame among his readers but also received much appreciation from literary critics.

6.2.4 Themes in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Works:

There are numerous ideas that reoccurred time and again in Garcia Marquez's fiction. One of the chiefs among them is the use of solitude. He used it in individual characters as well as in overall development of themes. At time he incorporated the technique of interior monologue to further intensify the theme of solitude. Through monologue he also projected the actual dialogues between the characters. Through them he showed that people are least concerned about the lives of others, they are just concerned about themselves. To him, solitude is something that cannot be

disintegrated from human lives. In one way or the other one has to suffer from it in any stage of one's life. It is the language, culture, and social background that assist in responding to the situation termed as solitude.

Another recurrent idea in his work was the frequent use of violence. It mainly came from the civil war between political parties of Columbia. Even his own study and life got disturbed because of that civil war. Time and again he had depicted the impact of violence and he was of the opinion that it had done more of bad than of any good in the lives of the people. Although, he never talked about the actual events but there was a message and hints towards those events of violence. The war between conservative and liberal of Columbia of 1960s resulted in slaying of hundreds and thousands of people and it was natural to have hints of those events in his writing. Situation of curfew, censorship of press and underground press are clear cut hints towards those events that were associated with war, killing, and violence. While talking about violence Garcia Marquez himself commented as "fragmented portrayal of social disintegration by the violence."

Macondo, a fictional town, is another recurrent idea in many of his fictional writing. He had used the history, cultural, and geographical setting in abundance in general sense, not in a specific term. He clarified the use of Macondo as "Macondo is not so much a place as a state of mind, which allows you to see what you want, and how you want to see it." Hence, this literary and fictional town had attained much significance in his writing. In the words of Stevens about Macondo, "its geography and inhabitants constantly invoked by teachers, politicians, and tour depicts agents..." made it "... hard to believe it is a sheer fabrication." His most renowned novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* took place in the same imaginary town and delineated about the town from its foundation to its doom.

6.2.5 Gabriel Garcia Marquez as Journalist:

Apart from a writer he was also a journalist. He used the journalistic tools to achieve more impactful and authentic piece of fiction. His investigating character assisted him a great deal in exploring the true sense of his characters. Most of his personal experiences as a journalist and his topics as a columnist later turned out to be the subject matters of his fictional works. Standard journalistic tools such as chronicling can be seen in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* reporting techniques of witness and sources can also be traced. His narrators often made use of quotes and commentary just like the tone of a reporter or investigator. Like a

journalist he was of the view that the opinion of a writer is never biased or prejudiced but there is no denying that in few cases it is there in the form of narrators.

He began his journalistic career in 1947 with *Universal* as a reporter. He worked till 1952 for *El Heraldo*, for *El Espectador* till 1955, worked for *Momento* Magazine in 1958 and 1959. He formed Prensa News agency, worked as correspondent and reporter in Cuba, New York and Havana. He had also honorary membership of "American Academy of Arts and Letters." During his journalistic career he contributed columns, reports, news stories, short stories, and essays. He also contributed as film critics and investigating reporter. He used this forum for the projection of his political ideology. He expressed his opinion on current issues. He did editorial and advertising-based projects other than screen plays and films. He tried his luck in production but did not receive much prominence in this field. Through journalistic medium he worked for social justice which was duly recognized by Swedish Academy while bestowing him Nobel Prize for Literature.

There is a fascinating combination of literary and journalistic flair in his works. His journalistic exposure had undoubtedly influenced his literary career. He made use of literary expressions like metaphor, similes and adjectives in his journalistic writings. He was of the opinion that journalist can learn from writers and writers from journalists. General and common tools can be adopted from either field and can be used by either journalist or by a writer. Politically he was always an ardent supporter of left wings. He had support and personal link with Columbian communist party though he never joined it as a member. He also offered financial support to Venezuelan political party. It was due to these political affiliations he was denied the visa of United States of America. Throughout his literary career he projected political ideology though sometime unintentionally.

Check your progress:

1. When did he start his journalistic career?

   _____

2. Did he use literary expressions in his journalistic writings?

   _____

6.2.6 Conclusion:

Garcia Marquez was an outstanding figure and a matter of great pride for Columbia. He won Nobel Prize for Literature which painted Columbia on the map of literary height. He also outdid other contemporaries. In addition to his literary and journalistic talent he had great

admiration and support for film and cinema. Though most of his works had been adopted for film but none of them got much fame and admiration on film screen. He was undoubtedly the greatest Spanish language writer and one of the most influential exercisers of magical realism. In addition, he was the greatest Columbian who ever lived on the map of the world. He was a novelist, short story writer, journalist, and screenwriter. He was the first Columbian who had won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. Before it he was awarded "Neustadt International Prize for Literature" in 1972. Though he studied law but he preferred to become a journalist and a fictionist. He told to Associated Press News Agency, "I'm a journalist. I've always been a journalist; my books couldn't have been written if I weren't a journalist because all the material was taken from reality." His first novel *Leaf Storm* got published in 1955 when he was mere 27 years of age.

He was loved by the readers because of his fictional and narrational style. He matchlessly blended magic with reality which became popular genre among the readers. His work was not only famous among readers but also attained appreciation from literary critics. He studied law because his parents wished him to be a lawyer but during the study, he realized that he was meant for writing and journalism. He initially started his writing career as a journalist but he was equally good in fictional and non fictional writing. Though he had fusion of magic and supernatural elements in his writing but mostly his themes were based on realities of life. It was these qualities as an artist that made him endeared to readers and critics as well. He was awarded numerous awards "for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts."

Keeping in view the literary services and stature of Garcia Marquez it is hard to imagine how the world of literature would have been without him. He was not only the greatest artist of Columbia but also one of the renowned names of literary horizon of all Times. His fame and repute were not limited to his own country or region rather it had changed the entire face of literature. He was known as "Gabo" in his native land and in all the other parts of the world as the pioneer of magic realism and fabulous novelist, short story writer, and journalist. Due to his contribution in magic realism his work had attained wide range of viewership, exceptional commercial success, and considerable appreciation from critics and readers. Numerous writers including Isabel Allende and Salman Rushdie were influenced by Marquez. He was a political and social activist as he thought that a writer must speak the view of the public. He was having leftist view. He was also emotionally attached with the tragic political upheaval in his own native country.

Check your progress:

1. Which was the first novel published by Marquez?

   _____

2. Name one writer who is influenced by the magic realism style of Marquez.

   _____

6.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- know the life sketch and socio-political scenario of Gabriel García Márquez, the Columbian author.
- comprehend the writing style of the author.
- understand different themes used by Gabriel García Márquez in his writings.
- know the author's contribution in journalism and literature.

6.4 Glossary

Magic realism: A literary style or genre that combines naturalistic details and narrative with surreal or dreamlike elements.

Screenwriter: One who writes for the screen, who writes drama for film or television; especially a professional who knows the conventions appropriate to such works.

Neustadt International Prize: A biennial award for literature sponsored by the University of Oklahoma and its international literary publication, *World Literature Today*. It is considered one of the more prestigious international literary prizes, often compared with the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Nobel Prize: It is five separate prizes that, according to Sir Alfred Nobel's will of 1895, are awarded to "those who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind." Nobel Prizes are awarded in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature, and Peace (Nobel characterized the Peace Prize as "to the person who has done the most or best to advance fellowship among nations, the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and the establishment and promotion of peace congresses").

Macondo: A fictional town described in Gabriel García Márquez's novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Lymphoma: Lymphoma is a cancer of the lymphatic system, which is part of the body's germ-fighting network

Supernatural: Ghostly, paranormal

Prestigious: Prominent, esteemed

Intertextuality: The relationship between texts, especially literary ones

Stylistics: The study of literary style, and how it changes within different contexts

6.5 Sample Questions

6.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Who received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982? _____.

    (a) T.S. Eliot

    (b) D.H. Lawrence

    (c) Garcia Marquez

    (d) Ezra Pound

2. Gabriel Garcia Marquez received Neustadt International Prize for literature in _____.

    (a) 1882

    (b) 1872

    (c) 1972

    (d) 1982

3. Gabriel García Márquez was a/an _____ writer.

    (a) English

    (b) American

    (c) Irish

    (d) Columbian

4. Gabriel García Márquez was born in _____.

    (a) 1827

    (b) 1927

    (c) 1972

(d) 1900

5. Who penned the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*? _____.

(a) Shakespeare

(b) J.M. Synge

(c) G.B. Shaw

(d) Gabriel Garcia Marquez

6. Macondo is a mythical town created by _____.

(a) Thomas Hardy

(b) R.K. Narayan

(c) William Faulkner

(d) Gabriel Garcia Marquez

7. Who is affectionately known as Gabo by Latin Americans? _____.

(a) Gabriel Garcia Marquez

(b) Robert Frost

(c) William Faulkner

(d) May Angelou

8. *Eyes of a Blue Dog* is a collection of _____ by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

(a) Poems

(b) Short Stories

(c) Letters

(d) Essays

9. Which is the first novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez? _____.

(a) *Leaf Storm*

(b) Marriage and Family

(c) *Fame*

(d) One Hundred Years of Solitude

10. What is the mother tongue of Gabriel Garcia Marquez? _____.

(a) English

(b) Spanish

(c) French

(d) Arabic

6.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Which is most celebrated text of Gabriel Garcia Marquez? Why?
2. What is magic realism?
3. Mention few notable works and achievements of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
4. Write a short note about Gabriel Garcia Marquez as a journalist.
5. Why was Gabriel Garcia Marquez exiled to Europe?

6.5.3. Long Answer Questions:

1. Give a biographical sketch of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
2. Discuss important themes in the writing of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
3. Comment on the writing style of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

6.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Aghaei, M. B. (2015). Gabriel Garcia Marquez; The Significant Message of His Literary Discourse. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 4*(2), 185-188.
2. Bell-Villada, G. H. (2010). *Garcia Marquez: The man and his work*. University of North, Carolina Press.
3. Janes, R. (2013). Stephen M. Hart. Gabriel Garcia Marquez. *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature, 37*(2), 171-174.
4. Ospovata, L. (1980). Gabriel Garcia Marquez on Literature, Himself, and His Work. *Soviet Studies in Literature, 16*(4), 46-77.

Unit-7: *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*

Structure

7.0 Introduction
7.1 Objectives
7.2 *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*
- **7.2.1** Plot of the Story
- **7.2.2** Characters in the Story
- **7.2.3** Class Conflict in the story
- **7.2.4** Pretense and Dissimulation
- **7.2.5** Description of Cage

7.3 Learning Outcomes
7.4 Glossary
7.5 Sample Questions
7.6 Suggested Learning Resources

7.0 Introduction

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a Spanish novelist, short story writer, screenwriter and journalist. He is popular with his nickname, 'Gabo' or 'Gabito' in countries of Latin America. He is considered as one of the most influential writers in Spanish Literature and one of the significant writers of 20th century in world literature because of wide range of translations of his works in various languages which has made his writing accessible for non-Spanish readers around the world and which has contributed in spreading his fame around the globe. He is the recipient of the prestigious Nobel Prize for literature on 10th December 1982. He was the first Columbian and fourth Latin American to receive this award. Before that he won the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1972. In his early days of life, he left law school and opted for a career in Journalism. Though a journalist, he wrote many acclaimed non-fiction books and short story collections but he gained global fame with his novels; *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981) and *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985). These novels and his other works were very successful both critically as well as commercially.

He is credited with popularizing magic realism; a literary style which combines magical elements with realistic situations. Being inspired by his birthplace, Aracataca, he has set some of his works in the fictional village of Macondo. Garcia Marquez has experienced solitude in his childhood because his parents were away from him and he grew up with his grandparents so he presents the theme of solitude in his works very oftenly. He was highly influenced by his grandparents who shaped his personality in his early days. From his grandfather, he learnt to resist any atrocities and from his grandmother he learnt the unique way of storytelling, which many years later he used in his masterpiece novel, One Hundred Years of Solitude. He published his first poems in a school magazine when he was studying in the Colegio Jesuita San Jose during the 1940s. Reading the translation of Metamorphosis in his early days he became influenced by Franz Kafka. His first published work was "La tercera resignacion" in newspapers, El Espectador in the edition of 13 September 1947.

In 1948, he joined Universidad de Cartagena after the bloody disturbance on 9th April. Unfortunately, he never finished his higher studies but many Universities, including Columbia University, New York have honoured him with doctorate degrees. During 1948-49, he joined Barranquilla Group which helped in the development of his literary career. There he started working with Ramon Vinyes and read works of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. He was also able to go deep in the Caribbean culture. In 1957, he joined the Momento magazine but left in 1958 because of differences in opinion with the owner. Being a leftist since his early days because of his grandfather's inspiration, he started writing against imperialism from the beginning of his writing career. His anti-imperial writing includes: Changing the History of Africa in 1991 and had friendly terms with Fidel Castro. Being a socialist and anti-imperialist, he hated the domination of the United States in the world. This led to visa denial by the US immigration authorities as he was banned by the US government which was lifted by Bill Clinton. In 1992, he founded QAP newscast which aired till 1997 which had advocated free journalism. Being an influential person globally, he acted as mediator in many negotiations between the Colombian government and the guerrillas fighters

Being a film critic of international repute, he worked in many Latin American countries and wrote several screenplays. He was also elected as a Head of the Latin American Film Foundation. His writings have inspired writers and directors around the world who have adapted several films based on his writings mainly in Mexico, Italy, UK, Costa Rica and Hungary. In 1999,

he started writing his memoir and three years later he published the first volume of his trilogy, *Living to Tell the Tale* (*Vivir para Contarla*). He died on 17th April 2014, at the age of 87. In his obituary of Garcia Marquez, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos called him "the greatest Columbian who ever lived".

In terms of writing style, he stories were mainly based on his native place, Columbia, focussing on reality. In some of his work he experimented basically with less approaches to reality. Being an expert on magic realism, his works are not only a reflection of his native country's culture and history but of the entire continent and hence he is considered as a master storyteller. Credit goes to him for making Columbian literature famous all over the world.

7.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- make your acquaintance with Garbriel Garcia Marquez
- make you familiar with Garcia's writing style
- understand the plot structure and theme of the story
- analyze Garcia's *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* as an example of class conflict
- explain *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* as story of pride versus humility

7.2 *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*

7.2.1 Plot of the Story:

Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon is a story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez which was published in 1962. It is unique in a sense that it can be interpreted in two ways; either it is simple or it is ambiguous. Individuals can interpret it in two ways. Either it can be interpreted reading in a plain way or one can find a deeper meaning which seems hidden and it is necessary to have a close study of the text. The story, Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon is basically written in Spanish and has been translated from Spanish to English and thus it has reached audiences making Garcia Marquez an iconic figure in the history of Literature. Surprisingly, the name of the Balthazar's which has been taken from the Bible. Though it is not clear whether it is intentional or coincidental.

The plot of the story is set in a small town and the protagonist. Balthazar is a thirty year old, poor carpenter who is struggling with basic needs because of his low income. He doesn't have any privilege and recognition in his locality. For two weeks he has been making a bird-cage with outstanding beauty and quality. In making the cage, he completely lost himself so much that he didn't care about himself and because of his appearance, Ursula called him Capuchin because. He put all his efforts into making it because he believed that though momentarily it could break the social barrier which segregated him from the rich people of his area. He wished to rise to fame with it. It came out to be something which was a fine example of art and highly desirable. One of the rich Doctors of his area wished to buy it for his wife but he denied selling it to him. This reflects his high expectations associated with the creation. So he went to the house of Chepe Montiel, one of the wealthiest men of the city but miser in temperament who doesn't like to spend a penny on any art's piece. This is somewhat a daring attempt on his part because otherwise there are no other chances of him being invited to his mansion. Seeing him in the house, Chepe Montiel got agitated and started yelling at him, though his son, Pepe, was highly impressed by the bird-cage and wanted it. In order to humiliate Chepe Montiel, he replies that his son has contacted him and he is giving it as a gift to him. He has visited them in order to sell it.

Though he was not able to sell his hard work to one of the wealthiest men as he wished, he felt content because he was able to hurt the ego of one of the richest men of his town. His wife, Ursula, is unaware of all these happenings. She has a notion that he might have sold it and received a fair amount. Though Balthazer didn't receive any money, he felt himself a winner and celebrated his victory in the bar with a crowd buying drinks for them with no money in his pocket. He lies to the people that he extracted money for the cage. In his drunk state, he also declares that he is about to begin a large enterprise to create “million cages” and suggests the crowd to work quickly before all the rich die as the rich can't even get angry anymore. The title of the story is his celebration in the bar which resulted in a marvelous afternoon because he acquired enough recognition for selling the cage which he didn't sell. Ursula was waiting for him at night with a good dinner. She didn't believe it when someone told her that Balthazer is drunk and buying beers for everyone in the hall, but she didn't believe it because he never used to drink.

Later Balthazer ended up in the Brothel, excessively drunk but immensely happy for the first time in his entire life. He gave his watch as a pawn to secure payment for the bill to take it the

next day. He then spent his night on the street unaware of the fact that his shoes were being stolen and in the morning, the ladies passing by who were going to the Church thought him to be dead.

In the story, the writer has depicted the cage as a symbol to represent the attitude of rich and poor towards art and creativity; while Chepe Montiel is indifferent towards cage which is a piece of art, for Balthazar it is so valuable that he spends his two week in making it and afterwards presents it to an innocent child because for him his art piece is valuable and should be given to a pure soul.

Check your progress:

1. When did Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon get published?

   _____

2. Did Balthazar sell his cage?

   _____

3. Was Balthazar really happy?

   _____

7.2.2 Characters in the Story:

1. Balthazar

Balthazar is the central character of the story, *Balthazer's Marvelous Afternoon*. He is a common carpenter who supports art and works relentlessly whatever he makes. He has been accustomed to making cages since childhood because of his circumstances as life has been very hard for him. Consequently, for two weeks he worked untiringly to make the wooden cage which came out very beautiful. He is a very talented and hard working carpenter who has full confidence in his work and never cares about the result. He is an expert in his work but he doesn't care about it. Some people in his area believed that the cage which he had made is the most beautiful cage present on this earth but he seems to be ignorant about it. He is simple by heart and does not believe in outward appearance. Though being poor, he is full of pride and never bows down in any situation. He worked very hard on the cage but gave it for free to Chepe Montiel's son out of generosity and pride.

2. Ursula

Ursulais the lady who has been living with Balthazar for four years. They are neither married, nor have children. But she looks after him as his wife and does all the household chores. She is always concerned about him and worries about his health and work. She pursues him to

demand more money on the artistic pieces which he makes. She praises his work and encourages him always to do more creative work. Sometimes, she seems to be critical of Balthazar's behaviour just for his betterment. The most relevant thing is that she trusts Balthazar so much that she didn't believe it when people told her Balthazar had drunk.

3. Chepe Montiel

Chepe Montiel is one of the wealthiest men of the town. But though having immense wealth, he is a miser to the very extent that he doesn't like to spend any money on art pieces no matter how valuable it may be. He is an arrogant man and does not allow people of lower section of society to enter his house. He is widely disliked by his town people because of his attitude. They think that it is very difficult to extract money from him. So when they get the idea that Balthazar has sold his cage to him, they are very surprised. In response to him, Doctor Octavio Giraldo is one of the respected men of the city. He is a rich and good-hearted man. He wanted to buy the cage from Balthazer for his wife but he didn't sell it to him and tell him that it has been sold though it was all lies. Balthazar wanted to rise to fame so he went to Chepe Montiel's house. He got angry, seeing Balthazar in his house and when he came to know that his son had placed the order, he started behaving in a maniacal way. He asked Balthazar to sell it to somebody else but seeing the whimsical situation, Balthazar had to say that he had brought it as a gift for his son.

4. Narrator

There is a third person narrator in the story who seems to be omniscient in his attitude and in the dialogue delivery. The simplicity of the narration, the dialogic discourse between characters of different levels make it very interesting for the readers. He has described the characters in the story in such a way that the readers are able to explore the thinking of each and every character. Large sections of the story are mostly told in dialogues between characters. He has made direct comments about all the characters. The narrator has told the story in the most simple and lucid way so that it is easily understandable for the readers.

Check your progress:

1. Why did Balthazar not sell his cage to Doctor Octavo?

   _____

2. Why did Balthazar give the cage as a present to Pepe?

   _____

3. Why was Balthazar happy?

7.2.3 Class Conflict in the Story:

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of the best voices in Latin American literature who is famous for his socialist and Marxist ideals which he reflected in his writings. *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* is one such fine example in which he has tried to expose some of the ideals of Marxism in a simple way without any political discourse which are the accomplishments of one of the greatest writers. Marxist writers like Gabriel Garcia marquez have the notion that capitalism exploits workers leading to class and economic conflict creating rifts among people. We can clearly see this in the story, 'Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon' where the economic difference creates class conflict in people.

In the setting of the story there is a clear indication of class conflict as the characters are described on the basis of economic condition in the social structure. The story is set in a small town, where everybody knows each other and are aware of the financial condition of people living around them. They even know their profession & creativity and are aware of everyday happenings in their lives. When Balthazar makes a cage, the people living in his locality come to see it. They feel happy to see the beauty of the cage and are excited to know whom he will sell and what price.

Marquez has portrayed Chepe Montiel, the rich man of the town as a symbol of capitalism who is arrogant and has the tendency to exploit others. He is not interested in any art piece or creativity. He showed no interest in the masterpiece made by Balthazar in the form of a cage. When Balthazar tells him that his son has ordered the cage, he gets agitated and behaves like a maniac. He doesn't want to spend a single penny on the cage but Balthazar tells everybody that he has paid 60 pesos for the cage. This is a fine example of Balthazar giving into capitalism; a Marxist concept when an individual coming to power believes in respect which his town's people give him. This is like shifting in power from capitalist forces to working class as Balthazar brings down a wealthy and powerful man, Chepe Montiel who is extremely greedy.

Gifting of the cage instead of selling is an act which is symbolically an illusion of freedom. This results in his celebration which is termed a marvelous afternoon. Though just for one day he lived like a rich man. Before this incident, he was a simple human being but Montiel's house episode had dehumanized him and he changed his attitude. This is an example of how money and power changes a person's attitude from simplicity to ambiguity. It diverts a person's attitude from creative expressions towards enjoyment. Balthazar goes to the bar, drinks excessively, buys drinks

for the crowd and goes to the brothel. This is an unexpected behavior on his part. In the morning, he is found on the street lying dead which is somewhat a punishment for his dehumanized behavior and his lies about selling a cage. Earlier, he was a famous carpenter who was very much liked by his town people because of his artistic skill especially because of making a beautiful cage.

The most beautiful cage made by Balthazar is also a symbolic figure. It represents the work of an art as well as the working class and the way the capitalistic society keeps it confined only for the rich people to buy it and appreciate it. Poor people can only see it from a distance. It evokes amazement and pleasure to all. But for rich people like Chepe Montiel, it is nothing or in the words of Doctor Octavio, "This is a flight of imagination".

Check your progress:

1. Is Marxist element present in *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*?

   _____

2. Is the portrayal of Chepe Montiel, a symbol of capitalism?

   _____

3. Is gifting of a cage, symbolically an allusion of freedom?

   _____

7.2.4 Pretense and Dissimulation:

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* has provided space for many critics to explore myriads' themes which are complex in nature. The writer has used varied techniques and diverse characterization in telling the story. The plot of the story focuses on Balthazar, the protagonist who is a common man, a carpenter by profession. He is so skilled that whatever he makes becomes a piece of art. The story opens with him making a cage untiringly for two weeks. He was so engrossed in making it that he forgot himself. Ursula, the love of his love and the people of his town highly respects him because of his talents and always encourages him. The main incident of the plot is the Balthazar's visit to Chepe Montiel's house with the purpose of selling the cage but on the contrary he gifts it to his son, Pepe as Chepe is not interested in buying the cage which is very much liked by the people of his town, even by his wife and son. This clearly reflects his disinterested attitude towards art and talent.

In *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*, there are many incidents from beginning till end, and the actions in the story are very impressive; one by one each action arouses interest in readers to read the story till the end. The story is a fine example of pretense and dissimulation. We see that

different characters in the story show pretense and dissimulation when they are caught up in tight corners situations. The way they escape from the hard reality with pretense is an interesting thing to read. It is a simple and highly emotional story but it seems complex as it blends experience with emotions.

The story is interesting with lively major and minor characters and location making it very fascinating. Though interesting and lively, it is also poignant in nature as we see the struggle of Balthazar from beginning till the end. He works very hard for two weeks to make the cage but in the end he doesn't receive any money for it. He even didn't care about his outward appearance and, like a genuine and dedicated artist, he put his strength into making the cage. Ursula and his town people had very high expectations regarding the sale of the cage so he had to pretend that he sold at a high rate to the wealthy yet miser of his town, Chepe Montiel. This also reflects hypocrisy on his part, instead of telling about his humility and generous act of gifting the cage to Pepe Montiel to the people he conceals it from them. This is very ironic as the rich person like Chepe Montiel is not paying the money and the poor like Balthazar is gifting his hard work and a means of livelihood to the rich man. On the other hand, Chepe Montiel in not buying the cage which is very much admired by his wife and son is an act of pretense as though being rich in terms of money he behaves worse than poor. The omniscient narrator of the story who speaks in third person makes it simple to understand by his lucid style and the interesting description of characters.

Check your progress:

1. What is the main incident of the story?

   _____

2. Is Chepe Montiel a hypocrite?

   _____

3. Was it a pretense on Balthazar's part to hide the gifting of the cage?

   _____

7.2.5 Description of Cage:

Balthazar worked very hard on the cage for two weeks and the outcome was that his followers were considering it to be the best work of his life. Ursula was very amazed with the cage and believed that it was the biggest cage which he had ever seen in his life. Though he was unaware of the fact, cage-making was something which he was accustomed to since childhood. There was a crowd in front of his house to see the cage. As the narrator describes, so many people came to

see it that a crowd formed in front of the house and Balthazar had to take it down and close the shop'. This act also reflects that as a carpenter, he was very famous in his town because of his craftsmanship. Everyone in his area was eager to see what amount he would receive by selling the cage and to whom he would sell it.

Narrator has vividly described the cage in a variety of words. The appearance of the cage was majestic with‘its enormous dome of wire’, ‘three stories inside’, ‘passageways and compartments’. ‘It seemed like a small-scale model of a gigantic ice factory’. One of the admirers of the cage who was an esteemed personality of the city was an old Physician, Doctor Octavio Giraldo who wanted to buy it as a present for his wife but he was not successful in his attempt. He appreciated the cage in the following words; ‘This is a flight of imagination’ and ‘It would be enough to hang it in the trees so it could sing by itself,’ ‘It’s very pretty,’, ‘Extremely pretty.’

Chepe Montiel's wife also praised the cage and said, ‘What a marvelous thing.’, ‘I’ve never seen anything like it in my life.’ But the artistic beauty of the cage and the immense praise couldn't move the miser Chepe Montiel who doesn't want to spend any money on it though his child, Pepe liked it a lot. Balthazar, considering it as a matter of pride and also as an act of generosity, presented it to Pepe. Though by doing so he didn't receive any monetary gain but still he was immensely happy that he had let down the richest man of his town by his act of kindness.

7.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain Marquez's story *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*.
- identify class-conflict in the story.
- recognize everyday struggle of a common man.

7.4 Glossary

Capuchin: A cloak and the hood formerly worn by women

Bristly: Having a stiff and prickly texture

Hammock: A bed made of strong cloth (canvas) or rope, which is hung up between two trees or poles.

Muttering: To speak in a low, quiet and often angry voice that is difficult to hear

Incoherencies: The quality of being illogical, inconsistent or unclear

Stifling: Making one feel constrained or oppressed

Cicada: A large homopterous insect with long transparent wings, found chiefly in warm countries

Troupial: A gregarious songbird of the American oriole family, typically having orange and black plumage and yellow eyes.

Resonant: Deep, clear and continuous sound

Specifications: An act of identifying something precisely or of stating a precise requirement

Shrugged: Dismissed something as unimportant

Templated: A shaped piece of rigid material used as a pattern for processes such as cutting out, shaping or drilling

Crammed: Completely filled to the point of overflowing

Obsession: An idea or thought that continually preoccupies or intrudes on a person's mind

Siesta: An afternoon rest or nap, especially one taken during the hottest hours of the day in a hot climate

Clamour: A loud and confused noise, especially that of people shouting

Decorous: Polite and restrained

Candor: The quality of open and being honest; frankness

Grandstand: The main stand, usually roofed, commanding the best view for spectators at racecourses or sports grounds.

Surgical: Done with great precision, especially with reference to a swift and highly accurate military attack from the air

Perplexedly: Surprisingly

Serenity: Calm, peaceful and serene

Emitted: Produce and discharge

Guttural: Produced in the throat; harsh sounding

Pacify: Put an end to anger, agitation or excitement

Jukebox: A machine that automatically plays a selected musical recording when a coin is inserted

Toasted: Cooked or brown by exposure to a grill fire or other source of radiant heat

Delirious: In an acutely disturbed state of mind characterized by restlessness, illusions and incoherence; affected by delirium

Rouge: A red powder or cream used as a cosmetic for coloring the cheeks or lips

Pawn: To use something as collateral when you're borrowing money

Spread-eagled: Lying or standing with arms and legs outstretched.

7.5 Sample Questions

7.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born on 6th March 1927 in _____.

(a) Peru

(b) Columbia

(c) Chile

(d) Dominican Republic

2. *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* was basically translated from _____ to English.

(a) French

(b) Italian

(c) German

(d) Spanish

3. Garcia Marquez received the Nobel prize for literature in December _____.

(a) 1980

(b) 1982

(c) 1985

(d) 1983

4. Garcia Marquez gained global fame with which novel? _____

(a) One Hundred Years of Solitude

(b) Chronicle of a Death Foretold

(c) Love in the time of Cholera

(d) In Evil Hours

5. Which US President lifted the ban on him?

(a) Barack Obama

(b) George Bush

(c) Bill Clinton

(d) Donald Trump

6. _____ called Balthazar as Capuchin.

(a) Ursula

(b) Octavio Giraldo

(c) Pepe Montiel

(d) Chepe Montiel

7. In February, Balthazar had been _____ years old.

(a) Thirty one

(b) Thirty five

(c) Thirty

(d) Thirty three

8. Chepe Montiel's son's name was _____.

(a) Peter

(b) **Pepe**

(c) Petey

(d) Pip

9. Chepe Montiel was _____ in terms of money.

(a) Miser

(b) Generous

(c) Kind

(d) Spendthrift

10. Balthazar pawns his _____.

(a) House

(b) Chain

(c) Ring

(d) Watch

7.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. What is the message of the story in *Balthazer's Marvelous Afternoon*?
2. What is the symbolic significance of the cage in *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*?
3. Comment on magical realism in *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*.
4. *Balthazer's Marvelous Afternoon* is an escape from existing realities. Comment.

5. Explain the moral dilemma in *Balthazer's Marvelous Afternoon*.

7.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Explain class conflict in *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*.
2. Explain Balthazar as a fine example of pride and generosity in *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon.*
3. *Balthazer's Marvelous Afternoon* a complex saga of human emotions and experience. Justify.

7.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Bell-Villada, Gene H. *García Márquez: The Man and His Work*, North Carolina: Universityof North Carolina Press, 1990.
2. Bhalla, Alok, ed. *García Márquez and Latin America*, New Delhi: Sterling PublishersPrivate Limited, 1987.
3. Bloom, Harold, ed. *Gabriel García Márquez*, New York: Chelsea House, 2007.
4. Williams, Raymond L. *Gabriel García Márquez*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984.

Unit-8: Introduction to African Writing (Short Story)

Structure

8.0 Introduction
8.1 Objectives
8.2 Introduction to African Writing (Short Story)
- **8.2.1** Concept of Short Story and It's Beginning
- **8.2.2** Nature and Thematic Domains of African Short Story
- **8.2.3** Apartheid: Contact and Dichotomy between Black and White People
- **8.2.4** Diversity in African Short Story
- **8.2.5** Violence as a Ubiquitous Subject in African Short Story
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8.3 Learning Outcomes
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8.0 Introduction

African literature is a corpus of creative and artistic writing produced by native people of African continent. It incorporates literature in various indigenous languages as well as literary productions in many colonial languages viz. English, French and Portuguese. Like literatures of all other formerly big colonized countries, including India, Canada and Australia, African writing has its own background in the form of oral and recorded literatures extant in multiple endemic languages. Such literature manifest the growth of Africa with all its traditional values and cultural nuances in terms of changing political scenario, religious ethos, economic challenges, social reality and psychological motivation of the native people. The literature provides the record of overall existence in a renewed manner and thereby reflects the shifting realities of Africa. As literatures of other countries, it is segmented into various categories based on the time periods, thematic concerns, and literary developments and movements. Moreover, this literature is found in almost all big recognized genres like poetry, drama, novel, short story and non-fiction prose tracts and essays.

African literature has started to gain artistic recognition and critical acclaim at the global level. Though the Africans in the beginning have written literature in their native languages, they have also produced resistant literature against colonial hegemony. Since the beginnings of the 20th century, African literature has experienced many innovations and developments. The Negritude Movement from 1930s onwards launched by Leopold Sedar Senghar, Leon Damas and Aime Cesaire, has served a vehicle for the nascent nationalist aspiration in Africa. After World War II, Africans have augmented the intensity of struggle for freedom. This is reflected in Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri and Ngugi Wa Thiongo in the form of poetry, novels, plays, short stories and critical essays. This literature in European languages demonstrates the conflict and difference between African and colonial cultures and sensibilities. It shows the African pride, their future prospect and the rejection of illegal subjugation. In South Africa, apartheid has remained an omnipresent theme in the writings of Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee and Dennis Brutus. The contemporary African literature displays disillusionment with the existing developments. *Before the Birth of the Moon* (1989) by V.Y. Mudimbe projects the doomed love affair in a society ravaged with corruption and hypocrisy. In this way, African literature covers all precolonial, colonial, postcolonial and contemporary socio-cultural, political, economic and ethical dimensions of the concerned society in a very realistic and striking manner.

8.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- develop an overall consciousness about African literary tradition.
- familiarize you with the concept of short story and its inherent components.
- introduce you to the temporal development of African short story and its various dimensions of style and subject.
- highlight the main themes of African short story and its shifting scenario.
- show you the innovative styles of some established writers to create an exact compatibility with the substance they portray.
- make known the great landmarks in African short story and their acceptance and acclamation at world level.

8.2 Introduction to African Writing (Short Story)

8.2.1 Concept of Short Story and Its Beginning:

A short story may be defined as a short work of fiction and most of the constituent elements of bigger genre novel are applicable to it as well. Like novel, it presents the action, thought and dialogue of its characters in an aesthetic and artistic pattern of a plot. As other forms of literature, the tone of the short story may be comic, tragic, romantic, historic or satiric and so on. As in novel also, the plot of a short story can be narrated from one of the multiple available points of view. The short story may be written in the mode of realism, naturalism, fantasy as can be seen in the field of novel also. The short story differs from the bigger sister novel in the size that Aristotle named 'amplitude'. The limitation of length in short story does not permit the writer to have an elaborated tale with as many characters and details as the novel generally does. Edgar Allan Poe, the American writer who is considered the inaugurator of short story as an established literary form, is also its first critical theorist. He describes it as 'the prose tale' which can be read in one sitting ranging from half an hour to two hours. He adds that the short story is restricted to a certain singular effect to which every detail is subsidiary. Keeping in view the limited magnitude of plot, the restricted number of characters and their little space for sustained growth and development, the writer often starts the story close to, even on the verge of the climax and minimizes prior exposition and description of setting, and gears up denouement swiftly in a few sentences. The scanty narration of a nicely handed story often provides the artistry a higher visibility than the artistry in the more roomy and expansive structured novel.

The roots of the short story may be traced back to the Hebrew Biblical tales in the form of Jonah, Ruth, and Esther. Certain examples of short narratives preceding the modern concept of short story are the fable, the exemplum, the tableau, and the parable. These narratives are available in prose as well as in poetry. The present day concept of the short story originated in the beginning of 19th century. The forerunners and early practisers of the genre are: Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne in America; Sir Walter Scott and Mary Shelley in England; E.T.A. Hoffmann in Germany; Balzac in France; and Pushkin, Gogol and Turgenev in Russia. The literary form has truly found its fertile soil in America. Frank O'Connor has called it 'the national art form'. Besides all the short story writers, almost all the major novelists across the globe have

written very profound short stories. The constituent elements of short story may be enumerated as under:

- Plot: It refers to 'what', the main story being told either by invented character or by the author himself in the form of first person narrator.
- Character: It denotes 'who', the central character and their association with other characters and the world they live in. The relationship between plot and character is that of subject (character) and object (plot).
- Setting: It implies 'where', the background, the scene, and the environment of the characters. It may also be defined as context of the text (plot) being described by the characters. The relation among characters, plot and setting is – who says what and where.
- Point of View: It signifies 'how' a story gets narrated. It manifests mood through which readers are presented with characters, story and setting that constitute the overall work.
- Conflict: It refers to the problem the writer poses to resolve at the end. The characters particularly protagonist is to be challenged in some ways otherwise the plot will not develop with suspense and surprise at all. These conflicts may be seen as: man versus man, man versus nature, man versus himself, man versus society and the things like that.
- Theme: It denotes 'intention' or message, substance that the author wants to present before readers to know it at the end. It is the overall controlling substance of the work.

8.2.2 Nature and Thematic Domains of African Short Story:

The genre of short story in African literature has been growing with ripeness and new experiments both in the form and content since 1950. Although some critics give scant attention to the authenticity and genuine creativity of the native short story by rejecting it as not possessing literary and critical value. They are of the opinion that such stories have been published usually in magazines, journals and newspapers rather than being published by established publishing houses independently. They add that these works lack wider artistic appeal and literary flavour. So they are just productions of apprentices in the field. Moreover, these writers have been taunted for bringing out too much derivatives from the European form and substance rather than drawing their plots on indigenous social reality and human psyche. Yet the potential and talent displayed by these writers especially English speaking ones in Africa have succeeded in gaining the critical acclaim and appreciation. Their stories have found the space in major public houses, in highly

reviewed anthologies, and in globally recognized educational institutions and universities including America and European nations.

Chinua Achebe, a lovable fiction writer of Nigeria, and others point out that there do exist a distinction between African short story and its counterpart in Europe and America in terms of form and content. They add that novel and short story in Africa have derived their inspiration and sources from a common oral literary heritage. Yet Stephen Gray does not attempt to separate the short story, the myth, the fable and the legend. He emphasises that such classifications are mutually inclusive. He looks upon them as one whole – interdependent and overlapping and the writers have excess to them always. Gary Spackey writes that "the contact between oral literature and short story has been and must remain minimal". It implies that despite sharing certain traits and components of nature and structure, the African oral literature and newly emerged short story have distinctive identities and are independent entities. It is also pertinent to differentiate between the tale and short story in African literature in order to have clarity of concepts in mind. The tale is described as a loosely, fragmented story with an ostensible didactic purpose. It deliberates more on incidents and episodes by bringing them together without showing the complexities of the characters and their changing temperaments. Such creations adhere closely to the tradition of oral literature. On the other side, the proper short story designs characters and contents on social reality and human psychology without giving undue space to moral teachings. It develops plot with conflict and maintains conflict throughout in a complex manner. It fallows the law of probability and necessity in spirit and does not compromise the requirements of art and aesthetics. There is a compact temporal and spatial unity and also a correspondence between form and content. In Africa artless tales have been held very high and crafty short stories looked down upon in the past for a very long time. The priority has not changed even now. The art of short story is now very popular and acclaimed one (there seems a contradiction. please see and resolve it). The motifs in African short story are commonly seen in the form of needs, aspirations and anxieties. The tradition and modernity are at loggerheads and are never reconciled and compromised. According to Ulli Beier: "by far the greatest number of African writers is interested in depicting present day situations and problems. The past traditions held little interest to them". Generally tradition is seen in relation with modernity in the writings from other parts of the world. But in African short story, the two concepts are poles apart and in perpetual clash. Therefore, they cannot be bridged and made one. Besides, these recurrent motifs and tradition-modern conflict, the omnipresent themes and

concerns in African short story may be identified as: colonialism and its ramifications; war and its consequences; religion and witchcraft; political high handedness and corruption; the urban and rural life; hunger and privation; love, treachery and many like subjects.

8.2.3 Apartheid: Contact and Dichotomy between Black and White People

Apartheid literally means 'separateness' or 'apart-hood'. Apartheid was an institutionalized or legalized system of racial segregation and social discrimination that remained in practice in South Africa and South West Africa (now called Namibia) from 1948 to early 1990s. It was characterized by the totalitarian political culture which guaranteed that South Africa would be controlled politically, economically and socially by the nation's minority population. In this system of social hierarchy, white citizens had the highest status and top most position followed by Asians, coloureds and then marginalized black Africans.

One of the main concerns of African short stories written by English knowing writers is the identification of the contact between black and white people. This has been demonstrated in diverse ways with the involved implications. The stories highlight the barriers between the people of different colours. These hurdles create a tension in the social life and weaken the efforts to establish sociable and cordial contacts based on mutual equality, dignity and harmony. It is due to the ever mounting tension and widening hiatus that the hopelessness and sadness arise in the short stories. Alan Patan's story "A Drink in the Passage" projects this racial tension and segregation. There are two characters — a black and white tied together out of their mutual gumption for art and beauty. The white Van Rensburg having deep impression and regard for the black Simelane, invites him for drink. But due to the taboo of not eating and drinking together, Van Rensburg summons his companion at his home. But even within walls, the drink is consumed hurriedly in a cold passage. This shows the stigma of the society where the relation between the two races is at the first place- prohibited, and secondly it is considered below dignity to treat other one humanly. Though the story treats both the characters uniformly and with homogeneity, which is very rare, yet the psychological reality of the characters gets revealed. Alan Patan usually in his writing inducts the expressions and sentences of moral implication, yet reserves his moral judgement. Through the characterization of Simelane and Van Rensburg, the writer refers to the circumstances which do not allow the two fellows to touch each other in spite of the mutual affection or fellow-feeling. The same can be witnessed in Don Jacobson's "The Box". A young white boy in the story pulls apart the handiwork of their black servant. The pigeon box painstakingly made by the black

servant is absolutely redundant for the white boy. At this when Jan, the black servant, cries, the narrator comes to pacify him by asserting: “Stop crying, Jan. You can make another box”. He adds that he could not touch him and put his arms around him due to Jan’s black colour. As in Patan’s story, the two characters in “The Box” cannot share their mutual feelings and thereby comfort each other due to their colour difference. The white character conceives it in a queer manner: “He was still black”.

One of the unique responses of white South Africans to their black country fellows is of fear. The rationale of this feeling of fear is complex and it is rooted in historical consciousness of white settlers who have displaced people with dark complexion. The subject is well expressed in Jan Rabie’s Afrikaan’s story “Droogte”. Moreover, the suppression and violence springing from the truncation of contact between black and white people is the main thrust of “Chasm” written by Macphail. Here the young British woman Elizabeth Ross is raped by a black man called Izak. Basically, the white woman is not familiar with the contemptuous behaviour shown by whites to black people. So when Izak is wounded during the work at her home, she treats him humanly and compassionately which the black worker misunderstands for love. When Izak is asked in court by the judge about the circumstances of the rape incident, he replies: “It was the fault of the white woman. She encouraged me. She made overtures at me. She took my hand in her hand. She played with my fingers. She wanted me”. The implications of this plainly brute story are comprehensible and understandable for all having an eye on African social reality. It is a reminder of the encounter between the young white woman and black man in Gordimer’s story “Is There Nowhere else Where We can Meet”. Macphail’s title metaphorically refers to the gap being identified between the characters of opposite colour. The stunning impact of the denouement of the story is that Izak seems right in justifying the wrong deed, yet his violent behaviour in the bedroom is also unpardonable. To conclude, it is evident that there are plots in South African stories where black and white people communicate and contact with each other and the result is the reciprocal benefit and goodness. But Macphail’s “Chasm” projects the usual if not necessarily a violent pattern of black and white encounter in the country. All such cited illustrations and the like situations are behind the dichotomy between the two races which impede the process of establishing a close contact and rapport between them.

8.2.4 Diversity in African Short Story:

The characteristic feature of white South African writers' fiction is the diversity and variety of subject-matters as well as in use of techniques and devices. The diversity of characters, situations, settings and modes are also there in the short stories of black writers and Afrikaners. The stories of white writers display a wide range of fictional methods from naturalism and realism to fantasy and fable. Basically, these writers have derived such diverse modes and situations from European and American writers. By doing so, they do not restrict themselves to a temporal and spatial reality. This free approach helps them to look 'before and after' and thereby to produce the fiction of 'plenitude' abound in people, plot-situations, subjects, backgrounds, techniques, styles, and methods. As mentioned earlier that realism and naturalism are common modes of fiction, yet the writers like Alan Patan, Dan Jacobson and Jack Cope have yielded to form of fabular or fable like writing. The quintessential examples of such transition can be experienced in stories like "A Drink in the Passage", "The Hero of Currie Road", "Another Day" and "The Heart of the Daybreak". Moreover, the writers viz Barney Simon, Peter Wilhelm and Christopher Hope do seem more motivated for parable like and fable like writings also. "Seth and Sam", "The Problem with Staff" and "Learning to Fly" are illustrious pieces of this kind. Christopher Hope's "Learning to Fly" beautifully brings together the humorous and the pathetic. It is pertinent to cite Peter Wilhelm's experimental story "Pyro Protram". It assumes the form and tone of science fiction. The last man on the planet is trapped in monstrous creatures and dreadful hallucinations from the bygone times. It evinces clearly that though realism is a dominant mode of fiction writing, yet some writers are rapidly shifting towards alternative modes of fable and science fiction. It may be relevant to add that many works of Nadine Gordimer such as "A soldier's Embrace", "Oral History" and "Something out There" are journalistic in nature and presentation. The subjects of these stories are bush-wars, urban terrorism, and infringement of the Immoral Act. These are usually the domains of journalism.

Sheila Roberts writes that "the very ambience of South Africa causes people, who begin challenging the overall unfairness and injustice to start examining other situations where similar injustices exist. It think it must be impossible to be critical of the situation and not all that criticism to ripple out in other areas of one's life". One of the domains into which female writers such as Sheila Roberts, Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head have let 'criticism to ripple out' is that of the plight that women are undergoing in South Africa. Sheila Roberts in "Knobs and Nikes: A Tale of

Revenge" does something singular in African fiction. She reveals a nexus between the cruel treatment of a man to his wife and his adherence to African nationalism. The story suggests a connection between the man's political preferences and his macho notion of himself as a master in bed. Ruff is very negligent and languid lover. After gratifying his sexual thirst, his wife the narrator of the story tells how much reprehensible and remiss Ruff is in fulfilling his part of the bargain: "I don't mind doing this for him after I have been taken care of, so to speak. But more and more these days, geysers first and then his whole body begins to exude a sweat of self righteous doing my duty labour. He cannot rise up like a helium-balloon twice..." The stories like this dealing with sexual harassment and sexual injustice faced by women add a new dimension to African short story. The woman writers such as Roberts, Head and Gordimer explore such concerns of urgently required correction.

8.2.5 Violence as a Ubiquitous Subject in African Short Story:

When African literature in English started its onward journey, the writers have tremendously barrowed ideas, themes, techniques, know-how of using settings and exploiting characterization from European and American literatures. After learning the art of writing the fictional literature from foreigners, the African writers began to concentrate seriously on native issues and concerns and have incorporated local events, situations, and personages in order to accomplish the objective of national literature. This endemic projection can nowhere be discerned more comprehensively and closely than in the treatment of the subject —violence. The violence existing in African domestic and social environments has been mirrored right from the very inception, yet the short stories of 1970 onwards are replete with it. The writers have fictionalized it in different ways as per their sensibilities and potential.

Although at the official level the presence of violence in Africa has been denied, yet the literature has provided the big platform for its exposition and presentation. The writers show urgency for its instant eradication from the familial and social life. They present the appalling impact of violence in a very stark and striking manner before public. One form of this violence is associated with World War II which is reflected mostly through foreign settings. Such examples can be seen in the works of Robie's *21*, Bretenbach's *Katastropes* and De Vrier's *Dobbeldoor and Vliegoog.* These works do not point out violence of a particular location, but show it in broader perspective in relation to mankind at the international level. Therefore, these collections of short

stories satirize human beings taking recourse to violence in order to satisfy the urge of power by subduing others.

The impact of literary works describing a specific and localized violence cannot be dissociated from the political power structures which lie wholly behind such outrageous acts. It has been realized that violent acts and political system are in a hand and glove relation and there is a cause-effect equation between them. Sometimes this violence is projected by the writers out of sympathy, rather empathy, for the victims of the abuse. The solid examples of this are Alan Patan's stories about the black children in the reformatory from his book *Debbie Go Home* and Piet Haasbrock's story "Aardrykskundeles" ("Geography Lesson"), dealing with the murder of a black school teacher in the bush wars. Welma Odendaal's "Freedom Figher" and her trilogy of stories — "LM", "Baker" ("Dry Nurse") and "Grens) ("Border") are all stories saturated with distress and death of people in the guerrilla wars in South Africa. Moreover, certain writers do protest about violence by underlying the tyranny of its perpetrators. Among the established English stories demonstrating violence and cruelty of people are Jack Cope's "The Bastards"; Peter Wilhem's "All the Days of My Death"; Mtutuzeli Matshoba's "A Glimpse of Slavery"; Alex La Guma's "Out of Darkness"; and James Mathew's "Crucifixion". In Afrikaan's fiction of 1970s and 1980s, a prominent example of this sort is Haasbrock's "Anatomieles" ("Anatomy Lesson") which describes the white soldier's brutal mutilation of a black corpse. Rabie's "Dies Irae" exposes how wealthy white Afrikaners inhumanly appropriate the homes of dispossessed black people. All these citations and identifications of violence in African short stories and the writers' response to the same to educate the people are eye openers for a reader so as to understand its causes and the dreadful consequences for domestic and social fabric.

8.2.6 Style and Substance Coordination:

As it is true with other New Literatures written in former European colonies, the African English writers also have utilized English language very judiciously and skilfully to create a balance between form and matter, and style and substance. It has helped them to achieve the purpose of expressing native sensibility in the foreign language. The African writers have tamed English as per local demands of social reality, human psyche and overall cultural ethics. By doing so, they have been able to overpower the barriers of apartheid and tribalism. The English language has been employed just like their mother tongue with all literary devices such as metaphors and imagery. One of the omnipresent themes in African short story is violence and it has been presented

in the same phrases and words denoting hostility and aggression. In La Gumas's "A Walk in the Night", the characters speak the language exuding the emotions of anger and fear. At the very outset, the readers are told that Michael Adonis is "nursing a little growth of anger the way one caresses the beginnings of a toothache with the tip of the tongue". Afterwards in the story when he is targeted by the police, his mind is disclosed in like manner: "deep down inside him the feelings of rage, frustration and violence swelled like a boil, knotted with pain". In this way the writer produces compatibility between content and words. Similarly "Waiting for Leila" evokes the social trouble and unrest with exact imagery of violence and turbulence. The jack hammers used for breaking down buildings are matched with crows picking at a person's guts, and the hearts of the people left in "District Six" are likened with empty shop windows. This type of fictional prose loaded with dense imagery is a peculiar feature of black African writers. Moreover, Themba, another black writer, plunges into highly poetic language and creates literary echoes with exciting imagery. In "Crepuscule" Themba reflects the sophistication of his age and of the social ambiance of the place before the government destroys it. As reminiscence of Dickens'opening passage in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Themba's prose is poetically hyperbolic and full of contrasts:

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 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- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on it being received for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

The African short story in English has witnessed multiple experiments and innovations in terms of form, style and narrative techniques. The language has been exploited to manifest the indigenous socio-cultural values, beliefs, institutions and human psychological complexities in the comprehensive manner possible in second language. The texts have been created to match the contexts. The crude local life has been dressed in cultured lingual apparel.

8.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand African short stories, including themes, techniques, form, characterisation, and content.
- become familiar with the short story as a literary form in the African context.
- understand the changes and developments in African short stories over time.
- recognise how African short stories adapt to changing social and cultural circumstances.

8.4 Glossary

Ambiance: A unique mood or atmosphere of an environment or surrounding influence.

Amplitude: Largeness, magnitude; size in terms of width and breadth.

Anthology: A collection of literary works, such as poems or short stories, especially a collection from different writers.

Apartheid: The policy of racial separation and social segregation used by South Africa from 1948 to 1990.

Apprentice: A trainee, especially in a skilled trade or profession.

Augment: To increase; to grow; to make larger or supplement.

Colonialism: The colonial domination policy. A colonial system, a colonial word, phrase, concept, or habit.

Denouement: The end, conclusion or resolution of a plot.

Dichotomy: A separation, fission or division into two; a distinction that results in such a division.

Endemic: Indigenous, native to a particular area or culture; originating where it occurs.

Exemplum: An example; a story communicating a moral point; a parable.

Hallucination: A sensory perception of something that does not exist, often arising from disorder of the nervous system; a delusion.

Homogeneity: Uniformity; similarity; the quality of being alike.

Harassment: Persistent attacks causing worry and distress; Excessive intimidation.

Imagery: The work presenting images or visible representation of objects; vivid descriptions suggesting images of sensible objects; figures in discourse.

Indigenous: Born or originating in, native to a land or region or country.

Landmark: A recognizable natural or man-made thing; marker; a notable location with historical, cultural, or geographical significance; monument.

Metaphor: The use of a word or expression to refer to something that it is not, invoking a direct similarity between the word or phrase used and the thing described.

Mutilation: An act of physical harm or destruction beyond recognition.

Naturalism: In arts, a movement in theatre, film, and literature that seeks to replicate a believable everyday reality, as opposed to such movements as romanticism or surrealism, in which subjects may receive highly symbolic or idealistic treatment.

Nationalism: The idea of supporting one's country, people or culture, patriotism.

Negritude: The movement launched in Africa based on the fact of being black African descent, especially a conscious pride in the values, cultural identity of African heritage; blackness.

Overlap: To share an area, range, character or function; co-exist.

Perpetrator: One who deceives, perpetrates; especially, one who commits an offence or crime.

Queer: Weird, odd or strange.

Quintessential: Being perfect example; ultimate; prototype.

Ramification: Offshoot, consequences, or result, outcome.

Redundant: Superfluous; insignificant.

Realism: A literary or artistic representation of reality as it is.

Segment: Section, part, organ, incomplete.

Spatial: Pertaining to space or place.

Tableau: A candid and vivid representation; a picture; a vivid graphic scene of a group of people arranged as in a painting or bas-relief sculpture.

Temporal: Pertaining to time; transient.

8.5 Sample Questions

8.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Which one of the following constituent elements does not belong to Short Story?

(a) Character

(b) Conflict

(c) Song

(d) Plot

2. Who among the following American writers does call Short Story "a national art form"?

(a) Frank O'Connor

(b) Edgar Allen Poe

(c) Washington Irving

(d) Nathaniel Hawthorne

3. Identify the meaning of word 'Apartheid':

(a) Sadness

(b) Hopelessness

(c) Darkness

(d) Separateness

4. Who among the following female writers does not belong to the fold of African literature?

(a) Nadine Gordimer

(b) Sheila Roberts

(c) Bapsi Sidhwa

(d) Bessie Head

5. The short story "A Drink in the Passage" is written by:

(a) Allan Patan

(b) Dan Jacobson

(c) Jack Cope

(d) Peter Wilhelm

6. Who does not belong to Negritude Movement?

(a) Léopold Sedar Senghar

(b) Lean Damas

(c) Aime Cesaire

(d) Dennis Brutus

7. The book *Before the Birth of the Moon* is written by:

(a) V.Y. Mudimbe

(b) Nadine Godimer

(c) J.M. Coetzee

(d) Chinua Achebe

8. Choose the odd one:

(a) Fable

(b) Drama

(c) Exemplum

(d) Parable

9. The expression: “the contact between oral literature and short story has been and must remain minimal” is given by:

(a) Gary Spackey

(b) Ulli Beier

(c) Stephen Gray

(d) Alan Patan

10. The story “Is there Nowhere else Where We can Meet” is written by:

(a) Jan Rabie

(b) Jack Cope

(c) Christopher Hope

(d) Nadine Gordimer

8.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Describe the concept of short story.
2. Define the terms ‘plot’ and ‘character’ as used in fiction.
3. What do you mean by the idea of ‘apartheid’?
4. What does ‘conflict’ mean in short story or novel?
5. Distinguish between Novel and Short Story as two forms of fiction.

8.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Elaborate the nature and thematic domains of African short story.
2. Explain in detail the concept of short story and its constituent elements.
3. Critically describe the theme of violence in African short story.

8.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Achebe, Chinua, and C.L. Innes, eds. *African Short Stories.* London: Heinemann, 1985.
2. Beier, Ulli, ed. *Black Orpheus: An Anthology of African and Afro-American Prose.* Ibadan,Nigeria: Longman, 1964.
3. Balogun, F. Odun. *Tradition and Modernity in the African Short Story: An Introduction toLiterature in Search of Critics.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991.
4. deGrandaigne, J., ed. *African Short Stories in English: An Anthology*. London: Publishers,1985.

Unit-9: Ngugi wa Thiong'o – 'Decolonizing the Mind'

Structure

9.0 Introduction
9.1 Objectives
9.2 'Decolonising the Mind'
9.2.1 Africa and African Literature
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9.2.3.1 The Language of African Literature
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9.2.3.5 Conclusion
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9.0 Introduction

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is one of the most prolific writers and is considered the most promising figure of African literature. He is a fiction writer, essayist, playwright, and literary and social critic. He has also contributed to children's literature. He was born in Kenya, a country in the east of Africa and brought up during the days of the Kenyan struggle for independence. His first four novels are in English. Later, he chose his mother tongue *Gikuyu* for creative writing. With the publication of the book *Decolonising the Mind*, he bade farewell to the English language forever for any kind of writing and continued in Gikuyu. *Decolonising the Mind* is a social critique of colonialism and its deep-rooted impact on African literature, culture and young African minds. It explores some key conflicting issues emerging from the imposition of the use of a foreign language in Kenya. Ngugi discusses at length on colonial alienation, the Eurocentric experience of history, neo-colonial forces, colonial imposition of foreign language and so on. The author tries to rediscover the lost spirit of Africa and aspires to bring it back to its full bloom by locating African

language and culture at the centre of the world in the mind of an African child. He has found ways of achieving the lost spirit. According to him, giving recognition to regional languages of Africa, studies in African languages and literatures in schools, colleges and universities and encouraging native writers to write in their mother tongues are the ways to bring back the spirit of Africa to its pristine glory.

This Unit is divided into three sections. The first section gives details about the author, his works and his contribution. The second section presents factual information about Kenya's political history, demography and languages. The first two sections give you the background information required to follow the arguments given by the author in the book. The third section discusses the book *Decolonising the Mind.* This section is further divided into four parts that discuss the four chapters of the book.

9.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- understand the political struggle of Kenya against British imperialism.
- examine the impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the literature of Kenya in particular and Africa in general.
- analyse Ngugi's argument is in favour of dismissing English and reviving regional languages of Africa.
- comprehend the role of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in reviving African theatre.
- appreciate the relevance of African literature in African society.

9.2 'Decolonising the Mind'

9.2.1 Africa and African Literature

Africa is one of the richest continents on earth in terms of languages, cultures, biodiversity and ethnicities. Africa is the largest landmass after Asia and is a cluster of 54 sovereign states surrounded by sea. Anthropologists considered Africa as the oldest human habitation. It was also an abode of one of the earliest civilizations that raised massive structures like the Pyramids of Egypt. African literature has a rich oral tradition and it exists in many vernacular tongues.

Africa has a rich tradition of oral literature sustained in many languages through stories and songs that are religious as well as secular. The African literature can be broadly divided into the following categories; Pre-Colonial literature, Colonial literature, Post-Colonial literature and Contemporary literature. *Book of Kings* is the pre-colonial text that dates back to the 4th century AD. This work is written in Ge'ez, a native tongue of Ethiopia. *The Story of Tambuks* is the most renowned work in Swahili, a language spoken on the East African coast and its neighbouring islands. The colonial period marks the emergence of slave narratives. The most important slave narrative of this period is *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, written in English in 1789. The colonial interaction spread the use of English for creative writing, and different genres of literature like play, novel, autobiography and travel writings emerged. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, a writer from Kenya wrote the first English play titled *The Black Hermit* which was published in 1963. Chinua Achebe's English novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) brought the attention of literature lovers from all over the world to the African continent. In the post-colonial period, more and more writers have started experimenting in Western languages (such as French, English and Portuguese) as well as in indigenous languages of Africa. Among several other Nobel laureates from different parts of Africa, Wole Soyinka from Nigeria won the Nobel Prize in literature.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was born on 5th January, 1938 in the Kiambu district of Kenya in a peasant family. He was born into a Bantu ethnic group called Kikuyu, native to central Kenya. This is the largest ethnic group in Kenya. He and his family members witnessed and bore the brunt of the Mau-Mau movement (1952-1960), the political uprising in Kenya.

Ngugi received his school education at Alliance High School in the Kiambu district of Kenya. For graduation, he went to Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda. He won a scholarship to study Masters at the University of Leeds. At the age of 29, in 1967, he joined the University of Nairobi as a professor of English literature.

The Black Hermit was the first play written by Ngugi in 1963. The other plays written by him are *This Time Tomorrow* (1970) and *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976). The first novel written by Ngugi was *Weep Not, Child* (1964). Other novels are *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1980), *Matigari* (1986), *Wizard of the Crow* (2004) and the latest one in 2020 with the title *The Perfect Nine: The Epic of Gikuyu and Mumbi*. *Caitaani Mutharaba* was his first novel written in Gikuyu and translated in English as *Devil on the Cross* (1980). His first Gikuyu play was in collaboration was *Ngaahika*

Ndeenda (*I* Will Marry When I Want) in 1977. The Kenyan government put him under detention for one year after the performance of this play as it criticized the new-colonial form of government that was corrupt, authoritative and supported big corporate houses. His prose works focus on politics, literature and culture of Kenya and include the following books: *Homecoming* (1972), *Writers in Politics* (1981), *Barrel of a Pen* (1983), *Moving the Centre* (1993), *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams* (1998). His book *Dreams in the Time of War* (2010) is a memoir of his childhood days. As a prolific writer, Ngugi has many other books to his credit.

We shall be looking at the contribution of Ngugi through the writers and authors who have written about Ngugi in their works. The following are a few reflections on Ngugi's contribution as a writer, academician, scholar, social activist and literary critic:

"Ngugi's approach to literature is one firmly rooted in the historical experience of the writer and his or her people, in an understanding of society as it is and a vision of society as it might be. The dictum "art for art's sake" is alien to his thinking." (Salituma Wamalwa)

"A review of Ngugi's literary career is a mapping of the diverse and complex ways in which nationalism in Africa has taken place since the 1930s, for this novelist's life and his literary products have been closely shaped by the politics of nationalism, its initial promise and eventful failure." (Simon Gikandi)

"Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is among the African scholars who have interpreted Kenya's history and social processes from the two perspectives: the non-Marxist and the Marxist. However, he has done so not as a historian or political scientist but as a creative writer. In the process of his explanation, he has helped shape the perception of Kenyan society within the two models from which other scholars have drawn inspiration. There is abundant evidence to demonstrate these trends in his writings since the early 1960s. The trends have reflected the demands and aspirations of each generation." (Hannington Ochwada)

"His view was that in order to qualify for membership in African literature, a literary piece of writing not only to be rooted in African art, tradition and culture but how to be originally expressed in an African language."

9.2.2 Kenya

In the African continent, Kenya is situated on the eastern side sharing land border with countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. The Indian Ocean is on the eastern side.

According to the archaeologists, the Kenyan site of Olorgesailie is believed to be one of the earliest human habitations that date back to approximately three lakhs years ago. Like Harappan, the earliest communities which established city-states in Kenya are collectively known as Azania, who practised hunting, farming and fishing. Bantu speakers have contributed significantly to the development of Kenya.

Like India, Kenya has a young population and diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. The major ethnic group is Bantu in which Gikuyu or Kikuyu speaking people form the largest linguistic group. The major ethnic groups of Kenya are; Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, Kamba, Somali, Kisli, Mijikenda, Meru, Maasai, Turkana and so on. 'Swahili' along with English are the two official languages of the state. English has attained the same status as that in most of the colonial countries like India. More than fifty languages are spoken in Kenya. These languages are broadly classified into two groups; Bantu (60%) and Nilotes (30%). Bantu comprises sixty per cent of the population whereas Nilotes, the half of the major group. The minor groups include Arab ethnic minorities and speakers from Indo-European families. The majority of the population practices Christianity, approximately eighty per cent of the population. The second most populous religion is Islam with around ten per cent population.

The Arab merchants were early traders in coastal Kenya. A part of coastal Kenya came under the Portuguese from 16th to 18th century. The British East Africa Company made their presence in Kenya in 1888. They built railways and brought many Indian workers as skilled manpower for construction. Like in India and other colonies, the colonial master was on the civilising mission. Kenya also bore the brunt of the world wars as a colony of Britain. There was direct economic, political, and social impact during and after the world wars. The colonial masters introduced many types of taxes resulting in forced labour and many legislations curtailing their rights and establishing the political and economic supremacy of the masters. In 1913, a land bill was passed which gave the colonial master the right to use land for the next 999 years. They exploited land and encouraged labour to subordinate agriculture to their homeland. Kenya became the first African country where black political consciousness emerged.

It was a war between the Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA), also known as the Mau Mau and the British Authorities in Kenya. It is also known as Mau Mau Revolt or the Kenya Emergency. The Colonial rulers used the divide and rule policy that divided the Kenyans between pro-Movement and pro-Britishers. The KLFA comprised of different ethnic groups of Kenya including Kikuyu, Meru, Embu, Maasai, Kamba and so on. There were many other revolts before the Mau-Mau uprising but this movement stretched for long and involved violence at a large scale. In the initial stage, the conflict was about the disproportionate sharing of land between the 'settler societies' and the natives, which led the latter to become wage labourers. Settler societies were all British habitations. This conflict later transformed into a struggle for independence. The Mau-Mau movement used the guerilla strategy which was brutally crushed by the British authorities. The violent resistance from the natives set the stage for Kenya's independence in 1963.

The language communities of Kenya can be broadly classified into two groups; Bantu and Nilotic. The major languages of Bantu group are Kikuyu, Kamba, Luhaya, Gusii, Meru and Mijikenda whereas, the major languages of the Nilotic group are Dholuo, Kalenjin, Maasai and Turkana. There are other minor languages spoken by the ethnic minorities: Borana, Orma and Rendille from the Cushitic group, Arabic from the Semitic group, Hindustani from the Indo-Aryan group, and Swahili from the Bantu group.

9.2.3 The Politics of Language in African Literature

The book, *Decolonising the Mind*, by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was first published in 1986. Ngugi dedicated this book to those who write in African languages. It is divided into four chapters with a *Preface*, *Introduction* and a section titled *A Statement*. The four chapters are as follows: *The Language of African Literature*, *The Language of African Theatre*, *The Language of African Fiction* and *The Quest of Relevance*. In the following sections, we shall be discussing the main points raised in the four chapters of the book. In the preface of the book, he states: "The very word we use is a product of a collective history (x-xi)." So he owes this piece of work to the people of Africa. In the preface, he clearly mentions the purpose of writing this book i.e., to critically examine the language practice of African writers. The author also identifies the neo-colonial forces which are clandestinely stealing African minds and enriching their languages and culture.

In the section "A Statement", Ngugi makes an interesting announcement of bidding farewell to the English language for any kind of writing. In 1977, he discontinued English for his

creative works like novels, plays and short stories and started writing in Gikuyu and Kiswahili. Gikuyu is also known by Kikuyu.

9.2.3.1 The Language of African Literature:

The central question this chapter addresses is the use of language in defining the self to their natural and social environment. Ngugi argues that language plays a very vital role in defining the self. The self relates with the surroundings; the natural and the social. The colonial and neo-colonial imperialism of the European countries in Africa controlled the economy, politics and culture of the Africans. They distorted the relation of the self with the surroundings. Ngugi examines this situation in which English creates a chasm between a native African and his nativity.

Ngugi criticises the colonial tendency of deciding the future of the nation: the colonial powers rule without considering their concerns and nativity. He refers to the round table conference of 1884 in which the future of Africa was carved out and Africa was categorised into European language-speaking communities. What bothers Ngugi more was the attitude of African writers who identify themselves with the imperialism imposed on the tongues. A similar kind of event happened in 1962. A conference in Africa about African writers barred those writers from participating who have been writing in African languages like Kiswahili, Zulu, Amharic and Yoruba. Instead, it only included those African writers who write in English. This intrigued the author (Ngugi) to ponder upon an inescapable question, "What is African Literature?" He raises this question from varying standpoints. He asks:

"Was it literature about Africa or about the African experiences? Was it literature written by Africans? What about a non-African who wrote about Africa: did his work qualify as African literature? What if an African set his work in Greenland: did that qualify as African literature? Or were African languages the criteria?"

His exploration of these questions concludes with the statement that language questions were actually never really asked. But the important point he makes here is that if great European writers like Balzac and Tolstoy did not write in African languages then why the Africans are enriching the language and literature of the colonial masters by using English, French and Portuguese in their creative writings. Ngugi critically examines the imperial policy of subjugation through 'bullets and blackboard.' He says, "In my view language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. The language was the means of spiritual subjugation." To make his point

more clear, Ngugi draws examples from his own experiences of language use and the study of English literature. He first explains the language harmony of the native people and then tells the readers about how this harmony was broken.

Ngugi introduces readers to African folk literature. Folk tales are inalienably related to the culture they represent. The people of Africa, as in other parts of the world, form their worldviews based on these tales. The folk elements of language become part of one's existence and the world around. The use of language in different spheres of life; home, field, playground, work, gatherings is 'one.' Ngugi recalls those experiences of his early life when language harmony had started distorting.

He experienced the first threat to the mother tongue when he joined a school. In the school, using mother tongue (*Gikuyu)* for communication was treated with corporal punishment. On the other hand, English was highly rewarded. The English rhymes in primary schools replaced orature (oral literature). English writers like Charles Dickens and his novels like *Oliver Twist* replaced the lion and tiger of their immediate surroundings. The characters of folk tales were lost, no more part of their imaginative world.

In this chapter, Ngugi also presents his views on language. He defines the 'dual character of language,' primarily as a means of communication and a carrier of culture. He further tells that language as communication/culture has three elements.

Language as communication:

1. Language of labour process i.e., production is communication
2. Speech i.e., communication in production
3. Written signs

Language as culture:

1. Product of human interaction in the labour process.
2. An agent which enters into our mind and creates a perception of self and the relation of self with the other.
3. Culture mediates through spoken and written words to correspond to the reality of the world.

According to the above characterisation of language, the author brings our attention to the relationship between the following: language & labour process, language & the interactions of the labour process, and language & the product of labour process. It also draws our attention to the

importance of language in shaping culture and the role of culture in understanding the reality of the world around us. There stands the importance of the mother tongue, which mediates between the self and the other. Thus, the author seems to be worried about the future of Africa because this harmony is broken. The relationship between the self and the surroundings is distorted and blurred. The author held that the policies of the British rule in Africa were responsible for this distortion. They imposed English and restricted the use of local tongues. Their policies snatched the power of imagination and the faculty to relate with the life around them. The grave situation of the "colonial imposition of foreign language," has brought with it grave consequences in the mind of the African child.

Ngugi outlines some concerns here. The deliberate undervaluing of their culture, art, dance, religion, history, orature and so on, has a deep-rooted impact. The imperial power imposed English and sidelined the native languages. Therefore, it broke the harmony with the outside reality. This resulted in the objective view of the world and mechanised learning. He says, "Learning for a colonial child, became a cerebral activity and not an emotionally felt experience." The act of looking at our own world from the borrowed tongue resulted in 'colonial alienation.' He describes colonial alienation as the disassociation of the sensibility of the native child from his immediate environment i.e., nature and society. This alienation is one of the dire outcomes of colonization.

In the same chapter, he extends this critical approach to the use of language in Africa. He shifts his focus on the use of language from school to literary writings. Here he analyzes the use of language by writers in their creative work. He argues that "the literature it produced in European languages was given the identity of African literature as if there had never been literature in African languages." Here the author indirectly refers to the work of those native African writers who have been writing in English and their work is categorised by Western scholars as African literature. You must know that there are three most prominent writers from Africa whose works are classified as 'modern classics.' They are Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and the author of this book (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o). The first two are Nigerian writers and have written in English. Wole Soyinka is a recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature. Ngugi's point here is that literature in English by African writers receives recognition as African literature ignoring and undermining the centuries-old oral folk tradition. It becomes quite evident that Western scholarship ignores the folk traditions of Africa. On the one hand, the African peasantry and the other working classes, who have kept the native languages alive, are ignored. But on the other hand, the literature in the English language

was “Africanised.” This act of ignorance deepens the sense of alienation among conscious minds like Ngugi Wa Thiong’o.

Making a strong criticism on the use of English by African writers, Ngugi draws a parallel between African politicians and African writers. He asks: “What is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European languages.” This is a critique of the neo-colonial form of governance in the post-independence period in which the submission to European supremacy was a voluntary act.

The author of the book *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) himself has been writing in English for such a long period of time and has earned fame for his work *A Grain of Wheat* (1967). In this chapter, he justifies his act of making a shift from English to *Gikuyu.* He justifies his action in the following words, “I believe that my writing in *Gikuyu* language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples.” This shift can be understood more as a political act of resistance rather than cultural. We will read in the next Unit about the author’s first Gikuyu play. The performance of the play invited strict measures from the government which put a ban on such performances and the immediate imprisonment of the author without any trial. The government in 1977 used the strategy of the colonial masters; crushed the voice of dissent with coercion. The author reacts to this coercion and renunciates English. After this book, *Decolonising the Mind*, he continued writing in Gikuyu. This act of resistance continues till date. Once disowned, he never looked back at English except in translation.

On language issues, he also examines the status of language in his own society. He scratches the act of labeling a language as high or low and the association of many negative connotations with the language of lower status. He further explains how in schools and universities, the languages of Kenya were associated with “backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and Punishment.” This association of native language with negative connotations is very much prevalent in India as well. The supremacy of English and its implications at the grass-root level is very well underlined by the writer. He describes two interlinked forms that have emerged as a consequence of “colonial alienation” in Africa. The first form is “an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around” and the other is the active/ passive identification with something “which is most external to one's environment.” He also brings out attention to the dire consequences of this kind of situation which ends up “producing a society of

bodiless heads and headless bodies." The metaphor of 'bodiless heads and headless bodies' signifies the absence of a bond between the body and the mind, the loss of harmony between the body and the spirit. The language issue is addressed from many standpoints and talked about again and again in this book.

To conclude, we can say that Ngugi emphasized the importance of the mother tongue in one's life. Language becomes a medium of communication between the self and the surroundings. Disassociation with the native language creates a sense of alienation. Ngugi wants to restore the pre-colonial status of languages where there was harmony between a person and his immediate environment. Therefore, he wants the literature of Kenya's regional languages to reflect the harmony that was disturbed with the imposition of foreign languages. He wants the children of Africa to connect with their immediate environment, their language, their society and their culture. This book not only educates African children about the importance of one's language but also spreads a universal message of linguistic harmony as a prerequisite for one's existence in the social and natural environment.

9.2.3.2 The Language of African Theatre:

In this chapter, Ngugi rediscovers and reenacts the traditional theatre of Africa called *Ituika* in Kamiriithu village. Ituika was a traditional ceremony held every twenty-five years. It marks the handing over of power from one generation to the other. Ituika involves fasting, dancing and singing that lasts for six months. According to the author, "Drama in pre-colonial Kenya was not, then, an isolated event: it was part and parcel of the rhythm of daily and seasonal life of the community." Ngugi informs that Ituika is a kind of a theatre in which the community participates. Therefore, it is a people's festival. This collective action of criticising the government through performance is countered by the neo-colonial forces of independent Kenya with acts of repression.

In the beginning of this chapter, Ngugi informs the readers how British colonialism has destroyed their tradition; the tradition of theatre in empty space. The colonial master had banned *Ituika* and introduced a licence for gathering in the village. The administration and Christian missionaries destroyed the concept of 'empty space' enjoyed by the local population. The months-long *Ituika* was organised in empty space. During colonial rule, these empty spaces were confined in modern structures. The confinement of 'empty spaces' continued even after the independence of Kenya. The colonial master took many initiatives to introduce the Western drama in confined

spaces to entertain and divert the attention from the Mau Mau uprising. They also controlled the Kenyan national theatre, which was the symbol of imperialism and a colonial tradition.

During the colonial period, the theatre in colleges and universities progressed with the efforts of university students travelling to the rural and urban spaces. Ngugi sees this progress with a more critical lens. In his words: "The real language of African theatre could only be found among the people — the peasantry in particular — in their life, history and struggles." Ngugi locates traditional theatre as a people's event that should take place in an empty space. He rejects the modern theatre introduced by the British rule which unacknowledges and undermines the traditional one.

Ngugi also describes his own homecoming; connecting with the roots, a shift from English to mother tongue in his writing. Instead of using English as a medium of creative expression, he shifts to the *Gikuyu*, his mother tongue. This homecoming takes place in the village *Kamiruthu* where he performs his first *Gikuyu* play *Ngahika Ndeenda.* This play was designed, organised, coordinated and enacted by the community on the pattern of Ituika, the traditional theatre of Kenya which also involves songs, dance and music.

Ngugi's effort in reviving Ituika changed the question of language used in his plays. In all of his earlier writings, English was the medium of expression. But in *Ngahika Ndeenda* (translated as *I will Marry when I Want*), for the first time, he used Gikuyu. The play draws its content from the political uprising in Kenya as part of the freedom struggle movement. The play also examines the political shift in Kenya from the colonial to neo-colonial system. The condition of factory workers in an independent nation reflects the Marxist perspective. The preparation for the *Ngahika Ndeenda* invited and involved the people from all walks of life. The community gathers during the day and holds long discussion on the script of the play, its content, its form and even its language. Therefore, Gikuyu becomes the medium and the 'empty space' becomes the stage. The question of form was central to the discussion. After frequent discussions on the form, song and dance were incorporated. Song and dance are part and parcel of the everyday life including rituals of the folks.

Ngugi, in this chapter, introduces the readers to the section of the play which includes dialogues and songs. The reader gets a primary experience of the play. He further explains the historical, political and social relevance of the performance. The most interesting description about the play is the background of the participants. Their role in real life corresponds with their role in the play. Ngugi writes:

They would compare their own actual experiences, whether it was in making guns in the forest, in stealing arms from the British enemy, in carrying bullets through the enemy lines, or in the various strategies for survival. Land and freedom. Economic and political independence. Those were the aims of their struggle and they did not want *Ngahika Ndeenda* to distort them.

The above description explains how theatre engages with real life and real-life characters. The characters of the play were heroes of real life struggle. The rehearsal of the play took nine months in the year 1977. The revival of traditional theatre, an experiment at *Kamiruthu* theatre was a great success. In the words of Ngugi, "Theatre became what it had always been: part of a collective festival." The whole act of connecting with the roots in *Kamiruthu* theatre gave Kenyan theatre a language of its own. But in the same year in 1977, the Kenyan government banned the performance of *Ngahika Ndeenda* and reinstated the ban on public gatherings and the author was also imprisoned. The struggle for revival did not stop here but continued for several years.

To conclude, we can say that the author has put a lot of effort in reviving the traditional theatre of Kenya. This process of rediscovering theatre involved the *Kamiruthu* village community in the performance of his play *Ngahika Ndeenda* in the same way the traditional *Ituika* festival was performed. The community participation in the performance of the play was a great success because people from all walks of life made their presence felt. Since the play was political and criticised the neo-colonial attitude of the government, the author had to bear the brunt of his actions. This episode of Ngugi's public life marks his commitment as a writer, who wants to connect to his roots not at an individual level but at the community level and restored the language of African theatre.

9.2.3.3 The Language of African Fiction:

In the opening of this chapter, Ngugi underlines that he is going to discuss his experience of writing *Caitaani Mutharabaini* (1980), a novel written in Gikuyu. This novel was later translated into English as *Devil on the Cross.* He maps the outline of the succeeding discussions on the issues and problems of the origin and development of the African novel.

As a whole, the discussion in this chapter goes around why write a novel in Gikuyu? Gikuyu is one of the regional languages of Kenya. You need to know that the four novels that Ngugi had written earlier were in English: *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977).

According to him, the novel which has landed on African soil is of 'Bourgeois origin,' which means the novel is a product of the industrial revolution that had taken place in Europe. When Europeans came to Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century, their hometown was industrialised. But, at the same time, the story of Kenya was entirely different. To make his point clear, Ngugi takes his readers to pre-colonial Kenya.

Pre-colonial Kenya was dominated by faith, worship and dedication to nature and natural forces. Like other African countries, nature was central in the life of Kenyans as well. Rituals, magic and divination held a central stage around which the life cycle revolved. Human interaction with nature and natural forces was never individual but a 'collective response'. Since nature was extremely 'incomprehensible and unpredictable' for the folks. They faced the extremes through 'cohesive social order.' Social unity became their strength for survival.

A continued and constant struggle of the people with nature goes on. This struggle gets reflected even in the literature. The animal kingdom, nature, and the natural forces find their place in folk literature; intersecting, intermingling and at times coexisting with one another. These folk narratives describe the heroic deeds of the kings and the tribal chiefs in the form of animal characters, half-man and half-beast characters. According to the author, this everyday struggle with nature and the animal kingdom was progressing in its own natural and organic way. The progression was hindered by capitalist tendencies of imperialism which turns the native population into slaves. Ngugi made strong criticism of capitalism, he says:

Imperialism has introduced mass poverty and cross-regional underdevelopment. Capitalism introduced plenty and possibilities of the conquest of hunger: capitalism ensured poverty and mass starvation on a scale unknown before. Capitalism and the development of science and technology introduced the possibilities of the conquest of nature: capitalism by its uncontrolled use and exploitation of natural resources ensured the virtual dominance of nature over man by way of droughts and desertification.

Ngugi completely negates the capitalist model of development adopted by the European countries. This model is based on the exploitation and hunger of the masses. He also criticises the development of science and technology that takes place in Europe. The colonial powers of Europe used new inventions in exploiting nature for profit. Therefore, their struggles are different. One is struggling with nature for survival and the other for profit. If our struggles are different, so are our experiences.

As we progress in the reading of this chapter, Ngugi comes to the question of the African novel. He offers some background information to the readers before the main point. In this chapter, he also relates the introduction of the printing press in Africa to the censorship involved by the government laws to keep track of the rebel activities. The role of the African language in the publication was minimal. It was limited to the translation of the Bible. Like India, the first generation of novelists was more exposed to *The Pilgrim's Progress* than to the classics of Balzac and Tolstoy. The school libraries were also under surveillance. The early African novels were influenced by Biblical themes. In the fifties, the opening of the overseas colleges of the University of London in different regions of Africa like Uganda, Nigeria and Ghana worsened the situation. These universities exposed young minds to the work of James Joyce, Joseph Conrad and others.

The writings of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Kofi Awoonor created an "Afro-European novel" instead of implanting an African novel in its roots. You must know that these three African writers have written in English. Ngugi confesses that he was also part and parcel of this process of Afro-European novel and a product too. His earliest writings both short stories and novels, were in English. But his rediscovery of *Kamiruthu* theatre changed the choice of language for creative expression. It took him long to decide the language of his own for his creative outpourings. He says, "I would reconnect myself not to the Afro-European novel of my previous practice but to the African novel of my new commitment." Ngugi has used English as a medium for his creative expression in novels like *A Wheat of Grain*, *Petals of Blood* and others. While writing, he was conscious and in a state of crisis. His only worry was what can be called a writer's integrity. Characters who become the content of his writing are never going to read these novels. Then comes the situation, he says, "I have reached a point of crisis. I don't know whether it is worth any longer writing in English." Throughout this work, he explores the relationship between mother tongues and the dynamics of the imperial imposition of the English language.

Ngugi critically examines the importance of teaching and studying African languages and their role in cultural resistance. Unveiling the inner dynamics of the imperialistic tendencies in imposing English also lowers the status of native regional languages and vice versa. The act of acknowledging the higher status of an imposed tongue creates alienation from one's own tongue. There arises the crisis of language, identity, belongingness, harmony, and the self. In introspection, he adds: "It seems to me that in a country where ninety per cent speak African languages, it is very unwise not to teach these in schools and colleges. We need to develop a national language, but not

at the dire expense of the regional languages." The important point in this statement needs further elaboration. He emphasises that in schools and colleges of Africa, the local languages must be taught. He also introduced the reader to fact that there is a need to develop a national language but that national language should not harm the regional languages in the same way as English has harmed the world. In his 1977 lecture, based on his experiment in theatre at *Kamiruthu* village, he called upon Kenyan writers to 'return to their roots.' While under prosecution, in 1978, he concluded with the call: "Kenyan writers have no alternative but to return to the roots, return to the sources of their being in the rhythms of life and speech and languages of the Kenyan masses if they are to rise to the great challenge of recreating, in their poems, plays, and novels, the epic grandeur of their history." He alarms the writers' fraternity about their loss of sense of belonging and rootlessness. He invites them to get one with the rhythm of life, with the speech of the common Kenyan man. Here, the author becomes the harbinger of awakening and the torch bearer of realisation of the self. He himself had already initiated the process of writing his first-ever creative work in Gikuyu, which was a novel, with the title *Caitaani Mutharabaini,* while in prison. In the prison, in the absence of a notebook, he used toilet paper for writing. Such was the commitment of Ngugi as a writer.

Ngugi also tells his readers that writing in Gikuyu was a challenge. There was no tradition of creative writing in Gikuyu, especially novels. The issue of orthography which does not represent tone is a chief feature of Gikuyu. He further extended this exploration with the challenge of looking at the 'fictional language,' the language of novel and short stories. In addition, the assumption that there will be a shift of readership from English to Gikuyu, was also a point of consideration. To cope up with the challenge of 'fictional language,' Ngugi borrowed from oral traditions. He tried to keep the plot simple so as to manage it well in time and space. Ngugi's first novel in Gikuyu *Caitaani Mutharabaini,* (Devil on the Cross in English), received an enthusiastic response from the members of the community. They read novels in the family, in get-togethers, at work places, in buses, in taxis and in public bars. His efforts started the new era of fiction writing in the regional languages of Africa. The success of the novel reflects in its translations in English, Swedish, Norwegian, and German. But for Ngugi, the struggle does not end here. He wanted to establish a communication between the various African languages. Therefore, the translation of *Caitaani Mutharabaini* into Swahili was equally important for him. According to him, "Indeed I see this kind of communication among African languages as forming the real foundation of a genuinely

African novel." He wants regional literature in the regional languages to reflect the 'African sensibility' in its true sense which will also enrich the 'art of translation.' Envisioning the future of the African novel, according to Ngugi, will depend on the writers' preference for native language, publishers' preference for regional literature, the state patronage to national literature and finally on the promising reader.

In a nutshell, we can say that the author wants the African writers to write in African languages and there should be a continuous interaction between different African languages. African writers who write in European languages must connect with their roots and reflect African sensibility in its true essence.

9.2.3.4 The Quest of Relevance:

This chapter starts with an explanation of why the discussion on poetry was not included in this book. Ngugi's stand was "the existence and the continuing growth of poetry in African languages, clearly and unequivocally so in orature, makes it manifestly absurd to talk of African poetry in English, French or Portuguese." This explanation shows the richness of the tradition of poetry in African languages. Ngugi informs the reader about Hassan, the great poet of Somalia. You must know that the state of Somalia shares a land border with Kenya. In the discussion on poetry, Ngugi makes a comparison of Hassan's poetry with the poetry in the European languages. According to him, Hassan was very much popular among the rural folks of Somalia. The peasant of Somalia learns his poetry by heart. In comparison, not even a single line of English poetry can be learnt by the same folks. The reason for this connection of poetry with heart is the intrinsic feature of poetry; rhythm, music, fluidity and so on. Thus, the author did not consider it important to discuss poetry.

A large part of this chapter revolves around the 'the great Nairobi literature debate.' The 1968 debate was about the teaching of African literature in universities and schools. Ngugi broadly classifies the literature available to the African student into three categories. The first category is European classic literature. The second category is of "liberal European who often had Africa as the subject of their imaginative explorations." The third category comprises racist literature which categorizes African as 'good and the bad.' His categorization outlines how African children experience the world through the lens of the 'Eurocentric experience of history.' The first category includes Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, Chekhov, Dostoevsky and so on. The second category perhaps includes writers like Joseph Conrad; the author of *Heart of Darkness*. The category of writing

gives value judgment on Africa. Therefore, he wanted to place 'Kenya, East Africa and then Africa at the centre,' of the world.

Regarding this, he and other like-minded people wanted to establish oral literature of Africa at the centre and include it in the syllabi of schools, colleges and universities. In 1974, an important conference was held in a Nairobi school on the *Teaching of African literature in Kenyan schools*. The conference was organised to examine the role of literature in society and its relevance. The fruitful outcome of this conference was the seventy-three pages document which "argued that a sound education policy was one which enables students to study the culture and the environment of their society first, then set it in relation to the culture and environment of other societies…" The author wants that the African consciousness should not be divided into northern Africa, Eastern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, he wants the Kenyan child to be exposed to world literature and the democratic traditions in world literature. But, the same child should be rooted in his tradition first. He should experience the world from his own sensibilities, not with the borrowed tongues. He wants the child to be exposed in correct order; vernacular literature first, foreign literature later.

9.2.3.5 Conclusion:

There is a strong will in Ngugi's writings to break away from neo-colonialism which subjugated the African mind. He deals with the issue of language that is intricate and entangled in the politics of colonial and the new governments. He himself struggled to shun English as his medium of creative expression and finally succeeded writing in Gikuyu. He wants the African child to be taught in his/her mother language. He expects the writers of Africa to write in their regional languages. He played a vital role in reviving the language of theatre in its traditional form. He places African sensibility and African worldview at the centre of the African child which can be done only by decolonising the mind. The decolonisation of the mind creates a harmony of the self with the natural and social environment. It creates a sense of pride in owning one's language and one's culture.

Check your progress:

1. Explain the dual character of the language defined by Ngugi in the first chapter *The Language of African Literature.*

2. According to Ngugi what should be the language of an African novel and why?

_____

3. Discuss the components of traditional African theatre?

_____

4. According to Ngugi, why it is important for an African child to study African literature?

_____

9.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the politics of language in Africa during the colonial and neo-colonial periods
- become familiar with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's critical view on rejecting English and returning to native roots
- explain about the Ngũgĩ's role and participation of village communities in reviving traditional African theatre like Ituika
- recognise Ngũgĩ's rejection of the Eurocentric worldview
- understand the importance of the mother tongue in shaping the worldview of an African child
- analyse the impact of the imposition of English and the need to promote African languages in literature
- appreciate the importance of writing and translating literature in African and regional languages
- understand the concept of "decolonising the mind" and its significance in restoring African identity
- gain insight into the relevance of *Decolonising the Mind* in promoting linguistic and cultural awareness

9.4 Glossary

Alienation: A state of mind when the sense of belonging is lost; loss of identity

Capitalism: An economic system, controlled and owned by private persons for profit

Colonialism: When a nation is being ruled, subjugated or controlled by another nation for economic interest. Most of the nations of Europe in 19th century and 20th century have colonies in Asia and Africa for economic interest

Bantu: Language group of Africa

Eurocentric: When the centre of the world lies in Europe

Gikuyu: Language of Kenya

Imperialism: When a country expands its rule in another nation without expanding boundaries to extend the power and influence for economic interest

Kamiruthu: Village in Kenya

Neo-Colonialism: A political system in which the economic policies of a nation is being controlled by another nation

Swahili: Language of Africa

9.5 Sample Questions

9.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. What is the mother tongue of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o?

    (a) Swahili

    (a) Bantu

    (c) Gikuyu

    (d) African

2. Ngugi's experiment in *Kamiruthu* village revived which one of the following tradition?

    (a) African Novel

    (b) African Theatre

    (c) African oral literature

    (d) African poetry

3. What was the nationality of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o?

(a) Egyptian African

(b) Kenyan African

(c) Uganda

(d) Somalia

4. Which group of languages does Ngugi wants to be at the centre of the world of an African child?

(a) Indo-Aryan

(b) Indo-European

(c) African

(d) Baltic

5. From which imperial nation did Kenya attain freedom?

(a) Portugal

(b) Spain

(c) Britain

(d) French

6. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o was a writer from which country?

(a) Nigeria

(b) South Africa

(c) Kenya

(d) America

7. The Mau Mau revolt in Kenya was mainly directed against:

(a) French colonialism

(b) British imperialism

(c) Portuguese rule

(d) Italian occupation

8. In which language did Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o later choose to write his novels?

(a) English

(b) Swahili

(c) Gikuyu

(d) French

9. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o worked as a professor of:

(a) Political Science

(b) African History

(c) English Literature

(d) Sociology

10. English belongs to which language family?

(a) Bantu

(b) Romance

(c) Germanic

(d) Semitic

9.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. What is Ngugi's contribution to African literature?
2. What is Ngugi's opposition to the Eurocentric view of the world?
3. Explain Ngugi Wa Thiong'o critique of colonialism and neo-colonialism.
4. In what ways did the imposition of English language impact Kenya?
5. According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, how should African children experience the world?

9.5.3 Long Answers Questions:

1. Describe the collective effort of the *Kamiruthu* village community in reviving *Ituika*, the traditional theatre of Africa.
2. Explain Ngugi's opposition to the colonial imposition of English language in Kenya.
3. According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, why is there a need to decolonise the mind?

9.6 Suggested Learning Resources

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3. Kasanga, Luanga A., and Mambo Kalume. "The Use of Indigenized Forms of English inNgũgĩ's Devil on the Cross: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Analysis." *AfricanLanguages*

and Cultures, vol. 9, no. 1, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 1996, pp. 43–69,http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771792.

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5. Thiong'o Ngugi Wa.*Decolonising the Mind; The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Oxford: James Curry, 1986.

Unit-10: Introduction to Indian Short Story

Structure

10.0 Introduction
10.1 Objectives
10.2 Introduction to Indian Short Story
    10.2.1 Indian Short Story: An Overview
    10.2.2 Indian Short Story and Women Writers
    10.2.3 Let Us Sum Up
10.3 Learning Outcomes
10.4 Glossary
10.5 Sample Questions
10.5 Suggested Learning Resources

10.0 Introduction

In the current age, people feel impatient to read the long narratives and instead try to satiate their aesthetic appetite in a minimum possible time span. Thus, short story proves to be a time saving genre for them. The evolution of the short story began before human beings' capability to write. Short story has been the most liked genre by most of the writers and there are many short stories in the Book of Genesis (the Bible) also. Writers like Geoffrey Chaucer and Giovanni Boccacio have written some wonderful tales in their magnum opus like *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Decameron*. The Roman and Greek writers like Homer and Virgil also contributed a lot to the genre of short story in the form of works like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. *The Arabian Nights* is also an important work of the same genre. The real beginning of short stories is believed to have taken place with Thomas Deloney's work *Gentle Craft* in 1586. As a genre, short story received relatively little critical attention through the middle of the nineteenth century. After a slight halt in the writing of this genre we saw a tremendous come back in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century not only in England but France, Russia, America etc. The possible reason was the tremendous increase in the advancement of science and technology due to which we saw an incredible increase in the publishing of magazines, newspapers, periodicals etc. Besides all this,

the literacy rate saw a rapid rise, thereby increased the number of readers as well. Some of the well-known short story writers who took the responsibility of taking this genre forward include Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Philip K. Dick, William Faulkner, Ray Bradbury, J D Salinger, Charles Bukowski, Anton Chekhov, Nathaniel Hawthorne, O. Henry, Guy de Maupassant, James Joyce, Ruskin Bond etc.

10.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- understand the concept and definition of a short story.
- learn about the rise and development of the short story as a genre in India.
- explore Indian short stories and the contributions of various women writers.

10.2 Introduction to Indian Short Story

The first important thing about a work of fiction which comes to our mind is the 'story' element, that how good story it is. So 'story' is something that plays an important role while defining the merit of any work of fiction. The story part is followed by the level of fantasy or imagination involved in it. Then comes the different techniques, themes, structure etc. So, all these elements work together for the successful accomplishment of the purpose behind writing a work of fiction. Thus, a short story can be defined as a brief work of literature usually written in narrative prose fiction which is complete in itself and where, by the dint of imagination and intellect, the series of events and incidents which are related to central situation are presented.

Curiosity in narrating and listening to short stories is deep rooted in human beings right from the commencement of human civilization. The evolution of the short story began before human being's capability to write. Short story has been one of the most liked genres by most of the writers after drama, novel and poetry. Short story as compared to these genres did not receive serious attention. Writers like Katherine Mansfield were apologetic about writing short stories while prominent short story writers like Edgar Allan Poe considered short story superior to novel. So let us now start talking about the various characteristics of a short story.

A short story has a pattern or sequence of events and situations to achieve a specific purpose. It needs to have a series of interrelated action that progresses through a struggle of opposing forces known as conflict to a climax and a denouement. For the successful and smooth functioning of plot, the creation of a living person through means of action, speech, thoughts and physical appearance of an imaginary character which we call characterization is also necessary. The other essential elements that play an important role to the final effect of the story include point of view, style and technique.

Both novel and short story share much similarity with each other and short story in comparison to novel is short. Moreover, a short story is different from an anecdote, tale and a fable. A short story has a plot, resonance and other dynamic components to a far greater degree than an anecdote. An anecdote can simply be defined as a short and amusing but serious account which may depict a real or imaginative incident or character. So anecdote can be humorous but there is a note of seriousness in it. A short story is also different from a tale. A tale is a detailed narration of some real or imaginary events or incidents by a narrator. The word 'tale' is derived from an old English word for speech. Thus, a tale is primarily an oral form. This oral form of storytelling still exists in many parts of India even in today's technological world.

Similarly, there is a difference between a fable and a short story. A fable is a short, simple story in verse or poem, usually with animals as characters, who finally convey a moral lesson. The moral is usually delivered in the form of an epigram. Fables with only animals as principal characters are also sometimes called as beast fables. It is a very old form of storytelling, related to folklore and proverbs.

Check your progress

1. What is a short story?

_____

2. How different is short story from a novel?

_____

10.2.1 Indian Short Story: An Overview

The history of Indian English fiction runs back to the twentieth century and it is believed that Indian English short story also began during the same era; however Indian English short story kept a low profile during the first half of the twentieth century. But it flourished and emerged as a

popular literary genre during the mid-eighties. It began with the publication of a short story collection *Stories from Indian Christian Life* by Kamala Sathianadan in the year 1898. The short story writers like A.S.P. Ayyer, K.S. Venkatramani, and K. Nagarjan who were social reformers focused on the burning issues of India in their stories.

The short story in Indian writing in English may be referred to as an outgrowth of the Indo-Anglian novel. Right from the writers like Raja Rao to Arun Joshi, every Indo-Anglian novelist, has contributed to this genre in one way or the other by writing at least one if not more, collection of short stories. The two towering literary figures, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, who are equally prolific within the realms of the short story and the novel, have contributed abundantly to the emergence of the short story in English with their amazing style. The short story evolved into a full-fledged mode of creative expression within the palms of these two masters who took a keen and stern interest in it as an art form from the past four decades. The significant output of Manjeri S. Isvaran, Khushwant Singh, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and others in the form of short stories monitor their determination to its improvement. Today, the Indian short story in English has very well served as a commanding vehicle of social consciousness and a tool to portray the Indian social scene.

However the early writers took us back to the ancient classics like 'Panchatantra', 'Jataka Tales', 'Brihatkatha', 'Yoga-Vashistha', the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharata* and took them as a source of inspiration. Later on, a tremendous influence of foreign short story writers was seen on the Indian literary writers and thus influenced them to portray social scenes realistically. The platform for them was set in the shape of different journals and magazines. Thus, it would be apt to say that the Indian short story in English prospered under the influence of foreign writers of this literary genre.

Writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterji and others had a great influence of foreign writers like Walter Scott on their writings. Besides this, the Indian fiction written in other regional languages like Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu etc was highly influenced by the foreign literary giants like Maupassant, Tolstoy, O' Henry etc.

Though the Indian short story writers primarily wrote under the influence of foreign writers, the content and subject matter was itself sufficient to suffice the need. They tried to present the real portrait of India through the genre. They highlighted both the rural and urban way of life

– its lifestyle, religion, superstitious beliefs etc. Man's amities, aspirations and a true picture of human nature were portrayed.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote short stories in Bengali. His short stories were translated from Bengali to English by many publishers. Manjeri S. Isvaran tries to get at the vital truths and values that oversee human affairs. His "By Way of Preface" in his collection entitled **A** *Madras Admiral*, is indeed an essay on the nature and function of the short story as an art form. He believes that a short story writer must try to place before the readers some problem and its determination, through the creative treatment of an incident. In his choice of themes and his treatment of them, he is typically Indian. A.S.P Ayyar also tries to focus the attention of his readers on certain major social problems of the day. The moralistic tone in his short stories is too loud to be missed. But his short stories are largely conversational and in the matter of creation has little of the firmness one generally associates with a good short story. Mulk Raj Anand attacks the insincerity of the people. He published seven volumes of short stories. They include *The Lost Child and Other Stories* (1934), *The Barber's Trade Union and Other Stories* (1942), *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories* (1947), *Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories* (1954), *Selected Stories (* 1954), *The Power of Darkness and Other Stories* (1959), and *Lajwanti and Other Stories* (1966).

In his short stories, Anand empathizes with the underdogs of society and reveals their quandary due to social unfairness and strong biases of the fortunate people towards them. His enthusiasm for alteration through experience and irony gets its full expression in his long short story "Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts." This story gives us a panoramic view of modern India and provides the author unlimited scope for his comments, mocking or otherwise, on the hundred-odd things which have fraught progress all around in India. However, satire does not give to Anand's short stories its true power. He is, on the other hand, more effective, when he is simply deducing life as it is. This is especially true when he portrays women and children. In a nutshell, the power and strength of Anand's realistic portrayal give his short stories an incredible resounding look.

In sharp contrast to Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan approaches the Indian scene with not much subtlety. In this respect, he stands in parallel to Isvaran that he has an eerie eye for detail – both of them create outstanding stories from casual roadside events and characters. While Isvaran attempts to see in a casual event some deeper meaning and significance, Narayan is usually satisfied in skimming lightly on the surface of life without preaching anything. He takes life for

whatever its merit is, writes about those familiar scenes which amuse or delight him, hardly ever bothering to touch its deeper and darker aspects. Aesthetic satisfaction is the sole aim of all his writings.

Though the earlier writers of the genre like Kamla Sattianandan, Nagarajan, S K Chettur etc set the platform but the true artistic fervor emerged during mid-thirties of the Twentieth Century through the writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R K Narayan who displayed their great literary genius and creative bent of mind through their literary pieces. Through the foreign medium and foreign influence they brought that Indianness in it and molded the language and techniques as per the interest of Indians. Along with these three prominent Indian writers the names of the writers like G D Khosla, Ruskin Bond, K. A. Abbas, Khushwat Singh, Manjeri Isvaran, Bhabani, Bhattacharya in handling this form cannot be ignored. They, through their works, presented a picture of what they saw through their creative eyes and presented Indian culture and thoughts to the global readers. The writers deliberately have chosen the English (global language) as a medium of writing to bring Indian culture, tradition, religious beliefs, caste system, corruption, social injustice, hypocrisy etc to the global platform. That is why they dealt with a variety of themes.

The earlier Indian short story writers were primarily reformers. They tried to highlight certain burning issues of the day and laid their focus to educate the illiterate masses. Their writing was thus didactic in nature. Thus the genre of satire and humor was excessively used by the Indian short story writers.

The age was the age of Mahatma Gandhi and the Gandhian philosophy of independence had a predominant influence upon the writers of that time. Thus, the freedom movement also became a dominant theme of the writers like A.S.P. Ayyer, K.S. Venkatramani, and K. Nagarjan at that time. They didn't restrict the stories to the above mentioned themes only but also experimented with some other themes like themes of horror and provided pure and healthy entertainment through their amusing and humorous short stories.

From the last three decades a sea of change can be seen both in Indian life and Indian literature in English as well. The country has tremendously progressed in the field of science and technology and has showed its remarkable progress in communication, defense, trade, commerce etc. Vast changes can also be seen in the field of politics. India holds the position of largest democracy in the world.

But along with these achievements a rapid increase can be seen in unemployment, population explosion, illiteracy, poor and detrimental condition of women as compared to their male counterparts. All these issues became the dominant themes of the writers of the age. The writers of different genres felt a strong urge to highlight it through their works, since poetry was not a better platform to suffice the need, that is why some poets like Jayanta Mahapatra, K **N** Daruwalla etc. started trying their hands at the short story as well. Jayanta Mahapatra along with the short story writers like Randhir Khare, Jug Suraiya etc explored the psychological dimensions of the characters. Besides this, the theme of sexuality was openly dealt by the Indian English short story writers.

Check your progress:

1. What was the influence of foreign writers upon the Indian short story writers?

_____

2. What was the primary focus of Mulk Raj Anand's short stories?

_____

10.2.2 Indian Short Story and Women Writers:

It is undoubtedly true that Indian English literature is mostly dominated by male writers and the literature produced by them in different genres outweighs the creative output of female writers. But Indian women too displayed their creativity through different forms of writing especially in short stories. Attiah Hussain, Nargis Dalal, Cornelia Sorabji, Ela Sen, Anita Desai, Sunita Jain, Dina Mehta, Anita Mehta etc are some of the women writers who gave vent to their emotions through this genre. This is also to be accepted that in the pre-independence phase the number of women writers writing in English was very few, but after independence we saw a rapid rise in the number of women writers because of the socio-political and socio-economic developments in India. Though the women writers were comparatively less and primarily emerged as novelists but the contribution made by them to the Indian short story can not be ignored. The contemporary women writers are exploring different subjects besides laying stress on man-woman relationship in domestic life and stressing the equal status that women should be given in different strata of society. They highlighted how women have always been regarded as the marginalized figures and, what in postcolonial terminology is called as, the 'Other'. They believed that despite this universally acknowledged fact that women perform equally with men physically and mentally,

they have been denied their rights to express their thoughts, feelings and anguish. That is why the women short story writers of India tried through their works to go deep into the female psyche and explore the minds, the sensibility and the angry heart of the forlorn and trapped woman.

Some women short story writers of India presented their women as bold, chivalrous, powerful, energetic and who spoke against their male counterparts with grit and courage. Their female protagonists can be seen boldly and fearlessly challenging the masculine social setups. Some important collections of short stories by female writers which deepened the bulk of Indian english short stories are as follows:Attiah Hussain's *Phoenix Fled and Other Stories* (1953), Rajkumari Singh's *A Garland of Stories* (1960), Usha John's *The Unknown Lover and Stories* (1960), Margaret Chatterji's *At The Homeopath's and Other Stories* (1973), Juliet Banerjee's *The Boy-friend* (1978), Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *How I Became a Holy Mother*, Shashi Deshpande's *The Legacy* (1978), and Dina Mehta's *The Other Woman and Other Stories* (1981).

10.2.3 Let Us Sum Up:

Though Indian short story as a genre does not have that old historical background, its emergence left a great impression upon the various Indian writers to give vent to their creative expressions through it. The advent of the short story can be traced to the early 19th century. The history of Indian short story can mainly be divided into two phases; pre-independence and post-independence. The success of the genre from pre-independence to post-independence through a plethora of writers is distinctly evident. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao represented the first flowering of this genre followed by numerous other writers, who were the products of their age. As readership increased, Indian short stories tended to get translated into foreign languages and have thus today achieved a permanent place in the field of world literature.

10.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- appreciate the short story as a literary genre.
- differentiate the short story from other genres such as the novel and anecdote.
- explain the historical background of the Indian short story.
- become familiar with major Indian short story writers and their important works.
- recognise how these writers helped develop the genre and take it to a global level.

- understand the contribution of women writers to Indian short stories.

10.4 Glossary

Portrayal: The act of portraying

Fiction: Literary type using invented or imaginative writing, instead of real facts, usually written as prose.

Apologetic: Defending by words or arguments; said or written in defence

Climax: The decisive moment in any story

Denouement: The final resolution of the main complication of a literary or dramatic work

Anecdote: Short account of an incident (especially a biographical one)

Narration: An Act of narrating events in a literary work

Folklore: The unwritten lore (stories and proverbs and riddles and songs) of a culture

Proverb: A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people

Panoramic: A bird's eye survey

Satire: A literary device of writing or art which ridicules its subject with an intention to reform

Didactic: Intended to teach or demonstrate, especially with regard to morality

Forlorn: Something that is abandoned or left deserted

Magnum opus: A piece of work that has been given much critical praise, especially one that is considered the greatest work of a person's career

10.5 Sample Questions

10.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. What differentiates a short story from a novel?

(a) Length

(b) Characters

(c) Theme

(d) Title

2. What plays the most important role while defining the merit of any work of fiction?

(a) Length

(b) Story

(c) Structure

(d) All the three

3. With which work of Thomas Deloney the real beginning of short stories is believed to have taken place in 1586?

(a) *Gentle Craft*

(b) The Canterbury Tales

(c) *The Decameron*

(d) The Arabian Nights

4. In which language did Rabindranath Tagore write his short stories?

(a) Tamil

(b) Punjabi

(c) Bengali

(d) Urdu

5. Take the odd one out:

(a) *The Lost Child and Other Stories*

(b) *The Barber's Trade Union and Other Stories*

(c) *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories*

(d) A *Madras Admiral*

6. In which of the writers' works did the freedom movement become one of the dominant themes?

(a) Jayanta Mahapatra

(b) A.S.P. Ayyer

(c) G D Khosla

(d) Ruskin Bond

7. Which of the following Indian short story writers has written the collection of short stories *The Boyfriend*?

(a) Shashi Deshpandi

(b) Attiah Hussain

(c) Rajkumari Singh

(d) Juliet Banerjee

8. Which one of the following is Rajkumari Singh's famous collection of short story?

(a) *A Garland of Stories*

(b) *The Unknown Lover and Stories*

(c) *At The Homeopath's and Other Stories*

(d) *The Boy-friend*

9. Who among the following was primarily a poet?

(a) K N Daruwalla

(b) Ruth Prawer

(c) R K Narayan

(d) All of the above

10. Indian English short story flourished and emerged as a popular literary genre during the mid-eighties with the publication of _____.

(a) *Stories from Indian Christian Life*

(b) *Phoenix Fled and other Stories*

(c) *The Unknown Lover and Stories*

(d) *At The Homeopath's and Other Stories*

10.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Manjeri S. Isvaran stands in parallel to R K Narayan. Comment.
2. What was the influence of Gandhian philosophy upon the Indian short story writers?
3. Indian women short story writers primarily stressed on man-woman relationship. Explain.
4. Write any five collections of short stories by five different women writers of India.
5. Why was English language deliberately chosen by various Indian prominent short story writers as a medium of writing?

10.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Critically comment on the evolution of Indian short stories.
2. What was the contribution of Indian women writers to Indian short stories? Explain.
3. Bring out major themes of Indian short story writers.

10.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Abrams, M.H. A Glossary of Literary Terms: Seventh Edition, Thomson Heinle,
2. Sharma, Amrita. Dictionary of Literary Terms, Sterling Publishers, 1998.
3. Iyengar, K R Srinivasa. Indian Writing in English, Sterling Publishers. 2018.
4. Fallon, Erin et al., editors. A Reader's Companion to the Short Story in English, Routledge, 2001.
5. Dev, Anjana, Neira et al., editors. Indian Literature: An Introduction, Pearson Publishers, 2006.

Unit-11: V. M. Basheer – 'The World-Renowned Nose'

Structure

11.0 Introduction
11.1 Objectives
11.2 'The World Renowned Nose'
- **11.2.1** About the Author
- **11.2.2** Basheer as a Writer
- **11.2.3** Style and Language
- **11.2.4** 'The World Renowned Nose'
  - **11.2.4.1** Summary
  - **11.2.4.2** Critical Analysis
  - **11.2.4.3** Satire, Humour and Pathos
  - **11.2.4.4** Satire
  - **11.2.4.5** Humour
  - **11.2.4.6** Pathos

11.3 Learning Outcomes
11.4 Glossary
11.5 Sample Questions
11.6 Suggested Learning Resources

11.0 Introduction

'The World Renowned Nose' is an ironical, satirical story of a 24 year old man who lives with his mother. The man works as a cook to make both his ends meet. The unsophisticated man can neither read nor write and remains mostly confined to the kitchen where he works. The 24th year of his life turns out to be ominous for him as his nose starts to grow unusually, reaching his chin first, and then it grows to his navel. He returns home, stays with his mother in their hut where people continue to throng for getting a glimpse of his nose. He has nothing to survive on and no visitor ever asks him if he needs anything, despite knowing that he has been fired from his job. Fed up with this, he requests his mother not to let anybody in to see his nose. People, on the other hand, acting differently, start bribing his mother for venturing in. The mother takes the currency notes delightfully and lets the people in to see the nose of the 'Long Nosed One'. This practice

changes their fortune. The man becomes rich. The hut turns into a big guest house. His popularity grows. The poets sing about him, biographers write his biography, and film-makers give him roles in movies. He soon becomes a celebrity with lots of prospects.

This man now employs two beautiful female secretaries, besides managing all affairs very cleverly and tactfully as both of them love him. His popularity grows to such an extent that the government starts taking him seriously. The President honours him with the title "Chief of the Long-nosed one", and also presents a gold medal to him. The political parties also try to garner support from his fame. One political party comes up with the name 'the party of the Long-nosed one'. The other party becomes the opposite one and tries to tarnish the image and fame of the Long-nosed one.

The opposition party makes one of his secretaries issue a statement regarding his nose being unnatural. This ploy makes the President furious and he sends the department to arrest him. Then doctors from 48 countries are summoned and they start examination of the nose of the man in front of the ministers. After a thorough examination the team unanimously declares that his long nose is utterly genuine. The long-Nosed man is then given berth in the Parliament. The government continues to face criticism from the opposition parties over this decision. An ordinary man thus becomes a celebrity first and then a law-maker of the country.

11.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- acquaint with the author and Malayalam literature.
- understand the genre of satire and its various aspects.
- analyse the story 'The World Renowned Nose.'
- appreciate the underlying meaning of the text.
- assess the use of different techniques such as pathos and humour to highlight the social and political follies.

11.2 'The World Renowned Nose'

11.2.1 About the Author:

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, also known as Beypore Sultan, was an activist who fought for Indian independence. He wrote in Malayalam highlighting the follies that had crept into various spheres of life. Born on 21 January, 1908, he was the eldest of the six children of Kaji Abdur Rahman and Kunchachumma. His father was a prosperous timber merchant. He was first admitted in a local primary school and then to the Vaikhom English School. He also learnt Arabic from a tutor.

Basheer was in his teens when Gandhi visited Vaikhom in 1924. He was very much impressed by Gandhiji's ideology which completely transformed his thought process. His leaving home to reach Calicut was a turning point in his life. Calicut was the hub of nationalistic activities. Basheer also participated in the freedom struggle and also took part in Salt Satyagraha on the Calicut beaches. He was arrested with other freedom fighters and was sent to Cannanore Central Jail.

In the jail, Basheer experienced tortures and atrocities at the hands of colonizers' forces. The inhuman behaviour he met with, in the jail brought radical changes in him. He did away with the Gandhian philosophy of Ahimsa and embraced the extremism of Sardar Bhagat Singh and Raj Guru whom he considered his role models for fighting against the imperialists (the Britishers). After the government issued a second arrest warrant against him, he went into hiding. The police started searching for him. To evade arrest he travelled all over India for the next seven years. In his sojourns he reached as far as the shores of Arabia.

He resorted to several disguises viz; palmist, astrologer, magician's assistant, private tutor only to prevent himself from being recognized. Besides these, he worked as a waiter and also took several other jobs.

Basheer was once again on police radar for criticizing the Dewan of Travancore. He had started a weekly publication, *Pauranadam* (a platform for his satirical writings) which was banned. He was arrested and put behind the bars in the Kollam Kasba police station lock-up. The period he spent in the prison proved fruitful for him. He penned some popular stories there: 'Tiger', 'Itiyan Panikker', 'Mathilukal' are a few of them. He wrote 'Premlakhnum' at the request of some prisoners who were fed up with the reading of religious scriptures like the Ramayana and the Bible.

In 1947 when India got freedom Basheer pulled himself from the active politics and tried to do away with his grave experiences through his writings. That is why his works that were written in post-independence era are not bitter and grave in tone. But he was dispirited to see things not going the way he had expected. He was socially and politically conscious, thus wanted to portray society realistically and truthfully.

Basheer passed away on 5th July, 1994, leaving behind his wife Fabi, daughter Shaheena and son Anees. However, he is immortalized by his works that continue to strike peoples' minds.

11.2.2 Basheer as a Writer:

Life and Times

Basheer started his writing career with writing short stories for a newspaper Jayakeseri. His first story, '*Ente Thankham*' (My Thankness), was published sometime between 1937 and 1941. This story had a great impact on Malayalam literary scene because it broke the traditional concepts of romantic fiction. In it Basheer introduced unusual characters like dark complexioned heroine, instead of a fair, slim, beautiful one. A clear difference is also marked in Basheer's writings as he did away with the traditional subjects and themes in Malayalam literary convention.

Basheer went to Madras where he wrote extensively for *Jayakevlam*. His career as a writer and journalist witnessed a strong boost. He came back to Ernakulam where he opened a small book store which began as a circle book house. This was later renamed as Basheer's Book Stall.

Basheer's literary pursuits were guided by a teacher and literary critic, M.P. Paul who proved to be his true mentor as well. It was on his advice Basheer devoted more time to his writing. He also reviewed his novel *Balyakalasakhi* (Childhood Friend) which was published in 1944.

11.2.3 Style and Language:

Basheer's works started making an impact in Malayalam literature in the period when Progressive Writers Movement in Malayalam literature had already begun. Writers were writing on the socialist themes like poverty, hunger, unemployment and so on. Basheer being socially conscious also dealt with these subjects but with his own flavour and experience. He had experienced and savoured all such things himself. His adventurous life provided him ample material for his stories. Having much experience of life and its different aspects to deal with, his stories enjoy uniqueness in Malayalam literature. He experimented with his own style by using rustic language of common parlance. His use of language enabled him to portray social fabric in its real costume. Unconventionally, he portrayed the rogues, the prostitutes, the eunuchs, the

pickpockets, the wicked as well as the innocents with same colour scheme and ironic humour. His treatment of his characters showcases the suffering of marginalized population of the society.

His unconventional use of language is still widely discussed in the literary circles of the country. His use of colloquial language differentiated him from his contemporaries. He never cared for refined and grand style of language instead he used the language spoken by the commoners. At times he scolded his editors for transcribing his writings into standardized Malayalam. His brother once objected him for not following the elements of Malayalam grammar (aakhyas and aakhyaada). Basheer very furiously reacted and told his brother not to look for his stupid aakhya and aakhyaada in his works. He was always contemptuous towards caring for grammatical correctness. His language is marked with freshness, natural flow and originality. Basheer, through his use of language, makes his readers reach the society and examine his characters in the real sense. He delves deep into their minds and makes readers read their behaviour in a given situation.

11.2.4 'The World Renowned Nose':

11.2.4.1 Summary:

The story 'The World Renowned Nose' begins with something which the author calls very startling. He calls it a true story and wants to give a detailed account of the story to his readers.

The story is of a young man who was in his early twenties. The man was ignorant, never had been to school, could not read and write and was devoid of any special attribute. The ordinary man worked as a cook and the kitchen where he worked was his entire world. He would live working satisfactorily in his own world and was unconcerned about the happenings in the outside world. He was rather a follower of Horace's injunction of 'carpe diem'. He would eat to his satisfaction and confine himself to the routine activities of his job. The man was so naïve and devoid of intelligence that he did not know the names of months of the year. He did not know the numbers and different techniques of calculating them. That is why at the end of the month his mother would come to receive his salary. His life was full of satisfaction and he enjoyed it until he reached twenty four years of his age.

In the 24^{th} year of his life his nose started to grow in length. It did not make him feel uncomfortable as he could breathe in a normal manner. However, he faced embarrassing situations as people would visit him to see his unusually grown nose. This irritated his master who fired him from the job. In this way his grown up nose cost him his job. The poor man returned to his home where he stayed with his mother. No one extended a helping hand to the duo. No political party

came forward to condemn his dismissal, no philanthropist turned to their way, no lover of humanity remembered them. They starved in their hut. They faced all sorts of miseries and lived a lowly life. However, people continued to visit them to have a glimpse of his nose. Photographers, news reporters and others would throng their hut, but no one ever asked them if they had taken anything. They had no penny in their pockets. The long nosed man was convinced that his nose had acquired great publicity. The long nosed man was fed up with the prevailing conditions and told his mother to keep these people out from his room. He had felt very much irritated.

The mother got them out and closed the door. The people were very curious to see his nose. Barring them was very disgusting for them, as they would come a long way to have darshan of his nose. They started bribing his mother who accepted that readily. This opened a door of prosperity for the mother and son. They started amassing wealth and their life improved very swiftly. Some people protested against that brazen corruption but no one paid any heed to their concerns. The government also was a mute spectator to this. It invited harsh criticism from various quarters and several people joined the revolutionary parties to topple the government for its silence over this brazen corruption.

The long-nosed one's riches grew manifold and he became a millionaire only in six years. The transformation of the long-nosed one from an ordinary cook to a millionaire was not unnoticed. People from different professional fields started approaching him and offered him roles in their fields of activity. He made his presence in three films, one of them 'The Human Submarine', a technicolour film received large number of audience and was declared a grand success. In addition, six poets wrote epic poems, eulogizing his noble attributes. Nine biographers wrote biography of the long-nosed one and earned fame and name besides money. The long-nosed one's small hut was transformed into a large mansion where doors were always open for all and anyone could get a free meal.

The long-nosed man employed two beautiful secretaries who also loved him and cared about him besides managing all his affairs professionally. But, taking care of two beautiful women simultaneously was as hard as putting two swords in one sheath. Later on, one among them invited a lot trouble for him. On the other hand, other people also liked him very much. The long-nosed one's nose had reached to his navel and it was seen as a sign of greatness. He became a celebrity. His comments and opinions on important national or international events were received delightfully and warmly. The newspapers also published his views even on sensitive issues. People

would wait for the long-nosed one's comments with regard to different subjects. Anything about which the long-nosed one had not commented would be thought insignificant. The long-nosed one reached the zenith of fame and prosperity.

Meanwhile, several people had started hatching conspiracies to capture the long-nosed one. In the first place, the government played a confidence-trick to garner the support of the long-nosed one. They, (the government) awarded him the title of 'The Chief of the Long-nosed One's' and gave him a gold medal as well. The President himself tied the medal round his neck and tweaked the tip of his nose instead of shaking hands with him. The newsreel cameramen recorded the whole event and later on it was played in all theatres. The political parties, on the other hand, enthusiastically came forward to the long-nosed one, and insisted him to join their political party. How could he join various parties? He sought advice from one of his secretaries regarding the issue. The secretary advised him that he should not join any of the parties. But to his surprise one of the parties came up with the slogan that 'Our party is the long-nosed one's party' and 'the long-nosed one's party is the peoples' party'. The slogan became the cause of trouble for the long-nosed one. The members of the other parties persuaded one of his secretaries to announce a caustic comment against him. The secretary issued a statement against him by saying that the long-nosed one had cheated people, deceived them, was a fraudster, and had made her a partner in that fraud. She further said that the nose of the long-nosed one was not genuine but made of rubber, and thus spoiled his reputation.

The news about the nose, of the long-nosed one, being made of rubber hit the headlines of all newspapers and people were awestruck to read it. The news was definitely going to invite harsh reaction from the masses. They were not going to stand it. Using all means of communication, they tried to seek clarification from the President regarding the issue. There were protests everywhere against the long-nose party and the government. The crowds would not allow the President to take rest. Judging the situation, the long-nose party made the other secretary issue her statement in favour of the long-nosed one and against the other parties. She readily issued a statement by saying that the countrymen; the citizens must not pay heed to the lies of the other secretary whose brother was in the opposition party. She further said that she was the faithful secretary of comrade long-nosed one and she was sure his nose was as genuine as her own heart. She asked people to support the long-nosed one and the long-nose party. The contradictory statements of the two secretaries put the masses in confusion. The opposition party members started finding faults of the

government. They relentlessly criticized the President and his government for deceiving people. They even said that the betrayal of the President was a threat to national interest and demanded the execution of the long-nosed one.

One morning the President, reacting very angrily, sent the army who beseiged his mansion and arrested him and took him away. Afterwards, there was complete lull there and the people forgot all about the long-nosed one as if confirming the saying 'out of sight is out of mind'. After the long lull, news with the magnitude of an explosion, hit the front pages of the newspapers, about the continuing trial of the Chief of the long nosed one's. The news revealed that on 9th of March a team of expert doctors, representatives of 48 countries would examine the nose of the long-nosed one. The papers further revealed that news channels of the world would be allowed to film the event. People were advised to maintain peace and wait for the findings.

The common masses did not pay any heed to the President's advice. They assembled in the metropolis in large crowds and resorted to violence. They invaded hotels, burnt public conveyance and police stations, and destroyed government offices. March 9 dawned, people gathered near the President's palace in large numbers, waiting for the news. The announcements were made through loud speakers, making people aware that the examination had started and insisting them to observe peace and maintain discipline.

The doctors formed a circle around the long-nosed one. The cabinet ministers and the President was present there. The long-nosed one's nose was examined first by blocking his nostrils; he opened his mouth to inhale. The other doctor pricked the tip of his nose which revealed a drop of blood. The doctors, in the presence of all the dignitaries, issued a unanimous statement regarding the nose of the long-nosed one. They said that his nose was natural and genuine. The doctors' verdict was really a good news for one of the secretaries, for long-nose party and the government. The secretary kissed the tip of his nose shouting the slogans 'Long live comrade long-nose', 'Long live the Progressive Peoples' Party of the long-nosed one' etc. As the shouting ended, the President came up with another scheme and nominated the long-nosed one as one of the members of the Parliament.

On the other hand, the opposite parties joined their hands under one banner 'The United Front' and incessantly demanded the resignation of the ministry. That is how an ordinary cook reached the Parliament and became a lawmaker despite not being worthy of the post.

11.2.4.2 Critical Analysis:

The story 'The World Renowned Nose' has been written to highlight the follies prevailing in the Indian societal setup. The author used myriad techniques to satirize the social, political as well as the behavioural patterns of Indian community. It has been written in first person considering the tradition of historical writing, the narrator begins from the beginning i.e., from the age of 24th year of the hero, Mukoon.

In the 24th year, the nose of the hero started growing unusually. This unusual and abnormal growth of a body part lead to his dismissal from the job. He was made to pack his bags for none of his own fault. The author mocks at the behavioural pattern of the people who never accept their fellow beings with the slightest of their abnormalities. He uses ironic and sarcastic tone to mock at the historical personages, history and historical writings.

He says that in the 24th year of one's age some crucial changes occur and this phenomenon of change has been left unnoticed so far by the historical writers who could have observed much more if they had properly deliberated upon it.

Mukoon, the hero, an ordinary cook, knew nothing about the outside world and even depended on his mother to receive his salary. He lived in his own world with a mundane routine like Sisyphus and was quite happy and content with his lot. Then something extraordinary happened in the 24th year of his age when his nose began to grow unusually, resulting in his dismissal from the job. He returned home, faced a tough time and experienced stomach churning starvation. People continued to visit him, but none of them bothered to ask him if they had something to eat. The author brings home the point that people are only concerned with their own interests and relish even at the cost of others' lives. The miseries and woes of the unprivileged continue to remain unaddressed.

The story tells us that the nose of the man reached to his naval and he got very disturbed by visitors and their indifferent attitude. Although, he was satisfied that his nose had become much popular. The author employed the techniques of hyperbole, exaggeration, and fantasy in order to bring out humour as well as pathos from what seemed to be an ordinary stuff. The hero plunged into deep despair for a period of time and then the gloom started to dispel. His mother readily accepted bribe from the visitors. This was the turning point of their life. This provided them a chance to better their lot. They kept taking bribe from the visitors, and this practice allowed them to transform radically. The days of poverty and misery ended, prosperity and happiness knocked

their door. On the other hand, several conscious people voiced their concern for this deceitful dealing but they neither had an answer from any quarter of the society nor from government.

Mukoon employed secretaries, built a new house and became a popular man. Several professionals offered him roles in movies, biographers wrote books on him and earned money. The ordinary and ignorant man becoming a celebrity in a short span of time reflects the sheer foolishness and stupidity of masses that make an ordinary unworthy person to reach the apex, `where the person is not seen as ignorant but a god to be worshipped. Mukoon's opinion on different issues was sought by people like T.V. channels, news reporters, philanthropists, intellectuals and philosophers. The jotting down of Mukoon's words very eagerly by different media groups is a portrayal of mean display of their intellect, a burlesque.

The government awarded him on being 'the chief of the long-nosed one's' to the society. The President presented a gold medal to him and tweaked the tip of his long nose. This is quite ironical as the governments play confidence tricks to garner the support of those who have themselves resorted to deceitful practices and unlawful activities for achieving success. Mukoon was made leader of the people's struggle. They approached him and announced that their party was the long-nosed one's party and the long-nosed one's party was the peoples' party. On the other hand, other parties hatched a well-designed conspiracy. They projected his nose as being made of rubber and made one of his secretaries to issue a statement regarding the same. This gave rise to conflicts, but the long-nosed one continued to grow in reputation. He won the admiration, adoration, and fame, became a law-maker of which he was not worthy.

The author wants us to appreciate that in Indian society people act foolishly and unreasonably. He also takes a dig at those poor intellects who, without using common sense, follow the influence of those who have gained recognition even by false means. The story is a scathing criticism of the politicians and officials who are unworthy and never do anything special for their community but are shrewd enough to exploit the common masses and take advantage of their foolishness. They make ordinary people, like Mukoon, a celebrity in order to get themselves going and soar high.

11.2.4.3 Satire, Humour and Pathos:

Satire: Satire is one of the oldest literary forms. It is an instrument of attack with which the writer or the speaker equips himself/herself in order to set right the situations that they think are undesirable. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary states that satire is a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution in which you use humour to show their faults or weaknesses. This can be employed directly as in the form of taunts or jibes or indirectly using irony. While employing this technique, the writer often describes a completely different situation and references to the things we know, so that we realize what it is that the writer is intending to criticize. It is used to highlight or ridicule the weaknesses, evils, follies, faults of a man, group community, or setup: social, political in nature. The aim of satire is to correct the unethical conduct by mocking at them, using criticism and wit with humour and sarcasm or preventing people from going astray.

Humour: In its common usage, the word humour means what creates or causes laughter, but it also means mood or character. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary explains that humour is the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech, a mood or state of mind, each of the four. It can be summed up as to ridicule or to make fun of someone, his statement, dress, or attitude. It is like a sugar coating which makes the criticism easier and lighter to take.

Pathos: Pathos is the most powerful and strongest tools that a writer or the speaker has to persuade his readers or listeners. A writer employs this tool to appeal to the readers' emotions because it is all about emotions or heart and we are often swayed by our emotions. While reading a work of art we pity or sympathize with those characters who are the worst sufferers or who go through troubles and tribulations. This empathetic attitude or feeling sad about the victim is what we call pathos. Using this technique the writer convinces his readers to go by emotions and not by logic as pathos is about hearts not heads.

11.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- Appreciation for Artistic Interpretation: Readers will gain an understanding of the diverse ways in which artists can interpret and convey complex themes through their

artwork. They will learn to appreciate the depth and symbolism embedded in artistic creations.

- Critical Analysis Skills: The essay encourages readers to engage in critical analysis by examining the physical aspects, symbolic significance, and emotional impact of the artwork. Readers will develop skills in interpreting and evaluating art, enhancing their ability to analyze and appreciate artistic expressions.
- Cultural and Historical Awareness: Through exploring the social, cultural, or political issues addressed by "The World-Renowned Nose," readers will gain insight into the wider context in which the artwork was created. This fosters a greater understanding of the interplay between art and society and promotes cultural and historical awareness.
- Creative Thinking and Expression: By studying the artistic techniques employed by Bashir Ahmad to communicate his message, readers may be inspired to think creatively and explore different ways of expressing their own ideas and emotions through art or other forms of creative expression.

Lastly, the essay presents opportunities for readers to expand their knowledge and understanding of art, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for the power of artistic expression.

11.4 Glossary

Unsophisticated: Not sophisticated; lacking education or enlightenment

Ominous: That which gives indication of coming ill

Prospects: Coming of potential things in one's way, especially favourable

Tarnish: Blacken; disgrace or dishonor

Parlance: A particular way of speaking or using words

Costume: Appearance of characteristics of a particular period

Eunuch: Castrated human male; an ineffectual person

Injunction: An order, especially a court order, requiring a person to do or stop doing a specific action

Darshan: An opportunity to see a holy person or the image of a deity

Technicolor: A process of colour cinematography using synchronized monochrome films, each of a different colour, to produce a colour print; brightly coloured

Unanimous: Uniform; fully in agreement

Follies: Faults; thoughtless action resulting in tragic consequences

Sarcastic: Containing sarcasm; mocking (often using irony)

Philanthropist: Lover of mankind; kind; very generous person

Mundane: Ordinary; commonplace

Naïve: Showing a lack of experience, wisdom or judgment

11.5 Sample Questions

11.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. The nose of the long-nosed one started to grow unusually at the age of ____.

(a) 24

(b) 21

(c) 25

(d) 20

2. The man was thrown out of his job because _____.

(a) He was not a good cook.

(b) He was ignorant.

(c) The visitors disturbed the peace of his master.

(d) His mother would receive his salary.

3. Long-nosed one spent his life_____after his return to his home.

(a) Peacefully

(b) Delightfully

(c) Miserably

(d) Proudly

4. What did the people do when they were not allowed to see the long-nosed one?

(a) Donated money to help them live a better life

(b) They used force to have a glimpse of his nose

(c) They resorted to violence

(d) They bribed his mother and got the permission

5. Whom did the long-nosed one consult when he was offered a place in politics?

(a) His mother

(b) The President

(c) His Secretary

(d) None of these

6. One of the secretaries put an egg on the long-nosed one's face. How?

(a) By calling him a fool

(b) By saying that his nose was unreal

(c) By charging him for taking bribe

(d) By labeling him an agent of the government

7. The title the long-nosed one received from the government was _____.

(a) The chief among the long-nosed ones

(b) The cleverest man in the world

(c) The most generous to the entire populace

(d) The peace-loving and caring man

8. The long-nosed one became the cause of much destruction and violence.

This reflects that the masses do not use their _____.

(a) Strength

(b) Money

(c) Reason

(d) Tools

9. How was long-nosed man's nose tested for ascertaining its genuineness?

(a) He was taken to a super specialty hospital for the test.

(b) He was sent outside the country to get examined by expert doctors.

(c) Doctors from 48 countries were summoned and they tested his nose in the presence of the president and the ministers.

(d) The tip of his nose was cut.

10. In the story the author uses several devices to satirize the social setup. To achieve his goals he mostly makes use of____.

(a) Irony-sarcasm-exaggeration-humour-pathos

(b) Metaphor- imagery-simile-sarcasm

(c) Alliteration-pun-hyperbole-simile

(d) Imagery-personification-mimicry-metaphor

11.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Why was the man (Mukoon) thrown out of his job?
2. How far was his mother responsible for his becoming a popular man?
3. How was his nose tested?
4. What did the extra-long nose bring to the man?
5. How did the controversies arise in the story?

11.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. The man's decision to keep the visitors away from him proved helpful to him. How do you know?
2. What does the story tell us about the psychology of the masses?
3. There was great confusion in the minds of people about the nose of the man. How was the confusion created in their minds?

11.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Basheer, Vaikhom Mohammad, *Me Grandad 'ad an elephant!: Three Stories of Muslim life inSouth India,* trans. R. E. Asher etc,al., Edinburgh University of Edinburgh Press 1980 and'New Delhi'; Penguin India, 1992.
2. Ravindran Vanajam ed., *Vaikhom Mohammad Basheer: Short Stories*, New Delhi: Katha, Rupa, 1996.

Unit-12: A Brief Survey of Indian English Drama

Structures

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- **12.2.1** Origin of Ancient Indian Drama
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- **12.2.5** Indian English Women Playwrights
- **12.2.6** Indian English Drama: Some Challenges

12.3 Learning Outcomes
12.4 Glossary
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12.0 Introduction

Drama as we know is one of the literary forms that evolved from the ancient theatre and theatrical performances. Looking into the history of the development of drama in ancient Greece, Rome, India, England, we come to know that it has always been an integral part of culture, representing the moral choices, cultural conventions, religious beliefs, social, political and philosophical approaches and attitudes and their changing status from time to time. Drama as we see is the combination of fact and fiction, and serves the function of representing the society in totality and simultaneously endeavours to bring about some desired changes in society for better in 'art for life's sake' stance. As Horace put it, drama was designed 'to delight and instruct.'

In ancient India drama was considered as the 'Fifth Veda.'A.B Keith remarks, "Indian tradition preserved in the *Natyashastra* the oldest of the texts of the theory of the drama, claims for the drama a divine origin, and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves." Its journey started with classical Sanskrit plays, using both Sanskrit and prakrit languages. Some of the ancient classical dramas are Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitram, Vikramorvasiyam,* and

Abhijnanasakuntalam; Bhavabhuti's *Malati-Madhava*, *Mahaviracharita* and *Uttararamacharita*; Emperor Harsha's comedy *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika* and a Buddhist drama *Nagananda*.

The origin and development of the Indian English drama is linked to the arrival of the British and the subsequent phenomenon of colonisation of the Indian subcontinent. Indian English drama is a unique corpus created by Indian writers in English or the translated plays into English from other regional languages of India, either by the dramatists themselves or by the translators. Pioneers of Indian English drama tried their hand at showing diverse Indian socio-cultural customs, conventions, and traditions in a non-native language. Moreover, it was natural for the dramatists to find it difficult to get connected to the masses who spoke their own regional languages. Nevertheless, English speaking classes emerged within Indian society over time due to the long exposure to colonisation, and the English drama started becoming relevant in Indian society after the English language permeated in the society. Also, it is a fact that Indian English drama did not succeed in the manner in which Indian English novel and poetry succeeded for several reasons (mentioned in the subsequent sections).

We have a period of Pre-Independence Indian English drama and a Post-Independence Indian English drama showing varied colours and themes of their socio-political circumstances. Moreover, women writers have also contributed to the corpus of Indian English drama. Several plays have been recognized nationally and internationally for their form and content.

12.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- familiarize you with the idea of the origin of ancient Indian drama in general and Indian English drama in particular
- familiarize you with the various aspects of the journey and development of Indian English drama
- acquaint you with the notion of the contribution of Indian dramatists in the Pre-Independence period and Post-Independence period
- acquaint you with the sense of the contribution of women playwrights in the Pre-Independence period and Post-Independence period

- acquaint you with the sense of challenges faced by Indian English drama in its development compared to Indian English novel and poetry.

12.2 A Brief Survey of Indian English Drama

12.2.1 Origin of Ancient Indian Drama:

Theatre is life. There is no art, no craft, no learning, no yoga, no action, which cannot be seen in it.

--Bharata's Natyashastra

Let us start with what Natyashastra says about the origin of drama. In our Indian tradition, we have varied sources of information regarding ancient literature and other cultural performances. As there is a notion of the divine origin of language in Judaeo-Christian tradition, so is there a notion of divine origin in Indian tradition about the origin of drama. As it is said, Brahma created everything so he created drama as well. A long time ago, it so happened that people had resorted to uncivilized ways during Vedic times, were ruled by greed and lust, had developed anger and jealousy, and the earth was swarmed over by gods, demons, evil spirits and yaksas. Indra and other gods seeing this requested Brahma to give people a toy *(kridaniya*) which could not just be seen but heard as well, which would act as a diversion, and people could thereby give up bad behaviour. This request did not move Brahma, as he had already given the Vedas, possessing all forms of knowledge for bettering the life on earth, so it was the fault of people who were neglecting the Vedas and taking to bad ways. Indra explained to Brahma that it is true that people benefited from Vedas, but Sudras were not allowed to learn and listen to the Vedas and requested that under the circumstances, there was a dire need for the fifth Veda and all four castes be allowed to learn and use it.

So the credit goes to Indra for requesting Brahma to create a Natyaveda. The treatise created by four-faced Brahma was read to other gods by Indra, who were not able to understand it as it was tough and too voluminous to practice. So Indra reported toBrahma that "they were incapable of any dramatic activity" (I, 22) and proposed that an appropriate person be searched among the sages as they were industrious. Thus, Bharata was selected and charged with the work. Brahma said to Bharata, "you have got a hundred sons and, therefore, you be the producer" (I, 24). So in this way, Bharata got the *Natyaveda* from Brahma.

Before Bharata there was drama in Indian culture but it deteriorated and had fallen from the standard and was given to *gramya dharma* depicting only elemental passions like anger, jealousy, greed, lust etc. Before Bharata there was no nataka but *rupaka* dealing with low *srngara,* so there was the need to refine the public taste and the way to achieve this was by employing the drama as it was already a popular cultural practice.

The account of drama in the first chapter of *Natyashastra* goes like this:

Bharata obeying Brahma accepted the task and guided his 100 sons to perform different roles. While rehearsing words, movements and actions (3 *vrttis*) Brahma suggested the inclusion of dance and music (*kaisiki vrtti*). Bharata agreed on a condition that women players be allowed voluntarily as it was not possible for males to perform female emotions. So Brahma created *apsaras* who were women in form. After rehearsals, when Bharata got ready to perform, it turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt, as it depicted the victory of gods over demons causing Virupaksa the leader of the demons to disrupt the performances and thereby stopping it and deciding not to allow the second show. Brahma, in order to protect the performances from the disturbing demons, ordered Maya to construct a theatre house and a stage. Before the show Brahma explained to gods and demons the nature of the play, that it is not against anyone and no one needs to feel hurt. Its objective and purpose is to entertain first and then instruct. “A play shows your actions and emotions. Neither gods nor demons are depicted as always good or always evil. Actually, the ways of the world are represented here. It gives you good advice; it gives you enlightenment and also entertainment. It provides peace of mind to those who are afflicted with miseries, sorrow, grief or fatigue” (I, 106-7,112-14). After this, Bharata was not troubled by demons and he carried on with his task of presenting dramas.

From this account, one can infer three main points. First, there was the need for the theatre house and stage to avoid disturbances. This necessity of theatre houses and a stage for the audience and actors would help the performances to be conducted smoothly. Second, there was the mention of the female artists, and it was acknowledged that certain roles are better performed by female actors. Third, in reply to the protests by the demons who alleged that Bharata's play “is an insult to us and complimentary to gods”, Brahma advises that drama should not be judged from a personal point of view, as it is does not represent a particular individual but the ways of the world in general. The dramatists advise good through entertainment, bringing peace of mind, not chaos.

12.2.2 History of Indian English Drama:

As we are informed that the history of drama in English in India is very much linked to British colonialism, Indians started using theatre as an instrument of protest against the British Empire. To curb this artistic protest via theatrical activities British Government had to impose the Dramatic Performances Act in 1876. The easiest categorisation of Indian English drama is as follows:

1) Indian English Drama before Independence.
2) Indian English dramas after Independence.

12.2.3 Indian English Drama before Independence:

The Prosecuted or Dramatic Scenes illustrative of the present state of- Hindoo Society in Calcutta, by Krishna Mohan Banerji is taken to be the origin of Indian English Drama in 1831. Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt's *Is This Called Civilization?* Is one of the first significant plays to appear on the literary horizon in 1871. Rabinder Nath Tagore primarily wrote in Bengali, but almost all his plays are available in English translation. He himself translated many of his plays along with other translators. His plays are *The Post Office, Sacrifice, Chandalika, Red Oleanders, Mukhtadhara, Natir Puja, The king of the Dark Chamber, The Cycle of Spring, Sanyasi* and *The Mother's Prayer.* Though the plays he wrote are grounded in Indian ethos and tradition in their themes and characters, he also experimented a lot with his plays and assimilated Bengali, Sanskrit and western features of drama and was successful in doing so. He employed French symbolic techniques to make his plays suggestive and more meaningful.

In his article *'Sri Aurobindo'* published in the the *Times Literary Supplement* (July 8, 1944), D. L Murray remarked that Sri Aurobindo is, "a new type of thinker, one who combined in his vision the alacrity of the West with the illumination of the east."

His play *The Viziers of Bassora* is romantic, *Rodogune* is tragic, *Perseus the Deliverer* is mythological, *Eric* is heroic, *Vasavadutta* is legendary. All these plays are five-act plays. We can see a perpetual conflict between good and evil in varied forms in his plays. Sri Aurobindo imbibed much from the Elizabethan drama and**,** more specifically**,** the use of blank verse. Nevertheless, he is not unaware of the Sanskrit playwrights like Kalidas, Bhasa and Bhavabhuti. As Dr. K.R.S Iyengar writes:

"...all five plays are steeped in poetry and romance, recalling the spirit and flavour of the distinctive dramatic type exemplified in different ways by Bhasa, Kalidas and Bhavabhutti. Though, of course, all have Aurobindonian Undertones."

Six of his incomplete plays are *Prince of Edur, The Birth of Sin, The House of Brut, The Maid and the Mill, Achab and Esarhaddon* and *The Witch of Ilni*.

Harindranath Chattopadhyay also contributed to the growth of Indian English Drama. Socialistic concerns are depicted in various forms in his plays. In his collection *Five Plays* (1929), the first play *The Window* is about the exploitation of textile labourers of Bombay by the industrialists. In *Parrot* he shows a woman's urge to set herself free from an undesirable husband's marriage bond. *The Sentry's Lantern* expresses the sentiments of three victims, and *The Coffin* shows the destruction of a bourgeois family.

There are various other playwrights who also deserve to be mentioned for their contribution to the growth of Indian English Drama. V. V Srinivasa Ayangar wrote *Blessed in a Wife* (1915), *Wait for the Stroke*(1915), *The Bricks Between* (1918) and *Ram Rajya* in 1952. A.P.S Ayyar also wrote several plays, like *In the Clutch of the Devil* (1926), *Sita's Choice* (1935), *The Slave of Ideas* (1941) and *The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity* (1942). D.A Krishnaswamy wrote a verse play, *The Flute of Krishna*, which earned him the fame.

Considered the father of modern Kannada drama T.P Kailasam also wrote in English. There is a blend of both Indian and western traditions in his plays. His English plays are *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *Karma* (1964), a play which has significant similarities with Sophocles's tragedy *Oedipus the King*. A modern woman playwright Bharati Sarabhai wrote *The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* (1952). The former play depicts the impact of the Gandhian view of life and social order, and the latter is a realistic play and explores the personal world of a sensitive person.

12.2.4 Indian English Drama after Independence:

There was not much difference between the pre and post-independence scenario of Indian English Drama. Although little effort was exerted on the performing arts, nonetheless, the National School of Drama and other state academies were established. However, the stress was on other Indian languages rather than drama in English. Among the dramatists of post-independent India, Asif Currimbhoy wrote more than thirty plays on the themes of history, politics, society, religion, art and metaphysics. His well-known plays are *The Doldrummers* (1960), a play about Anglo-

Indians and hippie culture, *The Dumb Dancer* (1961), about a Kathakali dancer, *The Captives* (1963), about China-India conflict, *Goa* (1964), about the liberation of Goa, *Monsoon* (1965), regarding colonisation, *An Experiment with Truth* (1969), about Mahatma Gandhi and the freedom struggle, *Inquilab* (1970), depicting the Naxalite movement, and *Om Mane Padme Hum* (1972), depicting Tibet under China's occupation and Dalai Lama's exit to India from Tibet.

G.V Desani wrote *Hali* (1950) about human longing and fulfillment. It is a poem play without visible actors on stage; only voices are presented on the stage. Pratap Sharma's *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) was banned in Mumbai for some time owing to its showing the goings-on of a brothel in a straightforward way in a Red-Light district of Bombay. *The Professor has a War Cry* (1970) is another play by Pratab Sharma. It is also important to mention Nissim Ezekiel who wrote three plays in 1969 namely *Marriage Poem: A Tragi Comedy, Nalini: A Comedy* and *The Sleep Walkers: An Indo-American Farce,* and *Don't call it Suicide* in1994. Gurcharan Das's *Larins Sahib* (1970), a three-act play, shows the life of Henry Lawrence as a Britisher in the court of Dalip Singh in Punjab in 1846-47. The play has lively dialogue, well-constructed plot and historical subject matter.

Contemporary Indian drama is experimental and innovative in themes and technicalities, a deviation from European and classical models, depicting contemporary socio-political issues. The dramatists in the background of this new emerging dramatic tradition are Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sirkar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. Karnad, a writer, director and actor, wrote *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayvadana* (1970), and *Nagmandala* (1972). He used history, myths, and old legends in a very symbolic way to establish their relevance in contemporary socio-political conditions. In Girish Karnad, we see a blending of traditional forms of Indian theatre with new ones but only to show contemporary issues. Vijay Tendulkar has the theme of isolation of the individual and the conflict of the individual with its hostile ambience. He does not consider human violence a loathsome thing. He says:

Unlike the communists I do not think violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or for that matter, in any society. The spirit of aggression is something that a human being is born with. Not that it is bad. Without violence, man might have turned into a vegetable.

He depicts violence on stage as raw and natural without dressing it up to make it palatable. He wrote *Chimanicha Ghor Hote Menache* (1960), *Kalojanchi Shalai*(1968), *Ek Hoti Mugli* (1967), showing the idea of exploitation of individuals and his concern with authority. The theme

of oppression is dominant in his *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1968) and *Ghasiram Kotwal* (1972). Both *Kamala* (1982) and *Kanyadaan* (1982) are written in the naturalistic tradition. The former is about exploitation and marriage, while the latter is about a family's emotional and cultural upheavals.

Badal Sircar started his dramatic career with a humorous play *Solution X*. He wrote *Evam Inderjit* (1962), *That other History* (1964), and *There is no End* (1971). His plays represent social, psychological, political and existential problems. His plays *Procession, Bhoma* and *Stale News* are premised on the idea of the Third Theatre.

Mohan Rakesh wrote in Hindi, but his plays have been translated in English for their exceptional relevance. His plays are *Ashadh ka Ek Din* (1958), *Leharon Ke Rajhansa* (1963) and *Adhe Adhure* (1969). They show the unfriendly surroundings of the contemporary man and the constant threat to human relationships.

Mahesh Dattani is “one of India's best and most serious contemporary playwrights writing in English”, as observed by *The International Herald Tribune*. He founded a theatre group known as “Playpen”. He is an actor, director, playwright and producer in one. He highlights the contemporary Indian urban issues like the tension between tradition and modernity, the marginalized minorities, women, gays, hijras. He was influenced by Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Strindberg. Technically he is compared to Ibsen. There is the depiction of violence in our private thoughts and our hypocritical conduct concerning public morals in his plays.

Dattani dedicated his life to theatre, and in 1998 he set up his theatre studio to train new talented aspirants in directing, stage writing and acting. He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1998 for his collection *Final Solution and Other Plays* becoming the first to receive it as a playwright. Penguin Books India brought out an anthology under the title of 'Collected Plays' in 2000 containing Dattani's eight plays, namely *Seven Steps Around the Fire, On a Muggy Night at Mumbai, Do the Needful, Final Solutions, Bravely Fought the Queen, Tara, Dance Like a Man* and *Where There is a Will*. In 2021 he wrote *30 Days in September*, dealing with the sexual abuse of a child and the consequential harmful effect on the man-woman relationship.

12.2.5 Indian English Women Playwrights:

Fiction and poetry by Indian women writers have been aptly acknowledged and recognised nationally and globally and probably is at par with the acknowledgment and recognition received by male writers. But drama by women writers has not received that much recognition and

acknowledgment either at national or global level. The reason for women writers outdoing or equaling the men writers in writing fiction might be as G.H Lewes has said: “Of all the departments of literature, Fiction is the one to which, by nature and circumstances women are best adapted ... the domestic experiences which form the bulk of women's knowledge find an appropriate form in novels”. Women seem to have shied away from dramatic and performance art for some socio-economic reasons. One of the reasons, as Tutun Mukherjee says, is that, “the audience expects the writers to articulate the public and radical voice of dissent and to provide scope for social comment, satire and criticism” and these are considered to be public and male activities, a sphere denied to women. Nevertheless, a number of women writers have tried their hands on this dramatic art and have achieved success at different national and international levels.

In the pre-independence period, the first significant woman playwright was Bharati Sarabhai, who wrote *The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* (1952). The former play depicts the impact of Gandhian socio-political principles through an old woman who digs a well for Harijans with the money she had saved for pilgrimage to Haridwar, preferring the basic need of the people over her religious need, whereas the latter play shows the inherent religious ambition in Indian womanhood. *Krishna* (1937) by Nalini Moha shows the demoralized India under the British rule. *Deluge* (1941) by Shanti Javari is a satire on modern life and its delusion. A verse play *Captive Soil* (1945) by Mrinalini Sarabhai is about the freedom movement.

In the post-independence phase, Shrimati K.B Thakur who wrote *Mother and Child* (1960), a tragic story about Karna, is considered the first significant playwright. Ketaki, another woman playwright, wrote *Radha and Krishna: the Reunion* (1948) and *Bheeshma and Drona* (1951). *Gandharee and Kaikayee* by Kamala Subramanium is a dialogue between two female characters from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

Except for Bharati Sarabhai, all other woman playwrights seem to have written plays with the themes based on popular Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. From the sixties, in the post-independence period, the woman playwrights seem to have moved towards showing the contemporary situations rather than mythical stories. Mrs. J.M Billomoria wrote *My Sons* (1963), with the Indo-Pak war in the backdrop and communal riots. Mrs. Dina Mehta's *The Myth Makers* (1969) shows the conflict between Maharashtrians s and non-Maharashtrians and exposes the interests of the selfish politicians. Shri Devi Singh's *The Purple Braided People* (1970), and

Mahesh Elkunchwar's recent play, *The Old Stone Mansion*, has the theme of the falling status of aristocracy in a new socio-political set-up. In 1971 Kamala Das also wrote *A Mini Trilogy*.

Bengali writer Mahasweta Dewi, winner of Jnanpith and Magsaysay awards, wrote a number of plays. She makes use of Indian history and myths and treats them as assets to Indian literature. Her plays are *Jal* (Water), *Bayan* (Witch), *Aajir* (Slave) and *Mother of 1084.* She depicts the plight of the untouchables and the marginalized groups. Usha Ganguly, a contemporary playwright, shows the struggle of the ordinary average people in daily life, their anxieties, and indignation in a realistic way rather than of historical and mythological personages. Her theatre company Rangkarmee is there to "create meaningful theatre for the masses". Her play *Rudaali* shows the predicament of Indian women. Tripurari Sharma, like Badal Sircar, performs her plays in the streets. At the request of UNICEF, she wrote and performed a highly discussed play *The Wooden Cart.*

PALI (Performing Arts and Literatures of India) was founded by Uma Parameswaran in Canada to spread Indian culture and literature among the Winnipeg children. The plays she wrote are *Sons Must Die* (1960), *Meera* (1971), *Sita's Promise* (1981), *Dear Didi and My Sister* (1989) and *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1998). Manjula Padmanabhan shot into fame as a dramatist via her play *Harvest*. The play won the prize out of 1470 plays from 76 countries in 1997 at the first Onassis International Cultural Competition. The play depicts the destitute youth of Mumbai selling out their body parts for money**.** *Her Lights Out* shows the tragic events of the day to day rape of the prostitutes and the disinterested attitude of citizens towards this social evil.

There is a belief that the plays written by women in English deal with the issues of the urban upper educated middle class only. But when we look at the plays written by women in the regional languages, we come to know that there is a variety in terms of issues and themes representing the common masses. It is highly recommended that a survey be done to explore the drama written in regional languages by women and the issues and themes they have dealt with.

12.2.6 Indian English Drama: Some Challenges

One of the major challenges to Indian English drama is that English is not the language of the masses that speak their regional languages. English is usually spoken in some offices and academic institutions. So it is difficult for the dramatist to create a convincing theatre for the masses that are not well versed in the English language. The dramatist has to write lively dialogues that go well with the characters being represented. As Girish Karnad puts it, "you write spoken

dialogue- you just don't write dialogues." The dialogues should sound lively and natural in the given circumstances of the characters without a bit of artificiality. Mahesh Dattani also says that the biggest challenge "is to reflect the language the way she is spoken and not harp on the correct form."

Further, English is seen as the language of the elite, and sponsors keep in view the audience and invest accordingly. Also, there is a lack of trained performers in English who would perform the dialogues as fitting to the characters in the Indian socio-cultural settings. There is yet to evolve an accepted Indian English, which is suitable for dramatic dialogues of characters in Indian settings and circumstances compared to Indian English novel, which has evolved to a greater degree. The Indianisation of dramatic form has yet to take place to show the Indian sensibilities, temperaments and ethos. Although some dramatists like Girish Karnad have tried to Indianise the drama using conventions of Indian classical drama and folk theatre, the degree of success is not such as that of the Indian English novel. Also, there is a dearth of plays that are staged. As Rama Sharma, in his preface to his *Collected Plays* says, "Any play written in India in English has an inherent disadvantage in the sense that it is not very often staged. Stage worthiness being a basic test for a play… most of the plays written in English do not fulfil this requirement." Rama Sharma further observes:"However these can be read and enjoyed for their thought content and for the relevance they have, to the perennial problems of life." The following points are summed up as the challenges to the Indian English drama:

1. The most crucial inhibiting factor is language. English is not our mother tongue. It is a learnt second language, and when characters utter dialogues in English, it sounds artificial, not natural.
2. The masses are not well versed in English. It is considered as the language of the elite.
3. There is a dearth of well-trained actors in English.
4. There is not yet an accepted Indian English which writers could use with confidence in the Indian context.
5. Compared to cinema halls and multiplexes, there is a dearth of theatres where the actual theatrical performances can be carried out.

Until English in India percolates to that level where masses use English as easily as their regional languages, there has to be a process of translating regional plays into English and vice versa. The playwright has to make characters speak naturally. The playwright has to write in a

language that is recognisably Indian and depicts the social context as it is lived. As Raja Rao expressed in the preface to his novel *Kanthapura* 'to convey in a language not one's own, the spirit that is one's own'. To convey the spirit, there has to be the development of a language for Indian English drama that suits the Indian character in Indian settings, the way Indian English novelists have achieved global recognition.

12.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the origin, growth, and development of Indian English drama.
- gain a basic idea of ancient Indian theatre.
- appreciate about major Indian English dramatists and their works.
- recognise the contributions of Indian dramatists to Indian English drama in the pre- and post-independence periods.
- comment on the challenges faced by Indian English drama.

12.4 Glossary

Drama: A play for the theatre, television, or radio.

Theatre: A place, building, room where people watch the plays and performances of the actors

Vedas: Ancient sacred writings that are important part of the Hindu religion

Natyashastra: A treatise on drama and dramatics and the allied subjects

Colonisation: The process of taking control of another country by going to live there or sending people to live there

Corpus: A collection of writings having some specific characteristic features

Permeate: The spread of some something into something else

Bharata or Bharatamuni: A sage who is credited with having written the Natyashastra

Yaksas: A kind of spirit can be malevolent or benevolent

Indra: The head of gods, god of rain and thunder.

Sudras: Lowest of the four Hindu castes, the working class.

Natyaveda: The Veda created by Brahma out of the four basic Vedas for all the four Hindu castes.

Brahma: The creator in the Hindu religion, also known as Svayambhu- the self born.

Industrious: Hard working, energetic.

Gramya Dharma: Uncivilized conduct.

Shringara: Low humour

Apsaras: Celestial water nymphs in Hinduism created by Brahma, used as singers and dancers

Perpetual: Continuing, happening often

Blank Verse: Iambic pentameter unrhymed verse

Bourgeois: Middle class people and their ways

Third Theatre: Street plays with actors in the attire of audiences

Haridwar: An important pilgrimage place for Hindus in Uttarakhand state in India.

Elite: Small group of educated, influential and powerful people.

12.5 Sample Questions

12.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Which of the following was considered the Fifth Veda in ancient India?

    (a) Novel

    (b) Drama

    (c) Poetry

    (d) Dance

2. In which of the following do we find the exhaustive theorization of drama?

    (a) Mahabharata

    (b) Ramayana

    (c) Natyashastra

    (d) Rigveda

3. Who requested Brahma for creating drama?

    (a) Maya

    (b) Bharta

    (c) Indira

    (d) Sarasvati

4. When was the Dramatic Performances Act imposed by the British government in India?

(a) 1876

(b) 1877

(c) 1878

(d) 1879

5. Who wrote *Is This Called Civilization*?

(a) Krishna Mohan Banerji

(b) Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt

(c) Rabinder Nath Tagore

(d) Sri Aurobindo

6. Which of the following plays show Indo-China conflict?

(a) Doldrummers

(b) The Captives

(c) Monsoon

(d) The Dumb Dancer

7. Who is associated with the Third Theatre?

(a) Asif Curimmbhoy

(b) Rabinder Nath Tagore

(c) Girish Karnad

(d) Badal Sirkar

8. Who founded the Playpen theatre group?

(a) Mahesh Dattani

(b) Badal Sirkar

(c) G. V Desani

(d) Pratap Sharma

9. Where is PALI (Performing Arts and Literatures in India)?

(a) India

(b) USA

(c) Canada

(d) England

10. Who is the first to receive Sahitya Akademi award for writing plays in English?

(a) Girish Karnad

(b) Mahesh Dattani

(c) Uma Parameshwaran

(d) Manjula Padmanabhan

12.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. How is dramatic form different from that of the novel?
2. What is Natyashastra?
3. Name some pre-independence Indian English playwrights and their plays.
4. Briefly comment on the contribution of Indian English women playwrights.
5. What, according to you, is the significance of Indian English drama?

12.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Elaborate in detail on the origin of Indian drama as preserved in Indian tradition.
2. Give a survey of post-independence Indian English dramatists and their plays.
3. What are the various challenges to Indian English theatre?

12.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Reddy, P. Bayappa, Studies in Indian Writing in English with a focus on Indian English Drama, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1990.
2. Iyengar, K. R. Srinivasa. Indian Writing in English, Bombay: India Publishing House, 1962.
3. King, Ehce (ed.). *Post-Colonial English Drama - commonwealth Drama since 1960,* London:
4. Macmillan, 1992.
5. Naik, M.K. A *History of Indian English Literature,* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982.
6. Bhatta, S. Krishna. *Indian English Drama:A Critical Study,* New Delhi: Sterling, 1987.
7. K.R.S. Iyengar. *Indian Writing in English.* New Delhi, Sterling, 1995,732.

Unit-13: Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar

Structure

13.0 Introduction
13.1 Objectives
13.2 Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar
- **13.2.1** Vijay Tendulkar: His Life
- **13.2.2** Vijay Tendulkar and his works
- **13.2.3** List of Important Works
- **13.2.4** Awards and Honours
- **13.2.5** Let Us Sum Up

13.3 Learning Outcomes
13.4 Glossary
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13.0 Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar was born in a Brahmin family on 7 January, 1928. He was brought up in Kandevali. It was a lower-middle-class belt, where there were mostly male shopkeepers and clerks. He lived in a typical house with one room, kitchen, and a shared toilet. Hence his upbringing in the lower middle class allowed him to observe this section of the society minutely. Perhaps that is why he portrayed different shades of this class on the stage.

His father Dandopant Tendulkar was a clerk in a British publishing firm called Longmans Green Company. His mother Susheela Tendulkar was a housewife. His father was a director of amateur Marathi plays. He did not choose a career in the theatre as it was not considered respectable then. Tendulkar was four when he would go with his father to see the rehearsals of plays, and that is how he developed the love for theatre. Tendulkar would consider these rehearsals 'magic shows' because he saw human beings changing into characters. He was surprised that a male actor performed a female role by changing voice and movements. Tendulkar had no theatre exposure except what his father staged. Tendulkar had another brother named Raghunath and a sister named Leela. His two elder sisters had died in infancy. He had two younger brothers but

Tendulkar was the favourite of his parents. He was a sickly child and often suffered from cough and asthmatic wheezing. Therefore, his parents would extra care of him for fear of losing him if he was not protected. For this reason, he was called by a pet name 'Papia' and was also known as ‘mother’s child’.

Apart from his father's influence, his brother Raghunath had a formative influence on his life. His brother believed in Gandhian Philosophy and would attend Congress meetings. His father wanted him to study but he was not interested. Raghunath wanted to marry the woman of his choice, Hansa Wadekar. But this was unacceptable to the idealist father, hence, the family broke ties with Raghunath. The family moved to Kholapur. The later childhood of Tendulkar was spent in Kholapur in Maharashtra where he earned a name for himself. He distinguished himself by reciting English poems. He was just 11 years old when he wrote, directed, and acted in a play called *Maya Bazaar*. In this way began the journey of this veteran writer. Tendulkar acted as a male child artist in two Marathi films.

When he was a teenager, the family moved to Pune, where he attended a new school again. He felt he might have completed his matriculation. However, the Quit India Movement had gained momentum those days, and as noted earlier he followed the Gandhian principle by obeying the call to boycott schools. He would generally attend the meetings and campaigns against Britishers without informing his parents. When he was arrested at the age of 14, his family became aware of his activism in the freedom fight. He would quite often miss his classes and spend his monthly school fees on watching English movies. They had a significant impact on him. This exposure helped him to be one of the great dramatists of Indian theatre. In an interview, Vijay Tendulkar said:

As a schoolboy I had watched the Hollywood films playing in my hometown, not once, but each one over and over again. I still remember the visuals, not the dialogues which I didn’t understand. A more conscious education in what the visual could do came when I worked with the Rangayan Theatre group in Bombay, but watching Marcel Marceau from the last seat in the last row was an enthralling experience. Not a single word was uttered, but so much was expressed. After that, I wrote mimes for quite a while. I felt the visual had unlimited possibilities, the word was useless. But I am a playwright, words are my tools, I had to use them.

At Pune, Dinakar Balkrishan Mokashi, a radio mechanic, influenced him greatly. He became a role model for Tendulkar. His simple lifestyle left a great impression on the mind of

Tendulkar. He was also influenced by Vinayak Bokil a teacher and a writer. Tendulkar was impressed by his exuberant style. He remembers one of the incidents about Vinayak Bokil when he told his students to look at the names of students' rank holders and look where they were. Does anybody know them? He advised students to pass exams as their parent pay their fees. However, he also mentioned that securing good marks in the exam is not everything. Instead, they should focus on creativity and develop their personality in other directions. This inspired Tendulkar to look for other prospects in life. Later Tendulkar dedicated one of his books to Vinayak Bokil.

Check your progress:

1. When and where was Vijay Tendulkar born?

_____

2. Name the two people who influenced Vijay Tendulkar in his life.

_____

13.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- familiarize you with the life of Vijay Tendulkar.
- highlight the important works of Vijay Tendulkar.
- appreciate his literary contribution to Indian Writing in English.
- recognize Vijay Tendulkar as one of the great dramatists.
- identify the various themes that Vijay Tendulkar has employed in his works.

13.2 Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar

13.2.1 Vijay Tendulkar: His Life

At the age of 16, Tendulkar left school for good. He did not have any friends and no one to communicate with. He wanted to talk but with whom? All he could do was to talk to himself. He would often put his dialogues on paper in various forms, poems, short stories, scripts, and this infused a conscious motivation of writing. At the age of 22, he wrote his full-length original play. *Gruhastha,* however, did not do well and Tendulkar thereafter decided not to contribute or write

any play. However, surprisingly he has written 28 full original plays and has been associated with the theatre world for the last 45 years.

Tendulkar started his writing career at a young age. He wrote his first work while he was studying in school. Since his father was a director, creativity was inborn in him. Much unpublished stuff of his father was thoroughly read by Vijay Tendulkar. Not only this, he studied some great writers because of the literary environment and atmosphere at home. The seed for literature was already sown and it was just shaping now in the form of a huge tree. He had never imagined himself to be a writer. As a child, he wanted to be an engine driver or an acrobat in a circus to astonish people with his daredevil acts. Later he worked as an apprentice in a bookshop. He also studied journalism and was an assistant editor of some daily newspapers of Marathwada like *Navbharat, Martha,* and *Loksatta.* Tendulkar has contributed to Indian writing through his plays, short stories, features, and some Hindi television serials. He has received many prestigious awards. Among the notable ones are Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, Kalidas Samman Award, etc.

Vijay Tendulkar has always fought for cultural freedom. Freedom is presently at stake and stifled by many forces. Tendulkar has changed the form and pattern of Indian drama by unfollowing the traditional three-act play structure of drama and creating new models. He is recognised distinctively for his criticism of the trend of hypocrisy, promiscuity, dishonesty, and many other vices that are prevalent in our society. He is one of the leading playwrights of Indian drama writing in English. He is often noted as a screen and television writer, journalist, literary essayist, and social commentator for his bold and daring expressionism.

Vijay Tendulkar has written nearly thirty full-length plays and twenty-three one-act plays, and several of his plays have left a long last impression on the minds of the readers and viewers. Tendulakr's contribution in Marathi includes eleven plays for children, four short story collections, one novel, and five literary essay collections, which have transformed the modern landscape of Maharashtra in particular, and India in general, to a remarkable extent. He is an important translator in Marathi. Tendulkar has translated nine novels, five plays, and two biographies into the Marathi language. He translated Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* (Hindi), Girish Karnard's *Tughlaq* and Tennessee Williams's *A Street Car Named Desire.* He has written the script for eight Marathi films. Some of the popular ones are, *Samana,* (Confrontation 1975), *Simhasan* (Throne 1979), and

Umbartha (The Threshold 1981*). Umbartha* was a groundbreaking feature film on women's activism in India.

During the 1970s to 80s, Tendulkar also contributed to and wrote the script for eleven Hindi movies in Bollywood. Scripts for films like *Akrosh, Manthan, Nishant* and, *Ardhya Satya*, etc gained from the expertise of Tendulkar. His contribution to Marathi theatre and service in Indian Cinema has earned him recognition and brought him the Maharashtra State Government Award and Filmfare award for the best screenplay for *Akrosh* in 1980 and *Ardhya Satya* in 1983. His lifetime achievements in different domains of life were recognised and he was conferred with *Padma Bhushan* by the Government of India in 1984.

With the establishment of *Sahitya Akademi* in 1954, Dr. S. Radhkrishnan made it clear that the prime objective of the *Akademi* should be the promotion of the unity of Indian Literature irrespective of its political, social, geographical, or linguistic diversities. He gave a slogan that Indian Literature is one although written in many languages. In this context, plays of Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, or Girish Karnad in Kannada hold a unique place in Indian Literature. Arundhati Banerjee says:

In the 1960s four dramatists from different regions of India writing in their regional languages were said to have ushered modernity into the sphere of Indian drama and theatre. They were Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Girish Karnad in Kannada. Rakesh's untimely death left his life's work incomplete, and Karnad has written only intermittently. Sircar, of course, has been almost as active as Tendulkar though his plays that can be divided into three distinct periods. Tendulkar, however, has not only been the most productive but has also introduced the greatest variations in his dramatic creations.

V.B Deshpande opines:

Since the Independence – since 1950, to be precise – the name of Vijay Tendulkar has been at the forefront of the Marathi drama and stage. His personality both as a man and writer is multifaceted. It has often been puzzling and curious with a big question mark on it. In the last 55 years, he has written stories, novels, one-act plays, plays for children and for adults. Similarly, he has done script writing and newspaper columns as well. And in all these fields he has created an image of his own. Thus he is a creative writer with a fine sensibility and at the same time a contemplative and controversial dramatist. He has made a mark in the field of journalism also. Because of his highly individual viewpoint and vision of life and because of his style of writing he

has made a powerful impression in the field of literature and drama and has given the post-independence Marathi drama a new idiom. He has put Marathi drama on the national and international map by doing this.

Vijay Tendulkar is a versatile writer and can easily fit himself into any role. During his struggling years, he did ghostwriting knowing that his name would not appear and become known to readers. He considered it as a role for his character. He changed to suit the personality of the character. Along with his job in a newspaper, he took to ghostwriting for additional income.

Check your progress:

1. Which prestigious award was given to Vijay Tendulkar?

_____

2. Which play of Vijay Tendulkar deals with women's activism?

_____

The disturbance, violence, and oppression he witnessed in society made him impatient. He was mentally agitated as well. Though Journalism did not offer any viable solutions for him, it did shape his dramatic career. Being a sensible, reasonable, and sensitive citizen, he could not quieten his conscience with journalistic fervor. Therefore, he left journalism after receiving Nehru fellowship. During this period he travelled to most parts of India and witnessed various kinds of violence directly. In this connection Gowri Ramnarayan points out: “With his exposure to Marathi theatre from childhood, and journalistic background Vijay Tendulkar turned contemporary socio-political situations into explosive drama.”

Tendulkar does not necessarily subscribe to any ideology but he is politically conscious. He believes these ideologies including Marxism do not understand any complexity of the human situation and do not offer any solution for these problems. He was himself a director and actor but did not find acting and direction as exciting as he found writing. He believes, he acts as he writes and emotes the lives of the characters. His writing is not just words but the spontaneous expression and personality of the character. In his early life, he developed a curiosity and would often note people's speech, habits, and mannerisms. This is clearly expressed through many characters of his plays. It must be admitted that most of his characters are an example of certain living persons.

Tendulkar learned a lot from films since films necessarily must have a structure. He was also fond of classical music concerts, although he was unaware of its strict grammar and regulations. Since he was a rigorous reader of poetry, it also helped him understand the knowledge of the compact form and structure. His frequent visit to art galleries offered him a thorough knowledge of the form, structure, and rhythm of good paintings. Interestingly, Peter Brook's book *Master Craftsman in the Art of Theatre* taught him the foremost principles, that all visual art, including the art of theatre, have one thing similar and common: space, and it is entirely upto the dramatist how skillfully and creatively he fills this space.

The most important work that set Tendulkar different from his previous generation Marathi playwrights was *Manus Navache Bel (An Island Called Man 1955).* His dramatic genius was a cutout for the newly emerging Marathi theatre. His frequent interaction and meetings with some great theatre personalities like Vijay Mehta, Sulaba Deshpandeetc. encouraged and fused fuel in his creative faculties.Hence the play *Manus Navache Bel* was followed by many other plays.*Madhya Bhinti* (The Walls Between), *Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menacha* (Nest of wax) (1958), *Mee Jinklo Mee Harlo* (I Won, I Lost) (1963), *Kavlanchi Shala* (School for Crows) (1963), and *Sari Ga Sari* (Rain o Rain) (1964).

13.2.2 Vijay Tendulkar and his Works:

Most of Tendulkar's plays are of naturalistic setting. It may be noted that his play *Ghasihiram Kotwal (1972)* has a folk tradition form, while the other two plays *Niyatioya Bailala* (*To Hell with Destiny*) and *Safar* (*The Tour*) employ fantasy. He became the centre of controversy because of his play *Silence! The Court is in Session*. He was considered the angry man of Marathi theatre. He rebelled against the established norms of society. *Encounter in Umbugland* (1974) is a political allegory. *The Vultures* surprised the fundamentalist section of Marathi people with its bold themes like sex, violence, etc. *Sakharam Binder* is probably one of the most naturalistic plays that gave a serious shock to the conservative section of Maratha people. It is considered more appealing and surprising than *The Vultures. In Gashiram Kotwal*, he explains the power dynamics and power structure predominant in Indian politics. *Kamala* is a depiction of a real-life incident that Ashwin Sarin reported in *The Indian Express* newspaper. *Kanayadan* is equally considered a controversial play and often branded as anti-Dalit play. This play subtly explains and shows how our romantic idealism fails. He wrote in Marathi first, later influenced it, and then guided it. He was able to create an impression on other regional languages and that is why most of the plays

were translated into other languages as well. He perceived the realities of society without any prejudice bent of mind or notion. He reacted to these realities like a truly sensitive and reasonable person and would realistically project them through his plays. He never wrote to win awards or prizes, and he never compromised with his subject matter. In this connection, Vijay Tendulkar can be quoted as:

"I have written about my own experience and about what I have seen in others around me. I have been true to all this and have not cheated my generation. I did not attempt to simplify matters and issues for the audience when presenting my plays, though that would have been an easier occupation. Sometimes my plays jolted society out of its stupor and I was punished. I faced this without regrets. It is an old habit with me to do what I am told not to do. My plays could not have been anything else. They contain my perceptions of society and its value and I cannot write what I do not perceive".

Vijay Tendulkar's plays often deal with gender inequality, social imbalance, power structure or power politics, self-alienation, sex, and violence. His characters are real-life projections, and they are neither too bad to hate nor too good to believe. He challenged the tyranny of Marathi conventional theatre and liberated it by adding some political and social satire purely for entertainment purposes. Vijay Tendulkar portrays a picture of contemporary times and man's dilemma by focusing specifically on morbidity in his plays. His plays have touched almost all aspects of life in the modern world and display modern intellectuals' disillusionment by primarily focusing on gender, power, and violence.

13.2.3 List of Important Works:

One Act

Thief Police

Ratra Ani Itar Ekankika (1957)

Chitragupta, Aho Chitragupta (1958)

Ajgar Ani Gandharv (1966)

Bhekad Ani Itar Ekankika (1969)

Ekekacha

Andher Nagari

Collection of Stories

Kaachpatre (1957)

Dwandwa (1961)

Gane (1966)

Phulpakharu (1970)

Novels:

Kadambari

Katha Eka Vyathechi : Henry James

Nave Ghar : Nave Ayushya : Grace Jordan

Prempatre : Henry James

Aage Barho : G L Letham (1958)

Gele Te Divas (1958)

Essays:

Kovil Unhe (1971)

Rat Rani (1971)

Phuge Savanache (1974)

Ram Prakar (1994)

Plays:

Gruhastha (Householder) (1947)

Shrimant (The Rich) (1956)

Mānoos Nāwāche Bet (An Island Named 'Man') (1958)

Thief! Police!

Bāle Miltāt (1960)

Gidhāde (The Vultures) (1961)

Pātlāchyā Poriche Lagin (Marriage of a Village Mayor's Daughter) (1965)

Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (Hindi: Khāmosh! Adālat Jāri Hai) (Silence! The Court is in Session) (1967)

Ajgar Ani Gandharwa (A Boa Constrictor and "Gandharwa")

Sakharam Binder (Sakhārām, the Book-Binder) (1972)

Kamalā ("Kamala") (1981)

Mādi [in Hindi]

Kanyādān (Giving Away of a Daughter in Marriage) (1983)

Anji

Dāmbadwichā Mukābalā (Encounter in Umbugland)

Ashi Pākhare Yeti (Hindi: Panchi Aise Aate Hain) (Thus Arrive the Birds)

Kutte

Safar/Cyclewallah (The Cyclist) (1991)

The Masseur (2001)

Pāhije Jātiche (It Has to Be in One's Blood)

Jāt Hi Poochho Sādhu Ki (Ask a Fakir's Lineage)

Mājhi Bahin (My Sister)

Jhālā Ananta Hanumanta ("Infinite" Turned "Hanumanta")

Footpāyrichā Samrāt (Sidewalk Emperor)

Mitrāchi Goshta (A Friend's Story) (2001)

Anand Owari [A play based on a novel by D. B. Mokashi]

Bhāu MurārRāo

Bhalyākākā

Mee Jinkalo Mee Haralo (I won, I Lost)

His Fifth Woman [in English] (2004)

Bebi

Mita ki kahani "(Mita's Story)

13.2.4 Awards and Honours:

All through his life Vijay Tendulkar was associated with theatre and devoted his life to the same.He received the following awards in his life.

1. The Maharashtra State Government Award (1956, 1969, and 1973)
2. The Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1971)
3. The Filmfare Award (scriptwriter) (1980, 1983)
4. The Padmabhushan (1984)
5. The Saraswati Samman (1993)
6. The Kalidas Samman (1999)
7. The Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1999)
8. The Jansthan Award (1999)
9. Katha Chudamani Award (2001)

This legendary theatre actor, director, and playwright passed away on 19 May 2008. He died in a private hospital, where he was admitted in April 2008. He was suffering from a neuromuscular disease called Myasthenia Gravis. His last rites were performed at the Vaikanth electric crematorium according to his wish. Prominent theatre and film personalities including Mohan Agashe, Satish Alekar, Haider Ali, Amruta Subhash, Amol Palekar, and Atul Pethe, University of Pune Vice-chancellor Narendra Jadhav paid their last tributes to Tendulkar at the crematorium.

13.2.5 Let Us Sum Up:

There is no doubt that Vijay Tendulkar is one of the great playwrights of all time. His contribution to Indian theatre in general and Marathi theatre, in particular, is significant. The diversity of themes that were employed by Vijay Tendulkar in his work earned him the reputation of a great social thinker. Reconstruction of society in all aspects, whether through women empowerment or any such other issue, remained a constant concern for Tendulkar. He will be remembered through his invaluable works for the years and ages to come by.

13.3 Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- shed light on the life history of Vijay Tendulkar.
- recognise the contribution of Tendulkar to Indian theatre through his plays.
- identify the variety of themes that Tendulkar employed in his works.
- understand the variety of genres that he has contributed.
- appreciate Tendulkar for all the awards and honours that were conferred on him.

13.4 Glossary

Familiarise: To give the knowledge of something

Recognise: Identify something

Enthralling: Fascinating or attractive

Hypocrisy: The practice of claiming to have moral beliefs or standards

Promiscuity: The state of being a promiscuous

Dishonesty: Not reliable or honest

Acrobat: A person who performs gymnastic feats

Associated: To be in connection with something or some organization

13.5 Sample Questions

13.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. When was Vijay Tendulkar born?

    (a) 1929

    (b) 1928

    (c) 1930

    (d) 1939

2. Where was Tendulkar born?

    (a) Calcutta

    (b) Bombay

    (c) Hyderabad

    (d) None

3. The play *Gruhastha* was published in the year _____ .

    (a) 1947

    (b) 1984

    (c) 1952

    (d) 1949

4. In which language was *Silence! The Court is Session* originally written?

    (a) Bengali

    (b) Marathi

    (c) Gujrati

    (d) None

5. Who directed the play *Maya Bazar* at the age of 11?

    (a) Kamla Das

    (b) Girish Karnad

    (c) Vijay Tendulkar

(d) None

6. When did Vijay Tendulkar receive the Padma Bhushan award?

(a) 1984

(b) 1982

(c) 1985

(d) 1990

7. Vijay Tendulkar received the Kalidas Sammaan award in the year _____ .

(a) 1999

(b) 1909

(c) 1990

(d) None

8. *Silence! The Court is Session* was published in the year _____ .

(a) 1976

(b) 1967

(c) 1969

(d) 1979

9. Which of the following film script was written by Vijay Tendulkar?

(a) *Aakrosh*

(b) Ghumund

(c) *Sholay*

(d) None

10. “Raat Rani” by Vijay Tendulkar is a _____.

(a) Novel

(b) Essay

(c) Play

(d) None

13.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Write a brief note on the life of Vijay Tendulkar.
2. Mention any five plays written by Vijay Tendulkar.
3. Discuss Tendulkar’s contribution to women's activism.
4. Name any three films whose script was written by Vijay Tendulkar.

5. Discuss the various influences that helped Vijay Tendulkar to become a dramatist.

13.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Discuss Vijay Tendulkar as a dramatist.
2. Vijay Tendulkar’s plays were a mirror of society. Evaluate.
3. Critically comment on the recurrent themes in the works of Vijay Tendulkar.

13.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. *Vijay Tendulkar*. New Delhi, Katha, 2001. ISBN 81-87649-17-8.
2. Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal: a Reader's Companion*. M. Sarat Babu, Asia Book Club, 2003. ISBN 81-7851-008-1
3. *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. V M Madge, 2007, Pencraft International. ISBN 81-85753-79-2.

Unit-14: *Silence! The Court is in Session*

Structure

14.0 Introduction
14.1 Objectives
14.2 *Silence! The Court is in Session*
- **14.2.1** Inner World of the Play
- **14.2.2** Act wise summary of the Play
- **14.2.3** Satire on Middle Class and its Pettiness
- **14.2.4** Symbols, Allegory and Motifs in the Play
- **14.2.5** Structure of the Play

14.3 Learning Outcomes
14.4 Glossary
14.5 Sample Questions
14.6 Suggested Learning Resources

14.0 Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar was a modern Marathi playwright and scriptwriter for television and cinema. For more than five decades, till his death on 19th May, 2008, he contributed as a political journalist and social commentator. Most of his plays which he wrote primarily in Marathi are harsh in terms of their unconventional topics and delivery. He took many of the topics from real-life happenings shedding light on harsh realities around. He wrote many plays, but the most popular is *Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe* translated in English as *Silence! The Court is in Session*, which was written in 1963 for 'Rangayan", a Mumbai based active theatre group (organization) in Marathi but came late into light on stage in 1967. Along with English, it is also translated into fifteen other languages. BBC screened its English version filmed by Satyadev Dubey a famous Indian theatre director. The play was directed by Arvind Deshpande and Sulabha Deshpande as the main lead in Marathi and by Om Shivapuri in Hindi. Having attracted such legendry artistes of the time, this play has created history across India. That Tendulkar's way of writing changed the storyline of modern Marathi theatre is the opinion of many critics and writers then, and even now is very much true when we watch/read this play after almost six decades.

The play, *Silence! The Court is in Session*, is based on Tendulkar's own experience of a conversation by a group of actors he had overheard while travelling in a local train to Mumbai for acting in a mock trial. Apart from this, there is one more source that the playwright could have had as his inspiration: he must have based the plot of this very popular play on a Swiss playwright Fredrich Durrenmatt's novel *Die Panne* (1956) and its English translation entitled *Traps*. This play was well received by the audience and the playwright was also felicitated with prestigious awards in 1970 from Sangeet Natak Akademi and Karmaladevi Chattopadhya Award for drama that same year. It has the distinction of being one of those plays in Maharashtra having been staged for more than 6000 times till date. This data about the play confirms the popularity and its relevance to our times. It was adapted into a movie in 1971, which proved to be a great success on the big screen earning new opportunities for the playwright and huge coverage to the play reaching every corner of the society.

Check your progress:

1. What is the original title of the play in Marathi?

_____

2. From which novel did Tendulkar get the basic idea of this play?

_____

3. When was the play adapted into a movie?

_____

14.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to:

- introduce a modern playwright and his famous play *Silence! The Court is in Session.*
- read and understand the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* by Vijay Tendulkar.
- appreciate the play; its idea, vision, form and approach.
- understand the form, idiom, mood and tone in the play.
- develop aesthetic sense so as to have pleasure from reading and watching.
- sensitise the issue of women in the light of the discussions in the play.
- understand the approach and concern of educated people towards the condition of women in the country and abroad across castes and classes.

14.2 *Silence! The Court is in Session*

14.2.1 Inner World of the Play *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session,* as we have already discussed, is a modern play written in three acts. We have an unconventional woman in this play as its protagonist named Miss Leena Benare. Her experiences in her life and the choices she made in a way threatened the moral code and conduct of the society she was a part of. Further, her very existence becomes a problem and she is silenced in the course of action in the play. The play is about ordinary people in a town from different backgrounds. They are actually the members of an organization called "The Sonar Moti Tenements Progressive Association (Bombay)." This organization works for spreading information and awareness about various important issues affecting society. They gather to present a courtroom scene, to enact a mock-trial protesting against President Johnson's production of atomic weapons.

The idea of a mock trial has been used very skilfully by the dramatist so as to keep the audience spell-bound while it is enacted. For that, the playwright chooses the ideal institution wherein the institutional values enshrine and safeguard the individual rights. In the mock trial, the playwright shows that the same principle is violated and ridiculed by the characters. While reading the play, you need to check through comparison whether the court in the play maintains and upholds the sanctity of the institution in reality or not. Even the place chosen is a hall. The only hall that we see in the play is used for all kinds of activities in the village. All three acts we see are enacted at the same place. While reading we need to enquire whether the place helps in some way or the other in keeping the action going smooth. Only a careful reading will help know many hidden things that help in tracing the continuity of action in the play.

Thus, the inner world of the play reflects the outer world that we live in. Some people behave badly but try to show they did not behave badly. The pettiness of the middle-class people is exposed by the playwright.

14.2.2 Act Wise Summary of the Play:

The play is divided into three acts. The reader is informed by the playwright through his notes provided in the text. The reader needs to keep pace with this very important aspect of the play in the absence of its performance in reality. It gives information and creates background for the action that follows, connecting characters, events and their inter-relations. In the beginning of

the play, the playwright, through notes, describes an old small hall in the village and the use of this only hall for multiple purposes; social, cultural and group activities like *bhajans*, dramatic performances etc.

ACT-I

The setting in Act-I is an empty hall with a little stage kind of platform, a few chairs and portraits of national leaders on the wall and a picture of Lord Ganesha on the door. Samant opens the hall unlocking the door, holding a book and toy parrot in hand. He welcomes Miss Benare into the hall and tells her that the hall is cleaned for the performance today. While opening the door, Miss Benare gets her finger caught in the bolt. Samant advises her to suck the hurt finger to feel better. Miss Benare thanks him and says that she is feeling very good today. She also says it was good that they rushed ahead of them all. She likes Samant, whom she considers very pure by heart and a good person. Samant is a bit hesitant initially. While exploring the hall she speaks well about the place, Samant also narrates how the hall is used for multiple purposes.

Miss Benare, in the course of the talk enquires whether Mrs. Samant comes to the place joining the *Bhajan* group. Mr. Samant clarifies by telling that he is unmarried and the toy parrot is for his nephew. He also adds that he never misses the programmes in the hall. In the meantime, when Miss Benare steps close to him while talking, he gets disturbed. Miss Benare then wonders where the other members are. She says, as a teacher she is very prompt in her work and never lags behind in her lessons as well. This scene in the play raises many doubts regarding the behaviour of both Miss Benare and Mr. Samant.

Further, when Miss Benare keeps talking, she adds how she is a punctual teacher and she would be doing that work till the last moment of her life, honestly. But she again questions herself regarding the enquiry and the threat of being thrown out of her job by the school. Others do not know what is going on. She sometimes puts her hand on her womb and signals something is not good in her life. This sows the seeds of doubt for the trial that begins in the next act. Miss Benare then starts singing a song that too in English. When she stops, she asks Samant what they are going to do today. Samant replies, it is a Mock-Law court. Actually Samant has no idea about the same, so Miss Benare explains to him about the make-believe court they are going to perform. Samant is informed about the program and its intention of spreading awareness about the issues of social importance and enlightenment. Through Miss Benare's and Samant's discussion we come to know about other characters like Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, their childless life and having so called adopted

son Balu Rokde. They educated him and have almost made a slave out of him, according to Miss Benare. Thus, Benare brings the characters on stage through discussion before they physically arrive with their professional details.

Samant has no idea about the trial. Miss Benare tells him that the trial is of President Johnson, and he is accused of producing atomic weapons. Samant is shocked, learning about the topic of Mock-Law court they are going to practice. Miss Benare and Samant hide themselves after listening to the noise of others coming. They jump all of a sudden, and Sukhatme another member of the group gets frightened. He alleges Miss Benare of not being mature even at this age. Benare defends herself by saying she is very serious in a classroom but could not maintain the same tempo here. In the meantime, Ponkshe another member arrives. Sukhatme comments on him that he appears very impressive on stage though we do not know that he had to appear twice for his Inter-Science and works as a clerk in a Telegraph Office. Ponkshe is annoyed with this remark and reminds all that at least he has not cheated on his father's money like others did. Thus, the cold war gets heated even before they turn to their work, and we get to know about the characters and their interests.

Amid this discussion arrives Karnik, an experimental theatre activist. He fails to understand the topic of their discussion. Sukhatme appreciates Benare for her song. Benare enquires about Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar with Karnik. Karnik reveals that Mr. Kashikar was to purchase *veni* (garland) for his wife. When they arrive, Mrs Kashikar reveals that she was planning to buy one *veni* for Miss Benare as well. Benare refuses by saying that she does not like *veni*. She is independent and if at all she wishes, she can buy *veni* for herself. She has been teaching in a school for the last eight years. She says she does her work honestly and enjoys the same. She also hints about slander and maybe her job will be snatched from her. In between, she puts her hand on her stomach, an unusual gesture.

Balu Rokde is another character who runs errands for the Kashikars. He is quiet often daunted by the Kashikars. We also learn in this part through conversation among the characters that the Kashikars represent the middle-aged couples in the sixties and seventies where women were not allowed to have education. Girls are married off after getting trained in household chores. Mr. Kashikar's act of buying a garland for Mrs. Kashikar exemplifies the patriarchal practice of men following the ideals of courtship during the period. Miss Benare through her rejection of

flowers and declaration of economic independence, refers to the changed time and changed choices of women.

Finally, when all characters have gathered, they come to know that Damle is absent and one more person from their group named Rawte will also be absent for the mock-trial performance. Miss. Benare appears a bit uneasy when she hears the name Damle and pretends as if she is busy in conversation with Ponkshe. Mr. Kashikar gives Mr. Rawte's role to Samant. Balu Rokde is interested in that role, but as usual, Mr. Kashikar neglects him and takes the act further. Mr. Samant has no experience of acting; neither had he any idea of the court room. He expresses his inability before all. All the members decide to play the mock-trial for Samant so that he will have an idea of the court-room.

Thus, by the end of Act-I, we come to know about the undercurrents among the characters. Every character has his/her irritation. Miss Benare mocks at all. Balu Rokde is often looked down upon by Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar first and by others thereafter. Finally Karnik reveals the news that Rokde has told him to tell Ponkshe about Miss Benare. Mr. Kashikar also readily accepts this trial of a different kind. Perhaps, Tendulkar here underlines the fact that when there is a woman to be taken for scrutiny, then things come differently. Several irrational, illogical enquiries and prejudices appear on the scene serially. Miss Benare has been accused of the crime of infanticide. The most confident and happy Benare at the beginning of this act, changes by the end of this same act. The command and control of the situation is lost by Benare and this happens as a result of a conspiracy. All the other characters except Samant get involved in this act of conspiracy.

ACT-II

Unlike in Act-I, Miss Benare is found in trouble in Act-II. She is the one who introduces us to many other characters in the beginning. Now she is an accused. She is on trial by the other characters in the mock-trial. Miss Benare is traumatized and amazed by the allegations against her by other members. She denies the charge of infanticide during the trial. Mr. Sukhatme continues with his argument based on the glorification of motherhood in the Indian context. Mr. Kashikar adds to it, quoting from Sanskrit, and establishes the high status of mother and motherhood in the Indian context. The same exalted status of women they try to relate through its contribution to India's freedom struggle as well. This part of the play, through trial and discussion, awakens the audience in the light of enquiry of whether we have such mothers within the limits of the play. There is no mother actually except the reference of Samant's sister-in-law in the play. Miss Benare

considers this glorification of woman and motherhood under the pretext of this trial as meaningless.

The court during the trial finally concludes that the status of a mother is sacred and decides to cross-examine Miss Benare for the charges imposed upon her. Samant has no idea of what infanticide meant. Hence, when others help him understand the meaning of the word, he relates another incident of a widow from his village, who was charged with the same a few years back. Thus, the history of women's plight in Maharashtra is opened through this event during the trial. As we go ahead in this act, we hear that the responses by other characters against Miss Benare are full of hatred, and they all wish and aim at trying her. Without any concrete evidence, she has been accused of the crime of infanticide. Almost all in the courtroom are involved in the debate over the things from Miss Benare's personal life. The reader experiences this shift in the court-room from a discussion over the issue of infanticide to Miss Benare's personal life and her relationship with Damle.

Right from Samant, who appears to be the most simple and straightforward person, all contribute to declaring Benare as a characterless, immoral woman who plays with all men who come in contact with her. All those present take a great deal of vicarious pleasure in troubling her. Mr. Kashikar, who is playing the role of a judge, intervenes and suggests, “Benare's personal life should not be discussed in the court-room.”Sukhatme, who is playing the role of a counsel, overrules him. We see further that Kashikar also enjoys and takes an interest in the trial. The personal secret unveiled in Act-II is the output of the play we watch. The dramatist as per his awareness relates the problem of anguish to the theme of violence. He simply exposes the innate nature of human violence visible in one form or the other. Every male character in the play indictes Miss Benare as a criminal and Mr. Kashikar allows them to do it. Benare leaves the hall bursting into tears. Kashikar and others discuss the soiled fabric of society. When Benare returns to take her bag and purse to leave the hall permanently, she finds the door shut from outside. The only way to go out is closed, symbolising the agony of a woman surrounded by arch enemies. She had no other way than being there, listening to the foul play of words against her till the end of Act-II.

ACT-III

Act-III in the play, *Silence…! The Court is in Session* is lengthier and more serious than the first two acts. When Miss Benare finds the door closed from outside and no way out, she stands still. She does not pay any heed to the words and the court orders she hears of bringing her into

the witness box. Miss Kashikar literally drags her to the witness box. Miss Benare is taken on trial relentlessly in this act. The cross-examination continuously leaves her disturbed even without answering the questions on her part. Though the other characters time and again refer to the cross-examination as mock-trial, nobody cares to stop it and console Miss. Benare who was their friend and companion. Rather, the audience is forced to pay attention to the cross-examination. The other characters have turned insensitive and Benare's silence is translated into contempt of court. No one else other than Samant who was not an active member of the court room, speaks in her favour. He has never been a part of the game. Only some of his earlier remarks and references that he spoke spontaneously proved to be a sort of evidence that other characters exploited in framing Miss Benare as a culprit.

All such questions are put to Benare under the guise of seeking truth in this part of the play. Her name, age and even why she is unmarried are enquired through the mock trial, which is intentionally planned and helps them in framing her. Only trivial prejudices and the hide-bound opportunities women are buried under in our society we see in this enquiry of Miss Benare. No solid evidence is found. Rather, they know it very well, so they keep beating around the bush about morals and codes of conduct prescribed for women in our society. The playwright actually exhibits and poses a challenge before us all to examine the mindset of the society in the double standard. It is different for women and men. How the powerful use the authority over the helpless we see through Benare's character in the play.

Further, in this same act, we learn that Benare has tried to contact many men in search of a husband. She wanted to marry for the child she was bearing. Perhaps, she is in search of a father for her child to be born. She is trying to defend her child from being called illegitimate. Her being unmarried has been looked down upon as troublesome. In fact, she is not attempting infanticide; on the contrary, she is protecting her child both physically and morally by attempting to give him/her a name in this myopic society. The men she has approached to join hands with her are not right or simply they are not equally bold as Benare is in these matters. They only make fun of it and contribute to overstated gossip about her. Whether it is Miss Benare's maternal uncle who exploited her while she was just 14 year old, or the recent culprit behind her pregnancy Prof. Damle, who is a professor and father of five kids, or the president of her school, who has come to know about her present state, all have shown their hypocrisy when it comes to supporting and helping a woman in trouble. Even other men like Sukhatme, Ponkshe and Mr. Kashikar who keep

singing about the sacrifices of a mother, act like a prey-bird eyeing their innocent prey for their petty prejudices and egos. Miss Benare is on the complete back foot at this point in the play.

Miss Benare has almost lost her battle during the mock trial. Her say, whether through the soliloquy or even otherwise, is not heard by others. They deliberately avoid listening to her. Deaf and dumb people with their frozen hearts, her own companions isolate her and take interest in exposing her motherhood. Finally, when the mock trial ends with Mr. Kashikar's verdict declaring Miss Benare guilty, she breaks down, putting her head on the table. She records her firm decision taking the safety of her child into consideration right here. The door that was bolted from outside is opened now. All the other characters are making a move so as to prepare for the show in the evening. All of them pretend to be consoling her by calling it just a mock-trial and nothing beyond that. Benare remains frozen there in the hall, being crumpled by the antagonism and inhumanity of her own peers. She struggles to move but in vain. No one is there to support her. She loses her job, reputation as a teacher and, most importantly, respect in society as an individual. Samant arrives there and leaves the toy parrot he was carrying for his nephew on the table for Miss Benare. Both the toy-bird and Miss Benare are motionless and still. The play comes to an end, leaving it for the speculation of the audience whether Benare will survive and will continue to be there in her role. Whether the society needs Benare or not is a serious question that is posed before the audience in the end.

14.2.3 Satire on Middle Class and its Pettiness:

The play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a play intentionally written to expose, criticise and mock at the prevailing traditions, customs and self-declared notions of the male-dominated society. Right from the title of the play, the satire begins. “Silence” is no silence in reality. There are noises, screams, exchange of hot words, sobs and tears. This silence is an imposed silence on Miss Benare and on other characters as well. Miss Benare and Mrs. Kashikar are the representatives of the feminine world in the play of the modern and the traditional types respectively.

The play satirises the middle classes through various examples. Women are considered animals caught in a dock and silenced forcibly. Women have no voice, and even if they have one, they are not allowed to express as we see in the case of Mrs. Kashikar in the play. The *Veni* episode and Miss Benare's response to the same make it very clear. Tendulkar, through Mrs Kashikar, satirises the male chauvinistic attitude of people in the case of women.

How the middle class moralities are born, nourished and nurtured in our society, we see through the example of Miss Benare. This society allows no immoral behaviour by women only. While Prof. Damle is equally responsible for Miss Benare's pregnancy, the mock-trial and all other characters target only Miss Benare. The snobbish behaviour of male and female characters from the middle class is exposed here. The fact that they take interest in troubling individuals by isolating them, has been taken to task by Tendulkar. Thus, the play uses all tools cum routines of the middle classes and relates them to their inhuman and irrational behaviour and satirises them in the play.

14.2.4 Symbols, Allegory and Motifs in the Play:

Symbols, allegory and motifs are the tools at the hand of the playwright. Using these tools, the dramatist exhibits his skills of dramatizing the situations and presenting his views and visions through situations. Following are some of the important symbols and motifs that occur in the course of the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session*. These symbols and motifs play a very important role in delivering the message and in making the idea flow continuously.

The Locked Door

This is one of the early symbols in the play. Before the mock-trial begins changing fictional things into real about Miss Benare's life, this door is the only hope of coming in and going out. When the situation is out of her control and unbearable on her part, and she wishes to flee from it, she finds the door closed from the outside, and she has got no way out. It is symbolic. She is caught in a mesh, and she is unable to open it. Here Miss Benare is a symbol representing the new, modern woman free from the past, but that is not the truth we experience in the play.

The Sparrow and her Nest

This is another symbol in the play that symbolizes the importance of a nest in the life of a sparrow. The nest symbolizes safety, security, and stability, and, through safety, a continuity of life. Birds keep flying back to the nest; they lay eggs and nurture them into chicks. Miss Benare also dreams of safety for her child. But that safety is not assured. It is stolen by the society through exposition in the mock-trial. She has also been sentenced to forced abortion.

The Parrot

The toy parrot that Mr. Samant carries with him has an important role to play in the play. This parrot symbolizes the situation that human beings are reduced to. When Mr. Samant places that parrot before Miss Benare standing still, disturbed but immobile, she represents that parrot.

She has no ability to have her own words, ideas and desires. She can just imitate the decisions, orders and suggestions of others.

Silence as a Motif

The use of this word right in the title is not a mere trick, but it is a command. It suggests silence, which is all-pervasive throughout the play. During the mock-trial also, Mr. Kashikar, the judge cautions Miss Benare to be silent again and again. The same power to make Mrs. Kashikar silent we see used by her husband, stopping her from expressing her opinions. The play ends with Benare standing silent when others leave the place to prepare for the evening.

Uniform and its Power

During the mock-trial we see Mr. Kashikar and Sukhatme wear their gown and wigs. When they wear their uniform, they appear more confident, comfortable and powerful. Uniform in general differentiates individuals and cuts them off from the rest of all in civil dress as it brings those wearing on equal scale. Ordinary people are awed at the invincibility of power of the office that it represents.

14.2.5 Structure of the Play:

Silence! The Court is in Session is technically a bit different but a perfect play. The play is a play within a play running in three acts. A group of amateur theatre actors assemble to practice a mock-trial on some important social topic so as to spread awareness among people. They keep waiting for other members of the group. In the course of their discussion and training a new member, they begin with a mock-trial. But, instead of presenting the earlier decided mock-trial, they decide to invent one of their member Miss. Leena Benare as an accused of infanticide. Through this mock-trial performance, the secret of her pregnancy is revealed. Contrary to what a court of law in real life follows, this play-acted court becomes a means to harass and embarrass Miss Leena Benare. The members of the group cannot speak openly about Benare's personal affair and her secret pregnancy; they take refuge behind the theatrical performance to dig into Benare's personal life.

The play uses some innovative tools to express certain very personal emotions of the characters like poems and songs quite often recited by Miss Benare. She recites the same to her class as a part of her profession. Through the songs, we come to know about the secret affair that Benare had as a young girl and her search for a husband so as to have a father for her child and preventing her from being an unmarried mother. Another song that we have in the play is about

the sparrow. She expresses her sorrow through this bird whose nest is stolen by somebody. Thus, these recitations in the play are the tools for the characters to express their emotions and feelings, and for the dramatist to reveal certain secrets and hidden truths to the audience.

The play has often been called a game. This gaming spirit in the play is very skilfully used by the playwright. When Benare becomes emotional when her personal life is made public, others remind her of the game through the mock-trial they are playing. The exercise they do in the name of a mock-trial proves to be equally demoralizing and annoying as any real trial in the life of the accused. The play through its acts is an attack on the central character through her life and choices without attacking her physically under the pretext of a game by other characters. Thus, the game play makes this play structurally a real game played by the so called civil society members on a helpless woman who is tried, harassed and embarrassed systematically.

14.3 Learning Outcomes

After completing this Unit, the learner will be able to:

- introduce to Vijay Tendulkar as an important modern playwright.
- explain Tendulkar's contribution in presenting harsh social realities through drama.
- appreciate the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* for its powerful dialogues and insightful vision.
- recognise how the play exposes hidden social issues and uses satire effectively.
- develop awareness of women's condition, status, and struggles in society.
- reflect on the injustices faced by women in different aspects of life.

14.4 Glossary

Abortion: A deliberate termination of human pregnancy

Bhajan: To any devotional song

Farce: An empty or ridiculous act

Infanticide: Killing a baby (before its birth)

Insolence: Impudence. Contemptuous or bold

Keen: To be sensitive, alert or aware

Melodramatic: Extravagant, appealing to the emotions

Mock-trial: An act or imitation trial, it is similar to moot-court

Modern: Relating to the present or recent times as opposed to the remote past in all walks of life

Paan: A masticatory of beetle nut, lime and paan

Playwright: A person who writes plays/dramas

Promiscuity: Close intermingingly of men and women; a state of having multiple sexual partners

Reprimand: To chastise

Sahib: Sir or master (a polite title to address a man) used by native inhabitants of colonial India

Symposium: An official gathering to discuss a topic in academia

***Veni*:** A garland used by women to decorate their hair on special occasions

14.5 Sample Questions

14.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. The setting of the play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* is_____.

(a) A Church

(b) A School

(c) An empty hall

(d) The courtroom

2. In the play Miss Benare hurts her _____.

(a) Leg

(b) Hand

(c) Finger

(d) Toe

3. Benare tells Mr. Samant that he is a " _____ " person.

(a) Winsome

(b) Handsome

(c) Good

(d) Brilliant

4. What does Samant call Miss Benare that offends her?

(a) Spinster

(b) Trollop

(c) Crone

(d) Schoolmarm

5. Benare considers herself as a _____ teacher.

(a) Brilliant

(b) Strict

(c) Indifferent

(d) Mesmerising

6. Which toy does Samant carry with him?

(a) Teddy Bear

(b) Toy Train

(c) Toy Parrot

(d) Toy Truck

7. Benare mocks at Mrs. Kashikar for being_____.

(a) Old

(b) Childless

(c) Ugly

(d) Uneducated

8. Who raised Balu Rokde?

(a) Sukhatme

(b) Karnik

(c) Ponkshe

(d) Kashikars

9. Who among the members is a science student?

(a) Sukhatme

(b) Karnik

(c) Ponkshe

(d) Kashikar

10. The mock-trial concerns _____.

(a) The Holocaust

(b) The Environment

(c) Indian Independence

(d) Atomic Weapons

14.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. What is the symbolic meaning of the title, *Silence! The Court is in Session*?
2. Why did Benare slap Rokde?
3. What is the broader significance of the paan-spitting scene in the play?
4. What is the prime objective of the program in the play?
5. What is the mock-trial intended at?

14.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

1. Comment on Tendulkar's art of characterisation in the play, *Silence the Court is in Session*?
2. How do the male characters glorify motherhood in the courtroom for their own purpose? Discuss.
3. Critically evaluate *Silence! The Court is in Session* as a social satire?

14.6 Suggested Learning Resources

1. Das, Veena Noble. *Women Characters in Vijay Tendulkar's Plays*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.
2. Gokhale, Shanta. *Playwright At The Centre: Marathi Drama from 1843 to the Present.*Seagull: Calcutta 2000.
3. Madge, V.N. *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Pen craftInternational: New Delhi, 2007.
4. Mehta, Kunal. "*Silence! The Court Is In Session: A Strong Social Commentary.*
5. O'Hanlon, Rosalind. *A Comparison Between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and theCritique of Gender Relations in Colonial India*. Oxford University Press, 1994.
6. Tendulkar, Vijay. *Collected Plays in Translation*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

SYLLABUS

DSC-4

Course Title: *Introduction to World Literature*

Scheme of Examination
Maximum Marks: 100 (Assignments: 30 & End Semester: 70) Exam Duration: 3 hrs
Instruction Mode: Counselling Classes (Blended Mode)

Course Outcomes: To introduce students to the samples of literature produced in different parts of the world so that they develop aesthetics for literature irrespective of the region and period. Upon the completion of the course students are expected to learn the style and theme of literary pieces belonging to various genres of literature produced across the time and countries.

Course Title: *Introduction to World Literature* (DSC-4)	
Unit No.	**Unit Title**
1	Victorian Poetry – Characteristic Features
2	Robert Browning – "My Last Duchess"
3	Modern Poetry – Characteristic Features
4	Sylvia Plath – "The Moon and the Yew Tree"
5	Introduction to Latin American Writing
6	Life and works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez
7	*Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon*
8	Introduction to African Writing (Short Story)
9	Ngugi wa Thiong'o – "From Decolonizing the Mind"
10	Introduction to Indian Short Story
11	V.M. Basheer – "The World-Renowned Nose"
12	A Brief Survey of Indian English Drama
13	Life and works of Vijay Tendulkar
14	*Silence! The Court is in Session*

Suggested Reading:

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* Prism Books, 1992.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.* Routledge, 1989.
- Prasad, B. *A Background to the Study of English Literature.* Macmillan, 1965.
- Rees, R. J. *English Literature: An Introduction for Foreign Readers.* Macmillan, 1973.
- Vinay, S. *Living Literatures: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry.* Orient BlackSwan, 2007.

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

Maulana Azad National Urdu University

Programme: **B.A. (Hons.)**

4th Semester Examination

Paper Title: **Introduction to World Literature (BNEN401DCT)**

Time: 3 Hours **Total Marks: 70**

Note: This question paper consists of three parts: **Part-A**, **Part-B** and **Part-C**. The number of words to answer each question is only indicative. Attempt all parts.

Part–A contains **10** compulsory questions of multiple choice/fill in the blank/very short answer type question. Answer all the questions. Each question carries **1** mark. **(10x1=10 marks)**

Part-B contains **08** questions of which students are supposed to answer **05** questions. Answer each question in approximately 200 words. Each question carries **06** marks. **(5x6=30 marks)**

Part-C contains **05** questions of which students are supposed to answer **03** questions. Answer the question in approximately 500 words. Each question carries **10** marks. **(3x10=30 marks)**

Part-A

1.

i. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in:

(a) 1842
(b) 1859
(c) 1872
(d) 1901

ii. Who called Pre-Raphaelite poetry the "Fleshy School of Poetry"?

(a) William Morris
(b) Dante Gabriel Rossetti
(c) Matthew Arnold
(d) Robert Buchanan

iii. "The Moon and the Yew Tree" is part of:

(a) The Colossus
(b) The Bell Jar
(c) Ariel
(d) The Birthday Letters

iv. Who is considered the father of the Imagist movement in modern poetry?

(a) T. S. Eliot
(b) W. B. Yeats
(c) Ezra Pound
(d) Robert Frost

v. Which of the following is a Romance language?

(a) French
(b) Urdu
(c) Tamil
(d) Gurmukhi

vi. Legends of Guatemala is written by:

(a) Miguel Ángel Asturias
(b) Lydia Cabrera
(c) Jorge Icaza

(d) Gabriel García Márquez

vii. Who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982?

(a) T. S. Eliot
(b) D. H. Lawrence
(c) Gabriel García Márquez
(d) Ezra Pound

viii. Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon was originally translated into English from:

(a) French
(b) Italian
(c) German
(d) Spanish

ix. Which of the following does not belong to the Negritude Movement?

(a) Léopold Sédar Senghor
(b) Léon Damas
(c) Aimé Césaire
(d) Dennis Brutus

x. Which of the following constituent elements does not belong to a short story?

(a) Character
(b) Conflict
(c) Song
(d) Plot

Part-B

2. Define poetry and give five examples.
3. Why does Anu feel for yellow fish?
4. Name two works of Saadat Hasan Manto.
5. Discuss the setting of the story "The Card Sharper's Daughter".
6. Give a critical appreciation of the poem 'Marriages are Made'.
7. Is the title "Telephone Conversation" suitable for the poem? Discuss.
8. Briefly discuss the title of the poem "So Very Far".
9. What lessons does Yeats learn from his experiences of love with Maud Gonne?

Part-C

10. Discuss the characteristics and types of lyric, narrative and epic poetry with relevant examples.
11. What is the significance of sea and water in the story *Yellow Fish*?
12. Critically evaluate Basheer's use of language and humour in *The Cardsharper's Daughter*.
13. Discuss the central theme of the poem "Telephone Conversation"?
14. Explain the caste laws given by Jotirao Phule?