

SHSA5103	INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH	L	T	P	CREDIT
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Course objectives:

- To introduce learners to the various phases of evolution in Indian Writing in English
- To acquaint learners to the varied dimensions of this literature.
- To understand the audience and purpose in written communication
- To analyze and interpret rhetorical elements on a text

UNIT : 1 History of Indian English Literature

9 Hrs

Pre-independence to Contemporary Writings, Postcolonial – Postmodernist – Diasporic – Indian Women Writings

UNIT : 2 Poetry

9Hrs

1. Kamala Das – The Stone Age
2. Nissim Ezekiel – The Patriot
3. A.K. Ramanajam - Sonnet

UNIT : 3 Drama

9 Hrs

1. Girish Karnad – Hayavadana
2. Vijay Tendulkar – Mitrachi Goshta
3. Mahesh Dattani – Final Solutions

UNIT : 4 Fiction

9Hrs

1. Raja Rao – Kanthapura
2. Aravind Adiga – The White Tiger
3. Chetan Bhagat – Five Point Some one

UNIT : 5 Short Fiction

9 Hrs

1. R.K.Narayan – An Astrologer's Day
2. Salman Rushdie – Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies
3. Jhumpa Lahiri – Interpreter of Maladies

Course outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- Outline an understanding of different genres of Indian writing in English
- Understand the purpose and varied dimensions of Indian Literature
- Ascertain the works of great writes of Indian writers in English.
- Analyze significant cultural and societal issues presented in Indian English literature
- Determine socio cultural aspects of Indian Literature.
- Compose a text based on one's knowledge from literary reading.

Prescribed Text:

K.R.S. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai, 2012.

References:

1. .A History of Indian English Literature, Sahitya Academy, Delhi, 2007..
2. Indian Poetry in English: A critical study. Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 2009.
3. Concise History of Indian Literature in English. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008
4. Kaustav Chakraborty. Indian Drama in English. PHI Learning Pvt, Ltd. Delhi 2014



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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT – I – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH– SHSA5103

UNIT : 1 History of Indian English Literature

Introduction

The term Indian English Literature (formerly known as “Indo Anglican”) or Indo English Literature connotes literature written in English by Indian authors. It remarkably differs from Anglo-Indian literature which was created by Englishmen in India who were fascinated by her romantic and exotic charm. They made India the main theme of their writings. It is “for the most part, merely English literature marked by Indian local colour.” Indian writing in English began much before the establishment of the British colonial rule in India and has survived the collapse of the Empire. The resilience of Indian writing in English is largely due to the English education provided by the Christian missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth century and the high adaptability of the Indian mind to Western education. Indian writing in English was able to mutate by combining typically Indian “feeling,” “emotion” and “experience” with the “discipline” imposed by English.”

Indian English literature is the outcome of the cross fertilization of two fruitful cultures – Indian and English. It is literature created by Indians both before and after independence. All Indian writers who wrote in English since the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy down to our own time belong to Indian English literature. It spontaneously and powerfully expresses varying shades of emotions thoughts and feelings typical to the genius and character of India. Indian English literature is “ a curious native eruption, an expression of the practical no less than creative genius of the Indian people. Indians have written – and are writing in English for communicating with one another and with the outside world, for achieving self-expression too artistically, using English if necessary or necessarily, in an Indian way.”

English, which has been domesticated and nativized in India, has been one of our own languages like Kannada, Punjabi, Marathi, Bengali etc. Hence, literature written in Indianized or nativized English is Indian English literature. It bears an indelible stamp of Indianness which implies ‘life attitudes’, ‘modes of perception’, ‘life patters’, ‘behaviour of the people’ and ‘traditions that have emerged over the years in India’. Gowri Deshpande asserts: “... We are right in asserting that we are Indian poets writing in English. Our landscape is Indian, our thought is moulded by our political, social, economic and philosophical scene.” Indianness or the Indian experience of life cannot be restricted to rigid definitions, as its expression varies from person to person, writer to writer, poet to poet and novelist to novelist. It is this richness and variety of experience which imparts colour and beauty to Indian English literature. It embodies the Indian sensibility which has come down to us through the vedic period .

In the context of Indians writing in English, as with many others in their regional languages as well, the process of coming to terms with tradition and the contemporary towards developing an indigenous sensibility has indeed been a large and complex historical process, which has evolved through a variety of phases.

Pre-independence Era (or) The Era of political awakening

English was always seen as a language of the Indian elites, a language used not only to construct the Indian nationalist movement but also to deconstruct the hegemony of the Raj. In fact much of the muscular growth and modernization of the Indian vernacular languages, especially Bengali, in the nineteenth century was largely due to the dissemination of the English language amongst the elite. It may be said that in the last two hundred years Indian writing in English has come of age. Indian writers have gained both the confidence and competence to express themselves in English thereby creating a typical and distinct idiom which is at once Indian and cosmopolitan. However, the construction of national literatures in India has been a predominantly upper class project with clear ideological biases and intellectual predilections, which looked at literatures of a society rather selectively, at times ignoring Muslim, Anglo-Indian, Indian Christian or Parsee writers.

The historic decision to use English for official communication and as a medium of instruction for higher education in place of Sanskrit or Persian resulted in the creation of vast literature on various disciplines in English. Rammohan Roy, Dadabhai Nauroji, Ram Gopal Ghose, Mahadeo Govind Ranade and other pioneers of Indian Renaissance who had struggled for independence were influenced by the late Victorians and Edwardians; but what distinguishes their prose, both oratorical and written, is the cultivation of an individual style suited to the expression of Indian sensibility and ethos.

Journalism also played a significant role to popularize English and to harness it to the expression of various debatable topics- political unrest and attainment of independence, religious and social reformation. It flourished with the rise of pamphleteering and the rise of journalism in English. Besides journalism and political prose, various prose genres- autobiography, biography, travelogue, reminiscence- were written with excellence during this period. What distinguishes the prose of this period is the evolution of Indian style and the flawless expression of Indian sensibility.

This era was characterized by political unrest, national awakening and social reformation. The Era of political awakening was also the epoch of Indian Renaissance which ushered India in a glorious period of social, cultural, religious, literary, economic and rational awakening led by Mahatma Gandhi the visionary. The Gandhian influence was all pervading on Indian English Literature. The urges and the problems of the masses began to be discussed in literature with new literary forms and styles evolving to suit the new subjects. Literary changes in Europe left their mark on this period.

The early poetry of the nineteenth century is reminiscent of English romantic and Victorian poets – Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Swinburne. The great pioneers like Derozio and M.M. Dutt imitated the manner and method of Byron and Scott. Early English poetry, though imitative of the manner and method of English romantic and Victorian poetry, mainly dealt with the Indian or oriental themes. The techniques adopted in Indian English poetry before 1960 were least imitative and derivative. That was in a way, a historical, imperative. Paradoxically enough more and more Indians began writing poetry in English freely and with some confidence only after they got rid of the native speakers of English.

he “novel” as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Epics, lyrics, dramas, short stories and fables have their respectable ancestries, going back by several centuries, but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel-the long sustained piece of prose fiction-has occurred and taken root in India. One might, of course, protest and say that Sanskrit works like Bana’s *Kadambar* and Subhandhu’s *Vasavadatta* are also novels, but the description would not really fit; and, besides these were isolated marvels.

Novel which is a vital medium for the expression of the spirit of the age can never grow and develop in isolation as it is related with life and society. The Indian English novel of this period reveals the spirit of the age in an authentic manner. It has become a great literary force, a powerful medium for creating social and national awareness. Novel is a long narrative in prose with plot, sub-plot, characterization, theme etc. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife*(1864) is the first Indian novel in English. It is noticeable that when Modernism was the trend in the world Literature, India produced its first novel in English. *Anandamath* was the second novel. It had “*Vande Mataram*” the Indian patriotic song. Then came Krishna Punt’s *Bay of Bengal*, Kandan, Filler, Toru Dutt’s *Bianca*, Jogendra Singh’s *Nur Jahan* and Madhusudhan Dutt’s *Kamarupa* and *Kamalata*. Toru Dutt was the major literary figure of the times. Till 1930, it was an imitation of British Literature and also had historical romances.

The earliest form of the theatre of India was the Sanskrit theatre. It began after the development of Greek and Roman theatre and before the development of theatre in other parts of Asia. However, Indian English drama began in the beginning of the nineteenth century. T.P.Kailasam, a gifted dramatist, created highly individualized characters and glorified the worth of the underdog. His plays were a success on stage. He followed Greek and Elizabethan technical patterns and ignored the rich dramatic tradition of Indian theatre. A.S.P.Ayyar’s plays dealt vigorously with contemporary life. He was a reformist and moralist who ignored the discipline of dramatic art.

Drama in Indian English began in the 19th century. M.K.Naik informs us that Drama in Indian English really begins with Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s play “*Is This civilization*” (1871) although the first play in Indian English is by Krishnadev Banerjee in 1831 titled “*The Persecuted*”. After that there is along list of plays according to one estimate there are as many as six hundred plays in Indian English today yet the notable names after Dutt are Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo. A playwright of the Bengal Renaissance is Ramkinoo Dutt with his *Manipur Tragedy*,(1893).Thus Drama like poetry and fiction has a long history no doubt, and yet it remains sadly true that it has not made its presence felt even on the national scene. It is necessary to enquire into the factors responsible for this sorry state of affairs.

The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, entitled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*; published in 1793 in England. In it’s early stages it was influenced by the western art form of the novel. Early Indian writers used English unadulterated by Indian words to convey an experience which was essentially Indian. Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English Nirad C. Choudhari, a writer of non-fiction, is best known for his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in which he related his life experiences and influences. He was a self-confessed Anglophile. P.Lal, a poet translator, publisher and essayist, is the epitome of the literature, and besides translating the entire Mahabharata into English, has written many essays in defense of Indian literature in English.

In theme, the novelists preferred the village to the city, the poor to the rich, the cultural heritage of the village to the urban luxury and sophistication. Almost all the protagonists of these novels come from the lower class of society – a society afflicted with British imperialism, economic exploitation, racial discrimination, religious conflicts and above all political crisis. English has been adopted in India as a language of education and literary expression besides being an important medium of communication amongst the people of various regions. The beginning of Indian literature in English is traced to the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, by which time English education was more or less firmly established in the three major centers of British power in India-Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.

Ram Mohan Roy was followed in the early 19th century in Bengal by the poets Henry Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Dutt started out writing epic verse in English, but returned to his native Bengali later in life. Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833), a social reformist from Bengal who fought for widow remarriage and voting rights for women, was the pioneer of Indian writing in English. Roy insisted that for India to be included among the world's nations, education in English was essential. He, therefore, campaigned for introduction of scientific education in India through the English medium.

The poems of Toru Dutt (1855-1876), who died at a tender age of 21. The daughter of Govind Chandra Dutta, who himself wrote tasteful English verse, and related to Sasi Chandra of the same family, a voluminous writer of English, she was in close contact with English or continental culture throughout most of her short life. She wrote a novel in French, which was published posthumously in Paris. "Her English poetry displayed real creative and imaginative power and almost faultless technical skill. In her English translations (A Sheaf Gleaned in French fields) and her Ancient Ballads and legends of Hindustan, she so nearly achieved a striking success as to make one regret that our language is essentially unsuited to imagery and ornament which form part of the natural texture of the oriental mind."

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1914) was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer; he was a musician and a painter; he was an educationist, a practical idealist who turned his dreams into reality at Shantiniketan; he was a reformer, philosopher, prophet; he was a novelist and short story, writer, and a critic of life and literature; he even made occasional incursions into nationalist politics; although he was essentially an internationalist. His active literary career extended over a period of 65 years. He wrote probably the largest number of lyrics ever attempted by any poet. He mused and wrote and travelled and talked untiringly. Next only to Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore has been the supreme inspiration to millions in modern India.

The phenomenal success of Gitanjali emboldened Tagore and his English publishers, Messrs. Macmillan, to bring out other volumes of translations, either done by him or by others under his supervision, and even some original writing in English: poems, *The Crescent Moon*, *The Gardener*, *Fruit-Gathering*, *Lover's Gift*, *Crossing*, *The fugitive* and other poems; plays *Chitra*, *The Post Office*, *The Cycle of Spring*, *Sacrifice* and other plays, *Red oleanders*; *Stray Birds*, a collection of epigrams and aphorisms and poetic miniatures; *Fiction*, *The Home and the World*, *The Wreck*, *Gora* (1923), *Hungry Stones* *Mashi*, *Broken Ties*, *Philosophy*, *Sadhana*, *Personality*, *creative Unity*, *The religion of Man*; autobiography, *Reminiscences* (1917). Of Tagore's full-length novels, only three appeared in approved English versions in his own life-time. *Naukadubi* (1905) appeared as *The Wreck*, *Gora* (1910) retained the same title in English also, and *Ghare Bhaire* (1916) became *The Home and the World*. *The wreck* has always been one of Tagore's popular novels.

Mulk Raj Anand alongwith R.K. Narayan is the best known writer of Indo-Anglian fiction today and his novels have been properly acclaimed by discriminating critics from the west as well. Mulk Raj Anand brought everything new to the Indo-Anglian novel and the short stories new matter, new technique, new style and new approach, but before we follow the paths trodden by his novels, it would not be out of place to study the influence of some Indian masters on the writings of Anand-Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Tagore, Sharat Chandra Chatterjee and Munshi Premchand.

His novels and short stories, which vividly present Indian life and people, show the influence of Western thought. But from early childhood, Anand imbibed love and respect for ancient Indian culture, which potently influenced his view of life. The kind of humanism he believes in and the kind of world he hopes for are integral to the Indian tradition in which he grew up.

Raja Rao, whom Santha Rama Rao has called “Perhaps the most brilliant –and certainly the most interesting – writer of modern India.” As a writer, Raja Rao is the child of the Gandhian Age, and reveals in his work his sensitive awareness of the forces let loose by the Gandhian revolution as also of the thwarting or the steadying pulls of past tradition. Raja Rao’s works include *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Cow of the Barricades*(1947), *The Serpent and the Rope*(1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), *Comrade Kirillov* (1976) and *The Policeman and The Rose* (1978).

India in the 19th century, was more or less torn by various fluctuating political and linguistic border lines. Many languages were at various stages of development and while some literatures like the Bengali literature were sufficiently advanced, there were other literatures which had not seen the dawn of the awakening. This uneven curve of literary progress had to be smoothened but the task of bringing the excellences of one literature to another was not very easy. Indian English fiction is a later development. The earliest writings of Indians in English consisted of prose-letters, memoranda, translations, religious, social, political and cultural tracts. The growth of Indian press also contributed to the rise of journalistic prose which was excellently written by Raja Rammohan Roy, the veritable morning star of Indian Renaissance.

Pre-Independence Indian English literature, this period therefore, marks a great leap forward. There is a clear cut advance in technique, form and style. Raja Rao enriched the novel with highly poetic prose and artistic narration. This period threw up men like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, D.F.Karaka, Ahmed Abbas, Ahmed Ali and many others whose contribution to the growth of the Indo-Anglian novel is of no mean order.

Postcolonial Writings

With the coming of independence the situation may have partly changed as seen from the increasing number of talented writers turning to English. But the foundations for the post-independence development were perhaps laid in the schools and colleges in the two decade before independence. The spread of education, the attractions of a world market, the growing sense of national self-confidence and maturity, the diversion of talents from regional languages into English for a variety of reasons-was there a brain drain inside India from regional languages into English? The acceptance and reputation of the early masters outside India, the prestige and recognition accorded to creative writing in English within India : all these probably led the way.

Postcolonial literature (or Post-colonial literature, sometimes called New English literature(s)), is a body of literary writings that reacts to the discourse of colonization. Post-colonial literature often involves writings that deal with issues of de-colonization or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. Postcolonial literature means the literature written after the withdrawal of the imperial power from the territory of the native people. Having got the freedom from the colonial rule, the Postcolonial people thought of having their identity. So they raised their voice against the past exploitations and oppressions and attempted at establishing their identity. The question of identity whether it is of the writer or of poet, of the nation or of religion, and of the national or regional literature is important for each.

In postcolonial writing a greater emphasis was put on the process of colonialization and attempt was made to record a strong resistance to the masters of the colonized societies besides insisting on contemporary realities of life. It deals with the literature written in colonized countries about the sufferings of the masses and also about the resistance of the people who were at the receiving end. Postcolonial writings can be considered as the historical marker of the period because it deals the literature which comes after decolonization. Postcolonial writers engaged themselves in opening up the possibilities of a new language and a new way of looking towards the world. Their writings can be taken as a medium of resistance to the former colonizer. Their themes focus on the issues like identity, national and cultural heritage, hybridity, partition, contemporary reality, human relationships and emotions etc.

During this period the dimension of Indian English literature widened. Some of the prose writers of the previous era- Nehru, Dr.Radhakrishnan and many other continued to write vigorously. Besides, English was used for various purposes and it has become a natural mode of expression for educated Indians. The rise of magazine literature, research journals on specialized disciplines and the need of international communication has immensely enlarged the possibilities of the multi-dimensional development of prose. After Indian independence in 1947, theatres spread throughout India as one of the means of entertainment. As a diverse, multi-cultural nation, the theatre of India cannot be reduced to a single, homogenous trend.

The impact of world war –II anticipated many changes in the modern Indian literature. The harsh reality of the war, the political and economic uncertainties created a spirit of protest and resentment against the existing order. Poetry written in this period was with a view to establish Indian identity by the Indian poets was an explosion or rather outburst of emotions: the nationalistic, philosophical, spiritual or mystical emotions. The appeal was to the heart of the readers.

India had turned Independent in the wake of the middle of a struggling 1947 and this very sudden and gushing change of governmental and administrative policies was sure to create its ill impacts upon the newly renamed 'Indian citizens'. The Partition of India, the consequent 'frozen period' of Indian economy made itself very much perceivable in Indian literatures - a country which was almost thrust into native- native and almost-alien systems after solid 200 years of colonial ruling. This called for reasons enough for genres in Indian literature to become apparent by themselves, a nation plunged into the era of post-colonialism sickness to end, with only sporadic writers and authors taking upon their shoulders the task to be conscious of social norms. Postcolonial Indian literature also gave birth to the Indian diaspora, with clusters failing to identify themselves with the native mode of administration, migrating to the land of once 'white' masters, looking down upon Indians as 'slaves'. Genres of

unnaturalness and unimaginable wonders began to crop up every other day in literature from India, with the now emerging tribal literary communities voicing their outcry of protests of helplessness and angst. The postcolonial generation always has perhaps suffered in a void of dichotomy, with two of the most extremities pulling at each other hard for want of importance and lack of it. And this perhaps is most visible in the rather dark genres in Indian literature, with English predominating above every other regional language.

The poets of the second phase, still romantic in spirit were Sarojini Naidu, Tagore, Aurobindo Ghose and Harindranth Chattopadhyaya. The poetic output of these poets was prolific. Romanticism of these Indian poets was fraught with nationalism, spirituality and mysticism. It was therefore different from English romanticism. Indian romanticism widened the poet's vision. The poetry of Toru Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu could not be romantic since they had to express the ethos of the age. They were not merely imitating the English romantics, Victorians and Decadents blindly. Their poetry was the best voice of the contemporary Indian time - spirit. It would be fair to say that Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu share their predecessor's individual nostalgia as well as their successor's sense of crisis and quest for identity. The new mind required the new voice which was discovered by the poet's genius for intimately registering the idiom of his own world.

Post independence, India was faced with a number of crises including social, political and economic. The society was in a continuous state of flux. This time the writers were no more eulogizing their nation. Rather they were bringing to the forefront the reality through their works. Both verse and prose were time and again emphasising on the dominant crises. In order to establish a new narrative, to break away from the colonial mind set, contemporary Indian writers adapted new narrative patterns to put through their notions.

In post 1960's one notices the emergence of new voices slowly making themselves heard as the important poets try to cast off derivative techniques and break away from forms which are beginning to stifle their creative freedom in a damaging way. Poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Jayanta Mahapatra, A.K.Ramanujan, R.Parthasarathy, Shiv K.Kumar, Keki N. Daruwalla, O.P.Bhatnagar, Arun Kolatkar, Kamala Das, Gauri Deshpande, Gauri Pant, Lila Ray, Monika Varma and Margaret Chatterjee not only project new things but present it in a manner quite different from their predecessors.

These poets have brought innovations in form, imagery, style, structure and employed in their poetry a new kind of diction akin to colloquial language and rhythm. These poets, as Professor William Walsh remarked elsewhere, "follow the contours of a speech which is both contemporary and distinctively Indian". The informal, assertive and conversational tone marks a definite departure from the past and a new beginning in the present. Some of the poets mentioned above are very near to be called confessional poets, though the confessional tone is more a strategy than a reality.

In post 1960, the use of language by the Indian English poets is a marked feature of their new technique. Kamala Das elliptical style, the sonorous style of O.P.Bhatnagar, R.Parthasarathy and A.K.Ramanujan, the vigorous and deep engaging style of Nissim Ezekiel, Jayanta Mahapatra and Keki N.Daruwalla, the emotive style of Gauri Deshpande, Gauri Pant, Lila Ray and Monika Varma, the impressionistic style of Shiv K. Kumar (particularly his use of very learned language in the manner of English metaphysical poets) are distinctive features of their individual poetic techniques. But very few of them are obsessed with the perfection of language. Shiv K.Kumars use of language bears the stamp of his professional style and learning. "Only A.K. Ramanujan and R.Parthasarathy are concerned with the perfection of language. Ezekiel and to some extent Daruwalla strive to approximate

Indians have developed a kind of mannerism in spoken form and the post-1960 Indian poets in English try to approximate to this speech rhythm in their poetry. These poets follow the contours of speech and try to re-create a just and lively presentation of Indian character and situation in their poetry. The purpose behind employing such a technique is to catch the spirit of the personages in actual form so that they can achieve the reader's total participation. This technique also aims at creating a new Indian English idiom. Nissim Ezekiel is the first poet to undertake such a task.

Modern Indian English novel is, thus, preoccupied with the inner life and individual problems of men and women passing through revolutionary changes. The novel in the previous era was mainly concerned with the external aspects of society and little with the exteriorization of the inner landscape of the human psyche. It has become more subtle, philosophical and psychological. This change in the content of the novel has necessitated the use of new technical devices. Anand deftly uses the device of the stream of consciousness in his first novel *Untouchable*. Myth too has been used as a technique to illustrate the novelist's vision or point of view. Almost all the novelists of this period have interpreted myth in their own manner so that it may contribute to the expression of their point of view.

The post-independence novel has shown signs of maturity from the viewpoint of technique, style and language. American and European models began to exercise their influence on novel, K. R. S. Iyengar remarks: —Before 1947, the English models were the major outside influence on the Indian novel. After independence, however, novelists in India have shown themselves susceptible to the influence of American and European (especially Russian models, and also models from oriental countries. The advance in fictional technique is a landmark in the history of Indian English novel. The novel has emerged as —a living and evolving genre, and is trying in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality.

Most of the novelists of this period exposed social evils, customs and traditions, rites and rituals, poverty and illiteracy, bonds and bondages in their novels on the one hand and on the other, they made their writings a powerful medium to highlight the east-west encounter and thereby to spread the nationalistic ideas of the great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi among the people. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao presented the radical social and national issues in their novels. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is Indian in terms of its story telling qualities. The novels produced in the pre-independence period depicted the changing socio-political scene.

The development of English writing post Independence took a new direction. The Indian English writers perceived India at a post-colonial view. The new ideas flourished but most of the focus was shifted towards the problems like- social, economic, religious, political and familial as bases; which were also enveloped with the feel of National Movement which drew attention of the creative writers. The partition, the communal riots after partition, the problems of casteism, subjugation of women, the poverty of illiterate masses became the flavour of the day. The outcry is enormous and many up-surging writers have enhanced the view of the Literature with passage of time.

Post independence, India was faced with a number of crises including social, political and economic. The society was in a continuous state of flux. This time the writers were no more eulogizing their nation. Rather they were bringing to the forefront the reality through their works. Both verse and prose were time and again emphasizing on the dominant crises. In

order to establish a new narrative, to break away from the colonial mind set, contemporary Indian writers adapted new narrative patterns to put through their notions.

In the post-independence Era Indian English novel came to maturity and attained full flowering. The rise of Indian English writing in postcolonial era was a significant development in Indian English literature. In the Indian context, postcolonial writing with its new themes and techniques makes its presence felt in the English-speaking world.

Post modern Writings

Postmodernism is the term used to denote the depiction of life after world war-II in Art, Literature and Culture and the kind of changes that manifested due to this in all walks of life across the world. The Indian literary scenario, after 1980, is typically postmodern in all walks of life as it has been with the rest of the world. There are a number of rationales that have gone into the making of it. And its outcome has also been multi-directional. In India, more than post world war circumstances, postcolonial pressures have played a crucial and unique role. After 1980s, India realized itself as a multi-cultural, Multi-ethnic, Multi-lingual, Post-colonial, and Postmodern nation.

Making a move from the 18th or 19th century, that had indeed sowed the budding phase of then referred contemporary Indian literature, writers belonging to post modern India are additionally very conscious about their own culture and traditions. Hence can be witnessed a massive body of vernacular language and literature flourishing in it. While some of the authors pen in English, most of them continue to write in their colloquial languages. The philosophy and thought behind their works exhibit influences of western thoughts and principles. It is quite laudable that these authors have been successful enough to maintain the unique flavour of their region in their works and tinge it further with a modern dimension. The literary genre of the contemporary Indian literature are manifold. Present Indian readers have novels, plays, short stories, literary criticism, science fiction and poetry to choose from.

The modern or experimental Indian English writing is part of the process of modernization which includes urbanization, industrialization, mobility, independence, social change, increased communication (in the form of films, television, radio, journals and newspapers) national and international transportation networks, mass education and the resulting paradox that as an independent culture emerges, it also participates in the international, modern usually westernized world. Following are some of the factors responsible for the emergence of "new", "modernist", "experimental" Indian English Literature:

- | The economic progress achieved through the government's policies of democratic socialism and five year plans.
- | The social progress achieved through the rise in mass education.
- | The economic and social progress resulted in the broadening of the middle class sections of the society.
- | The spread of the English language and the evolution of the English culture alongside Hindi and the regional languages hastened the process of modernization. English has been Indianised in pronunciation, intonation, stress parts, idioms, word order and the syntax.

| The scientific and technological advancement, the scientific temperament and modern sensibility has given rise to agnosticism and atheism among the educated intellectual. The modern educated intellectual Indian is critical of the formal and ritualistic religion.

| The modern sensibility has led to an open mode of expression in social relationships.

| Modern poetry deals in concrete terms with concrete experiences in free verse. Rhyme and other devices of meter and stanzaic forms are discarded.

The major post - independence Indian English poets are : Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, P. Lal, Adil Jussawalla, A. K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarthy, Gieve Patel, Arvind Mehrotra, Prithvi Nandy, Kamala Das, K. N. Daruwalla, Shiv Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra, Dilip Chitre, Saleem Peeradina, Santan Rodrigues, Eunice De Souza, Silgado, Meena Alexander, Agha Shahid Ali, Vikram Seth, Manohar Shetty etc.

The models of the modern Indian poets are neither exclusively Indian nor British but cosmopolitan. Europe, Africa, America and Asia have all become a part of our cultural consciousness and offer impetus and stimulation. So the poets have cosmopolitan culture to fall back on, though the preference is shown for Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Auden, Dylan Thomas, Wallace Stevens, Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath, devotional poetry of saints like Tukaram.

With the arrival of Anita Desai and Arun Joshi (1939-1993) on the scene of Indian novel, the depiction switched from society to individuals in modern fiction. The Indian novel in English found a new dimension with Arun Joshi and Anita Desai an expatriate living abroad. Their novels include: *The Foreigner*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice*, *The Last Labyrinth*, and *The City and the River*. Chaman Nahal, another notable novelist, wrote *My True Faces*(1973), *Into Another Dawn* (1977), *Azadi*(1975), which won Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1977, *The English Queens* (1979), *Crown and the Loincloth*(1981), *The City and the River* (1990), *The Triumph of the Tricolour*(1993), *Epilogue*(1993), and *The Salt of Life*(1993).

In want of a regular theatre Indian English drama could not register any major league. Though institutions like National School of Drama and Sangit Natak Akademi promoted the growth of regional language theatre. However, during this period talented playwrights like G.V.Desai's *Hali*(1950) an allegorical and autobiographical play in poetic prose, was written and admired for its originality, symbolism, vividness of imagery and plain and simple style and deep passions.

Yet another dramatic of this period is Guru Charan Das' whose work *Larins Sahib* a historical play, based on events in the Punjab in 1946-47 which covers the period after the death of Ranjit Singh was considered a landmark play. The play successfully employs use of Indian English for writing dialogue. Das wrote in a natural, crisp and pointed dialogue in Indian English. He has not only faithfully recreated history, he has also subtly captured the essential historical traits of his historical personal. Thus this period saw many a talented playwrights who had employed new methods and techniques and had decidedly enriched Indian English drama.

Diasporic Writings

Diasporic Literature is a very vast concept and an umbrella term that includes in it all those literary works written by the authors outside their native country, but these works are associated with native culture and background. In this wide context, all those writers can be regarded as diasporic writers, who write outside their country but remained related to their homeland through their works. Diasporic literature has its roots in the sense of loss and alienation, which emerged as a result of migration and expatriation.

Literature of old generation of diasporic Indian writers like Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau, Dhalchandra Rajan, Nirad Chaudhari, Ved Mehta,, mainly look back at India and hardly ever record their experiences away from India as expatriates. It is as if these writers have discovered their Indianness when they are out of India. Evidently, they have the benefit of looking at their homeland from the outside. The distance offers detachment that is so required to have a clear insight of their native land. Gradually, the old diaspora of indentured laborers is replaced by the new diaspora of International Indian English Writers live in the market driven world. These writers register their away from India experiences and even if they look back at their motherland it is often in a melancholic tone rather than nostalgia.

These modern diasporic Indian writers can be grouped into two different classes. One class includes those who have spent a part of their life in India and have carried the baggage of their native land offshore. The other class comprises those who have been raised since childhood

outside India. They have had a vision of their country only from the outside as an alien place of their origin. The writers of the previous group have a factual displacement whereas those belonging to the latter group find themselves rootless. Both the groups of writers have created an enviable corpus of English literature. These writers while portraying migrant characters in their fiction investigate the theme of displacement, alienation, assimilation, acculturation, etc. The diasporic Indian writers' portrayal of dislocated characters gains immense significance if seen against the geopolitical background of the vast Indian subcontinent. That is exactly why such works have an international readership and a lasting appeal.

In the novels of 1980s, there are different modes of narrative techniques. They project social realism, mythical realism, historical romance, magical realism, buildungsroman, etc. Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Gosh, Taslima Nasrin, Vasanji, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Suketu Mehta, Vandana Singh, Bharti Kirchner, Amit Chaudhuri, Rohinton Mistry, Gita Mehta, Dina Mehta, Indira Ganesan, Uma Vasudeva, Namita Gokhale, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Chandra, Manil Suri, Richard Gasta, Siddharth Dhanwan, Shanghvi, Rana Das Gupta are Indian Diasporic writers who live overseas.

Generally, diasporic literature deals with alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest of identity. It also addresses issues related to amalgamation or disintegration of cultures. It reflects the immigrant experience that comes out of the immigrant settlement. Diasporic writing unfolds the experiences of unsettlement and dislocation, at some or the other level. A diasporic text can be investigated in terms of location, dislocation and relocation. The changing designation of home and accompanying nervousness about homelessness and unfeasibility of going back are recurrent themes in diasporic literature.

The favorite theme of Diasporic literature is east-west fusion that makes its presence felt in the English speaking world by breaking a new ground both in themes and techniques of both fiction and poetry. There are many European characters that come to India and adopt the Indian culture and also remember their culture so there creates a matter of compare and contrast between the east and the west. Jhabvala's 'A Backward Place' shows a very fusion of the east and the west as her European sensibility mixes with Indian sensibility and presents the compare and contrast of two cultures. In this context Balachandra Rajan writes: ...the presence of two cultures in one's mind forms a wider and therefore saner basis on which to originate the quest for identity, and ...the discordance between these two cultures can be creative as well as merely confusing. Perhaps one can go further and suggest that the man with mixed allegiances is contemporary Everyman.

Two of the earliest novels that have effectively depicted diasporic Indian characters are Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Blackbird* and Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man*. Bharati Mukherjee's novels like *Wife and Jasmine* depict Indians in the US – the land of immigrants both legal and illegal – before globalization got its momentum. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *The Mistress of Spices* depicts Tilo, the protagonist, as an exotic character to reveal the migrant's anguish. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* shows the extent of rootlessness encountered by character born and brought up on a foreign land. Amit Chaudhari, in his novel *Afternoon Raag*, portrays the lives of Indian students in Oxford. These writers also depicted the positive aspect of displacement.

The ranks of second generation diasporic Indian writers like Meera Syal, Shashi Tharoor, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, etc. have faithfully demonstrated the lives of both first and second generation immigrants in the US. This is possible because big issues like religious discrimination and racial intolerance are no longer the main concern of these writers. Indian diasporic literature has raised different issues and aspects of immigrants' lives. The fictional narratives like Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1990), Meera Syal's *Anita and Me* (1996), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* (1996) have shown the Indians living in England, America and where they have immigrated either to advance their financial condition or to seek jobs due to unemployment at homelands or for better education of their children or better professional opportunities.

Literary works like Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* Meera Syal's *Anita and Me*, Chitra Banerjee- Divakaruni's *The Queen of Dreams* have also depicted the issue of intergenerational gap of the Indian Diaspora where the first generation parents expect from their children to live by the value system of Indian culture which they force on them at home through food, dress, customs, rituals, language, beliefs, etc. but the children encountering different cultural surroundings outside, find the latter have fascination, sandwiched between the two cultures and confused like Gogol in *The Namesake* and Meena in *Anita and Me*, who daily hear and bear the racial comments because of their brown skin as they are not able to decide which is their real 'home' India or the country where they have been born and brought up.

Nostalgia, loss, betrayal and duty are the foundations of new homes as diasporic protagonist adjust to new countries. In adjusting to new countries, issues of acculturation and assimilation become the central point as these immigrants negotiate the unbalance of their hyphenated identities. Usually, the first generation diaspora clings to food and clothes as the most obvious markers of Indianness that sets them apart and highlights their difference. The insistence on this difference is often a conscious declaration of belonging to another place. On the other hand, second generation diaspora declines and removes such identity markers to

assimilate the dominant culture. These and many other issues and aspects have been highlighted and focused by Indian immigrant writers through their literary works.

In the study of diaspora literature 'Displacement' or 'Dislocation' is important notion that is used not only to express the physical movement of an individual from one place to the other but it also shows how with the movement of a person the aggregate of a whole nation, to which he or she belonged, carried with them. Dislocation leads to cross-cultural encounters that have always affected the lives of immigrants and there is constantly the possibility of rejection, confusion and tension when people from different cultures intermingle. This interaction portrays the immigrants caught in flight between boundaries, an astonishingly complicated web of memories, relationship and images. The migrants in the foreign culture lie in soft bond memory of the motherland. The relocation has its disgust for one thing when one does not have a home (where there is a sense of belonging) he has to live in the reminiscences, a collective memory representing a symbolic relationship between past and present.

Identity becomes the core issue in any investigation of diaspora, a particularly diasporic identity that is made of various factors and sub-factors. This diasporic identity is multi-level. It is also based on the history or conditions leading to migration, as well as the individual responses to these circumstances. This experience of dislocation is dependent on factors such as the generation of diaspora that one belongs, impact of globalization, why the diasporic has shifted away from his homeland and also the approach of the host country towards the diasporic community. There are some factors like language, dress, and socio-cultural environment that deepen the problem of nation and identity after migration takes place.

A new aspect of this life in exile got added in post-independence period in India when many people in the sixties and seventies began moving towards developed countries on their own agreement either to avoid political or economic difficulties of their native land or to study or as professionals which Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak calls as part of 'brain-drain'. Since then, this move to other countries has been ongoing. It is important to note that whatever the reasons for migration be, the immigrants do experience the sense of unbelonging and displacement in the new lands. They may try hard to assimilate or acculturate in the new cultures; they remained on the edge of the adopted culture and treated as other.

Poetry is not as popular as the novel or short-story but still, there is some major contribution by the Indian diaspora in Indo-American Literature. A. K. Ramanujan occupies an important place among Indo- American poets with a wish for connectedness and the absence of connection are the two facts of Ramanujan's poetic world. Meena Alexander's *Migrant Music* deals with belonging and home which are created by the excavation and re-composition of the past. Agha Shahid Ali is a Kashmiri exile.

The themes of homeland, loss and exile are central to Ali's work. *The Half-Inch Himalayas*, a collection of poems depict in four sections; the very spaces opened up in exile. A Nostalgist's map of America is a volume that reveals alien spaces of hyphenated identity. Sharat Chandra's *April Nanjangud* views and remembers India through an expatriate's sensitive awareness. *Once or Twice* also contains some of his earliest passionate reflection of America's attitude towards its immigrants. The family of *Mirrors* is an extension of earlier immigrant themes. His *Immigrants of Loss* deals with universality of dislocation and sharply divisive nature of American social hierarchies. Vikram Seth, a well known Indian expatriate novelist has also contributed to his collections of poems like *the Golden Gate* and *All You Who Sleep Tonight*. Poets like Vijay Seshadri, Ravi Shankar, Maua Khosala, Prageeta Sharma have also contributed their literary talent.

In the present global scenario, with interaction and intermingling of the cultures, the new routes and modes of thinking about diaspora identities are escalating. Various theorists now believe that the discourse and narratives of nation, ethnicity or race which are the modes of belonging and place individuals in assurance of roots are not appropriate any longer when the immigrants are thinking in different ways about their relations to the new place, home, and their past. Moreover, since the substantial change has been noticeable in the approach, location and identities of diaspora, the diaspora individuals and communities cannot be positioned only in relation to some homeland to which they all want to return.

Indian Women Writings

Women writers in India have been creating such spaces through their writing. Women novelists have developed their own style which expresses feminine sensibility. Each one is different from the other. Each one of them has her own world of experiences, her own way of looking at things and her own way of character portrayal. One point is common in them. They show a keen sense of the awareness of social change. It was mandatory for them to create their own space in the male-dominated literary world. Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity.

A major development in Indian fiction is the growth of a feminist or women centred approach, that seeks to project and interpret experience, from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. Some works by early women novelists are Raj Lakshmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* (1884) and *Saguna* (1885); Cornelia Sorabji's *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901) and *Between the Twilights* (1908); Iqbalunnisa Hussain's *Purdah and Polygamy, Life in an Indian Muslim Household* (1944). The theme is from childhood to womanhood - developed society respecting women in general. Santha Rama Rau's *Remember for the House*, (1956), Ruth Prasad Jhabvala's first novel *To whom she will*, 1955 and her later novel *Heat and Dust* (1975), Kamla Markandya's *Two Virgins* (1994), Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977), and Gaeta Hariharan *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) are some of the leading women writers writing in Indian English literature.

A major pre-occupation in recent Indian women's writings has been a delineation of inner life and subtle relationships. In a culture where, individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women's role at home is the central focus. It is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural diversion.

The present-day women writers have dared to express what their predecessors have either ignored or shied away from expressing. The themes, the style, syntax, and even symbolism have been affected by their present space and time. Women writers like Jhumpa Lahiri have succeeded in creating fiction which re-examines the lives of the women characters using the tools of Postmodernism. These women writers dared to reinterpret Indian women's social, psychological, and even personal identities.

The search for a new different self became an unwritten code for all these women who personally had issues with their own identities. Right from Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal to Jhumpa Lahiri and Anita Nair, Indian women writers in English have created milestones both in their themes and techniques. The enigma called Indian woman has been redefined and the

myth of Indian womanhood reinterpreted. The hidden dreams, desires and fears of the 'real' Indian woman have found expression in the writings of these writers.

Women writers work on revealing the varying mental states, psychic observations, inner motives and existential pursuits of man. They succeed fully in breaking non-grounds for their fictional art among her contemporary while dealing with the predicament of man and his social and moral dilemmas. They also analyses a man in action in order to reveal his hidden motives behind the facial reality of conscious mind. Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity. The theme is from childhood to womanhood-developed society respecting women in general.

The contemporary Indian English women writers are creating their own 'little narratives' as a replacement of the 'grand narratives' dominated by the canonical writers. Anita Desai is one such powerful voice in the field of Indian English fiction. Her fiction gives us the glimpse of the inner world of not only her characters but also countless Indian women whose psyche has not been studied as intently as it should have been. Anita Desai's novels are postmodern as she creates her little narratives against the meta-narratives.

Women writers have gone up from difficult to tribal and rural areas too, but all of them have expressed their concern for women and their problems. The variety of subjects, they have touched upon is a great contribution in creating awareness for the modern women all over the globe. The variety of subjects handled by them considering Indian environment needs an appreciation. Some of the writers have not claimed that they belong to feminist's movement yet their writings suggest that their inner spirit and feelings are for the welfare of the women only.

The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away From traditional portrayals of enduring self- sacrificing women, towards conflicts, female characters searching for identity; no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus. It is interesting to note the emergence of not just an essential .Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Women's presentation is more assertive, more liberated in their view and more articulate in their expression than the woman of the past is.

A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus. It is interesting to note the emergence of not just an essential .Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Women's presentation is more assertive, more liberated in their view and more articulate in their expression than the woman of the past.

Indian writing in English at present is gaining ground rapidly. In the realm of fiction, it has heralded a new era and has earned many laurels both at home and abroad. Indian women writers have started questioning the prominent old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle. Today, the works of Kamla Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Geetha Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai and Manju Kapur and many more have left an indelible imprint on the readers of Indian fiction in English.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT – II – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH– SHSA5103

UNIT : 2 Poetry

The Stone Age - Kamala Das

Fond husband, ancient settler in the mind,
Old fat spider, weaving webs of bewilderment,
Be kind. You turn me into a bird of stone, a granite
Dove, you build round me a shabby room,
And stroke my pitted face absent-mindedly while
You read. With loud talk you bruise my pre-morning sleep,
You stick a finger into my dreaming eye. And
Yet, on daydreams, strong men cast their shadows, they sink
Like white suns in the swell of my Dravidian blood,
Secretly flow the drains beneath sacred cities.
When you leave, I drive my blue battered car
Along the bluer sea. I run up the forty
Noisy steps to knock at another's door.
Though peep-holes, the neighbours watch,
they watch me come
And go like rain. Ask me, everybody, ask me
What he sees in me, ask me why he is called a lion,
A libertine, ask me why his hand sways like a hooded snake
Before it clasps my pubis. Ask me why like
A great tree, felled, he slumps against my breasts,
And sleeps. Ask me why life is short and love is
Shorter still, ask me what is bliss and what its price....

[From The Old Playhouse and Other Poems]

The poem, '*The Stone Age*', by Kamala Das has been taken from the collection of poems called *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973). The poem shows the relevance of an extra-marital relationship in a ruined marital life. It reveals the pathos of the female speaker who is deprived of her individuality and freedom by her lustful husband and dehumanized her beyond limits. She loses all her identity as a female in this life of suffocation and utter neglect.

Detailed Analysis

Lines 1-10

“Fond husband, ancient settler in the mind,
(...)
Secretly flow the drains beneath sacred cities.”

The speaker in *'The Stone Age'* by Kamala Das, blames her husband for ruining her life by his unappeasable lust. She ironically calls him an old fat spider and reveals his physical incompatibility with her. The speaker criticizes her husband for turning her into a bird of stone which looks like lifeless granite love. She is deprived of her freedom and identity and is caged in a shabby drawing-room. She criticizes him for feigning love while he is totally lost in reading. She is disturbed by her husband's loud talk or by sticking “a finger into my dreaming eyes” at dawn.

This extract from the poem exposes the futility of ruined and forced marriages. It also shows the limitations of the life of lust in which there is no space for emotional or spiritual fulfillment. The speaker is totally dehumanized and feels like a caged granite dove having no life of lust in which there is no space for emotional or spiritual dove having no life of her own. She suffers from a sense of alienation and hopelessness and is left with no ray of hope in life.

Lines 11-16

“When you leave, I drive my blue battered car
(...)
And go like rain.”

In this extract, the speaker is quite fed up with her husband's show of love. She fails to sleep due to the loud talk of her husband at dawn. He absentmindedly strokes her face while reading in the dirty drawing-room. She feels suffocated in this life of confinement.

The speaker drives her highly dented blue car along the bus sea after the departure of her husband. She knocks at another's house after ascending forty noisy steps in search of love. She appears and disappears like rain and her neighbours keep a constant watch over her through the peepholes of the doors of their houses.

Lines 16-22

Ask me, everybody, ask me
(...)
Shorter still, ask me what is bliss and what its price....

In this extract of the poem, the speaker asks questions like what he observes in her, why he is called a lion or libertine, the flavour of his mouth, and why his ‘hand sway like a hooded snake before it clasps my

pubis'. She further asks why he felled like a tree on her breasts and slept on them. Finally, she asks why life was short and love shorter still, and what bliss was and its price.

Kamala Das here exposes the futility of a ruined marital relationship. The poem shows that the life of exclusive lust ultimately leads to lifelessness. It kills the individuality and the sense of freedom of its victim. A lustful person does not think beyond his sexual gratification and pays fig for the emotional and spiritual needs of his partner in love. The female persona loses all her identity as a woman and is reduced to the level of a granite dove only. She seeks alternative sources of love to fill in the emotional gap created by her selfish and self-centered husband.

Title of the Poem: 'The Stone Age'

The title of the poem, '*The Stone Age*', is very suggestive and appropriate. It shows that the life of exclusive lust ultimately leads to lifelessness. It kills individuality and a sense of freedom. A lustful person does not think beyond the satisfaction of his carnal desires. The female person in the poem feels like a "bird o stone,/a granite dove", having lost all her identity and freedom. She is absentmindedly fondled like a toy to create the illusion of love only. She seeks alternative sources of love to overcome her frustration in a marital relationship. Finally, she realizes that she has totally failed in her quest for finding true love in life.

What is *The Stone Age* About?

The poem, '*The Stone Age*', is about the loss of a female's individuality. Here the speaker, who is a female persona, addresses her husband in a satirical manner. The lady speaker is shown very critical of her husband's repulsive physical appearances and calls him an 'old fat spider' who has built 'walls of bewilderment' around her. She charges him for turning her into 'a bird stone', /'a granite dove'. He has built around her a shabby drawing-room and absentmindedly strokes her face while reading. He often disturbs her early morning sleep and directs a finger into her dreaming eye. While day-dreaming, she finds her husband an unwanted intruder into the privacy of her mind, haunted by strong men. They vanish like 'white suns in the swell of my Dravidian blood'.

After her husband's departure, she would leave the house in a battered car along the blue sea. She would climb the 'forty noisy steps to knock at another's door', closely observed by the neighbours while she appeared and disappeared like rain, in search of love. She was asked questions like what he observes in her, why he is called a lion or libertine, the flavour of his mouth, and why his 'hand sway like a hooded snake before it clasps my pubis'. She is further asked why he felled like a tree on her breasts and slept on them. Finally, she is asked why life was short and love shorter still, and what bliss was and its price.

The Patriot by Nissim Ezekiel

I am standing for peace and non-violence.
Why world is fighting fighting
Why all people of world
Are not following Mahatma Gandhi, I
am simply not understanding.

Ancient Indian Wisdom is 100% correct,
I should say even 200% correct,
But modern generation is neglecting -
Too much going for fashion and foreign thing.

Other day I'm reading newspaper
(Every day I'm reading Times of India
To improve my English Language)
How one goonda fellow
Threw stone at Indirabehn.

Must be student unrest fellow, I am thinking.
Friends, Romans, Countrymen, I am saying (to myself)
Lend me the ears.
Everything is coming -
Regeneration, Remuneration, Contraception.

Be patiently, brothers and sisters.
You want one glass lassi?
Very good for digestion.
With little salt, lovely drink,
Better than wine;
Not that I am ever tasting the wine.
I'm the total teetotaller, completely total,
But I say
Wine is for the drunkards only.

What you think of prospects of world peace?
Pakistan behaving like this,
China behaving like that,
It is making me really sad, I am telling you.
Really, most harassing me.

All men are brothers, no?
In India also
Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Hindiwallahs
All brothers -
Though some are having funny habits.
Still, you tolerate me,
I tolerate you,
One day Ram Rajya is surely coming.

You are going?
But you will visit again
Any time, any day,
I am not believing in ceremony
Always I am enjoying your company

About Nissim Ezekial

Nissim Ezekiel(1924-2004) is an Indian Jewish poet, playwright, and an art critic. He has been described as the “father of post-independence Indian verse in English”. His other works of poetry include – ‘The Night of the Scorpion’, ‘The Deadly Man’ etc. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi cultural award in the year 1983 and the Padma Shri award, by the president of India, in the year 1988.

Summary of the Poem

‘The Patriot’ is one of a group of poem termed ‘very Indian English Poem”. It is a lively humorous poem of forty-six lines. It reflects Ezekiel’s painstaking study of Indian speech habits and mental attitude. In this poem, Ezekiel deliberately employs inappropriate language to suggest that such a language is typical Indian English. He also gives the speaker amusing mental attitudes and thought patterns which, according to him, Indians are supposed to have.

The speaker here speaks to a visitor. He proclaims that he stands for peace and non-violence. He does not understand why people fight all the time and do not follow the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He believes that ancient Indian wisdom is absolutely correct. He says that he feels very sad to see that modern generation neglects this wisdom of ancient India. His heart is broken to see that modern generation is running after fashion and things made in foreign countries. The speaker says that he reads. The ‘Times of India’ to improve his English. It is highly ironical that inspite of his reading newspaper to improve English he frequently breaks the rules of English and most of the time use inappropriate language. He says that he read in news that a rogue throws stone at Indirabehn. He thinks that rogue must belong to the category of undisciplined students. The young boys and girls need to be patient. Then he suddenly makes a shift from present political situation to a glass of lassi. He asks if anybody else wants lassi. Then he shifts and starts telling the merits of lassi. He says that it is good for digestion. It is better than wine. Then he immediately makes it clear that he has never tasted wine. He is ‘a teetotaler’. Then again he makes a shift and focusses his attention on the previous topic of present political situation. He proclaims himself to be a lover of peace. He is worried about the attitude of Pakistan and China towards India. He says that both are not behaving properly. He says that he feels sad to see all this. Now he starts talking about brotherhood. He says that all men are brothers in India also whether they are Gujrati or Maharastrian or any Hindi speaking person. Different people in India have different funny habit. In spite of difference in habits, they tolerate each other. The speaker is sure about Ram Rajya to come. Now the listeners are perhaps bored, and are about to go. The speaker tells him that he is always welcome.

Explanation with Reference to the Context:

Stanza – 1

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel’s poem ‘The Patriot’. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical constructions to suggest that such language is ‘very Indian English’. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

The speaker says that he believes in peace and non-violence. He does not understand why people fight all the time and do not follow the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He believes that ancient Indian wisdom is absolutely correct. He says that he feels very sad to see that modern generation neglects this wisdom of ancient India. He says that the young Indian generation runs after fashion and things made in foreign.

Stanza 2

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

The speaker says that he reads the newspaper daily. He reads 'The Times of India' to improve his English. The other day he read in the paper that some rogue threw a stone at Indira behn. He thinks that this rogue must belong to the category of undisciplined students.

Stanza 3

Reference to Context

These lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

In these lines, the speaker imitates the famous speech of Antony in Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' without knowing that he is speaking to Indians, not Romans. He says that friends listen to me, things are growing better. New things are coming to life and these are regeneration, remuneration, contraception. The young boys and girls must have patience. You need not be restless because things are growing better. The juxtapositions of words like regeneration and contraception is typically humorous.

Stanza 4

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

In these lines, the speaker praises Indian drink-lassi made from milk and curd. He says that lassi with a little salt added in it is very lovely drink. It is very good for digestion. He says that lassi is better a drink than wine. However, the speaker immediately makes it clear that he has never tasted wine. He is 'total teetotaler, completely total'. He considers wine to be only for drunkards. Phrases like 'completely total' is typical of Indian speakers.

Stanza 5

Reference to Context

The lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

In these lines, the speaker asks his listeners about their views on the topic of world peace. He is worried about the attitude of Pakistan and China towards India. He says that both are not behaving properly. Their attitudes make the speaker very sad. His heart is broken because nobody is thinking about the idea of world peace. These lines show the way of thinking of Indian people.

Stanza 6

Reference to Context

These lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speakers of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

In these lines, the speaker proclaims that all men are brothers. In India, he believes that all men whether they are Gujaratis or Maharashtrians or Hindi speaking brothers. He says that in India people have different habits, and sometimes they are funny. He says that in spite of their funny habits, he tolerates others and others tolerate him. The speaker is fully convinced that one day Ram Rajya will surely come.

Stanza 7

Reference to Context

These lines quoted above have been taken from Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'The Patriot'. It is a humorous poem of forty-six lines. Through this poem, Ezekiel satirizes the typical speech habits of Indian speaker of English. He deliberately uses inappropriate and ungrammatical language to suggest that such language is 'very Indian English'. He also makes fun of the mental attitudes and thought patterns of Indian people.

Explanation

The speaker has been talking to some people. Perhaps bored by the speaker, they start to leave him. Addressing them, the speaker asks if the listeners are going away. The speaker hopes that they will visit him again. The speaker would welcome them at any day on anytime. The speaker says that he does not believe in ceremonies, he will always enjoy their company. These lines also show the mental attitude of Indian people. The use of 'ceremonies' instead of formality is also typical to Indian Speakers of English.

A. K. RAMANUJAN

SONNET

Time moves in and out of me
a stream of sound, a breeze,
an electric current that seeks
the ground, liquids that transpire

through my veins, stems and leaves
toward the skies to make fog and mist
around the trees. Mornings brown
into evenings before I turn around

in the day. Postage stamps, words
of unwritten letters complete with commas,
misplaced leases and passports, excuses
and blame swirl through the night

and take me far away from home
as time moves in and out of me.

A. K. Ramanujan
1929–1993

Poet, translator, folklorist, and philologist A.K. Ramanujan was born in Mysore, India. He earned degrees at the University of Mysore and Deccan College in Pune and a PhD from Indiana University. Ramanujan wrote in both English and Kannada, and his poetry is known for its thematic and formal engagement with modernist transnationalism. Issues such as hybridity and transculturation figure prominently in such collections as *Second Sight* (1986), *Selected Poems* (1976), and *The Striders* (1966). The *Collected Poems of A.K. Ramanujan* (1995) received a Sahitya Akademi Award after the author's death.

As a scholar, Ramanujan contributed to a range of disciplines, including linguistics and cultural studies. His essay "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?" proposed a notion of "context-sensitive" thinking based in complex situational understandings of identity that differed significantly from Western thought and its emphasis on universal concepts and structures. Context-sensitive thinking influenced Ramanujan as a folklorist as well. His works of scholarship include *A Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales from India* (1997), *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages* (1991), and *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (1967).

For much of his career, Ramanujan taught at the University of Chicago, where he helped develop the South Asian studies program. In 1976, the Indian government honored him with the title Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in the country. Ramanujan also received a MacArthur Fellowship. The South Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies awards the A.K. Ramanujan Book Prize for Translation in honor of his contributions to the field.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT – III – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH– SHSA5103

UNIT : 3 Drama

Hayavadan by Girish Karnad

Brief Biography of Girish Karnad

Girish Karnad was born to a Brahmin family and from an early age took an interest in travelling theatre troupes. He majored in mathematics and statistics at Karnatak Arts College, graduating in 1958. After graduating he travelled to England and studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, where he wrote his first play, *Yayati*. After working for the Oxford University Press for seven years, he began to write full time for both theatre and film. For four decades he has continued to write plays, often using history and mythology to address contemporary themes. For his contributions to theatre, he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's top civilian honors, in 1974. In 1992 the Indian government awarded him the Padma Bhushan, another of its highest honors, for his contributions to the arts. He also received the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honor, in 1999.

Historical Context of Hayavadana

In 1947, when Karnad was a young boy, India gained independence from colonial rule under Britain. Under colonial British rule, theater in India had largely consisted of performances of Shakespeare. In an attempt to decolonize the theater, many Indian playwrights and directors turned to religious rituals, classical dance and song, martial arts, and Sanskrit aesthetics in order to create a modern Indian theatre. This was later dubbed the "theatre of roots" movement. Karnad's work shares in this movement's goal, but also draws from some western styles like Greek theater (through the use of choruses and masks). The theatre of roots movement became strongest in the 1960s and 1970s, just as Karnad began to write plays.

Summary

The play opens with a puja to Ganesha, as the Bhagavata asks that Ganesha bless the performance that he and the company are about to put on. Then he places the audience in the setting of the play, Dharmapura, and begins to introduce the central characters. The first is Devadatta, the son of a Brahmin who outshines the other pundits and poets of the kingdom. The second is Kapila, the son of the iron-smith who is skilled at physical feats of strength. The two are the closest of friends.

As the Bhagavata sets up the story, there is a scream of terror offstage. An actor runs onstage screaming that he has seen a creature with a horse's head, a man's body, and the voice of a human. The Bhagavata doesn't believe him, and even when the creature (Hayavadana) enters, the Bhagavata thinks it is a mask and attempts to pull off Hayavadana's head. Upon realizing it's his real head, the Bhagavata listens as Hayavadana explains his origin: he is the son of a princess and a celestial being in horse form, and he is desperate to become a full man. The Bhagavata suggests he go to the temple of Kali, as she grants anything anyone asks for. Hayavadana sets out for the temple, hopeful that Kali will be able to change his head to a human head.

Recovering from the interruption, the Bhagavata returns to the play. He begins to sing, explaining that the two heroes fell in love with a girl and forgot themselves. Meanwhile, a female chorus sings in the background about the nature of love. Devadatta and Kapila enter. Devadatta explains his love for Padmini, explaining that he would sacrifice his arms and his

head if he could marry her. Kapila at first makes fun of Devadatta but then sees how much his friend is affected by Padmini. He agrees to find out her name and where she lives.

Kapila goes to the street where Padmini lives and begins to knock on the doors. When Padmini opens the door to her home, Kapila is immediately love-struck. Padmini asks him what he wants, outwitting him as he tries to come up with reasons why he is there. He eventually explains that he is there to woo her for Devadatta. Kapila says to himself that Padmini really needs a man of steel, and that Devadatta is too sensitive for someone as quick as Padmini.

The Bhagavata reveals that Devadatta and Padmini were quickly married, and that all three remained friends. The story then jumps forward six months, when Padmini is pregnant with a son, and the three friends are meant to go on a trip to Ujjain together. Devadatta expresses jealousy that Padmini seems to have some affection for Kapila, which Padmini denies. She says that she will cancel the trip so that the two of them can spend more time together, but when Kapila arrives, ready to leave, Padmini changes her mind and decides to go, much to Devadatta's dismay.

As the three of them travel together, Padmini remarks how well Kapila drives the cart. She points out a tree with the Fortunate Lady's flower, and Kapila rushes off to grab flowers for her. Padmini remarks to herself how muscular Kapila is, and Devadatta sees Padmini watching him with desire. When they pass the temple of Rudra and Kali, Devadatta is reminded of his old promise and sneaks away to cut off his head. Kapila goes to look for him, and upon discovering Devadatta's headless body is struck with grief. He decides to cut off his head as well.

Padmini begins to get worried about the two men and goes after them. She sees their two headless bodies on the ground and attempts to commit suicide as well. The goddess Kali stops her and tells her she will revive the men if Padmini replaces their heads on their bodies. Padmini, in her excitement, accidentally switches the two heads when she replaces them. The two men are revived: one with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body, and the other with Kapila's head and Devadatta's body.

At first, the three of them are amused by the mix-up, but when they try to return home, they discover issues. Each man believes that Padmini is his wife. Devadatta's head claims that the head rules the body, and so she is his wife. Kapila's head argues that his hand accepted hers at the wedding ceremony, and that the child she is carrying came from his body. Padmini is aghast, but decides to go with Devadatta's head. Kapila does not return with them.

As the second act opens, Padmini and Devadatta are happier than they've ever been. She loves his newfound strength, and the two of them prepare for their child. They buy two dolls for their son. The dolls speak to the audience and reveal that over time, Devadatta's new, strong body begins to revert to its old form. He and Padmini fight over how to treat their son, as she believes that Devadatta coddles him. The dolls tell the audience that Padmini begins to dream of Kapila. When the dolls begin to show signs of wear, Padmini asks Devadatta to get new ones and goes to show her son the forest.

As Padmini travels through the woods, she discovers Kapila living there. He has regained his strength, just as Devadatta has lost his. He explains how he had to war against his body, and how he has come to accept that he is, in fact, Kapila. Padmini implies that she is attracted to him, and spends several nights with him.

Devadatta returns with the dolls and tries to find Padmini in the woods. He discovers her with Kapila, and the two decide to kill each other to put an end to the struggle between their heads and their bodies. After they have killed each other, Padmini decides to perform sati, throwing herself on their funeral pyre. The Bhagavata explains that Padmini was, in her own way, a devoted wife.

Just as the audience believes the play has ended, a second actor comes onstage saying that there was a horse walking down the street singing the national anthem. The first actor also enters, with a young boy in tow. The boy is very serious, and does not speak, laugh, or cry. It is revealed the child is Padmini's son.

At that point, Hayavadana returns. He explains that he had asked Kali to make him complete, but instead of making him a complete human, she has made him a complete horse. Padmini's son begins to laugh at Hayavadana, and the two sing together. Hayavadana still wishes to rid himself of his human voice, and the boy encourages him to laugh. As Hayavadana laughs more and more, his laughter turns into a horse's neigh, and he thus becomes a complete horse.

The Bhagavata concludes the story by marveling at the mercy of Ganesha, who has fulfilled the desires of Hayavadana and the young boy. He says that it is time to pray, and Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila join in thanking the Lord for ensuring the completion and success of the play.

Themes

Hybridity

One of the main themes of the play is that of creatures that are hybrids of different things; the title character, Hayavadana, is a hybrid of a man and a horse, and even Kapila and Devadatta end up being hybrids of each other. At the start of the play, being a hybrid is something godly and special; the opening prayer is to Ganesha, a god who is a boy with the head of an elephant. He is the lord and master of perfection which is paradoxical given his appearance. However, as the play continues, the hybrid characters seem less and less perfect to themselves and all ultimately feel that they are incomplete because they are not fully one creature or another.

Incompleteness

The theme of being incomplete is personified by all of the characters. Devadatta and Kapila are brain and brawn respectively, but neither feels truly complete. This is mirrored by Padmini; she chooses to take Devadatta as her husband but she still finds herself longing for the physicality of Kapila. She feels incomplete because she has been abandoned twice by the same two men, which emphasizes her own incompleteness to her.

Devadatta and Kapila feel a sense of incompleteness after they have each other's bodies joined to their own heads. At first, it seems that Devadatta gets the best deal because he gets to keep his own sharp mind, and also has the muscular physique of Kapila. Kapila has his own strength of mind but has Devadatta's soft, unathletic body. He begins to feel incomplete as soon as the switch has occurred; however, when both men start to find that their bodies are returning to their prior state, they still both feel incomplete because they realize that they are living half existences.

The most obvious example of incompleteness is Hayavadana, who wants nothing more than to be made complete. He wants to be made fully a man but Kali makes him fully a horse instead. Even when she does so he feels incomplete because he still has the voice of a man. When he is able to change this and achieve the "neigh" of a horse instead he finally feels that he is complete.

Conflict Between Body and Mind

The play engages with the question of which is more powerful, the body or the mind. By all accounts, it is the mind, as shown in Hayavadana, Devadatta, and Kapila's experiences, but Karnad also suggests the body has more power than one might initially assume. The body has memory, a memory that stubbornly resists the mind's desire to sublimate it. The body's physical engagement with the world leaves a residue within, and when considering this as well as the putative supremacy of the mind, one must consider the two parts as near equals and both important to the formation of complete identity.

Women's Subversiveness

Padmini might be a wife and mother, as traditional Indian society would dictate, but she is not complacent, quiet, or docile. She is a desiring, sensual woman who pursues what—or who—she wants. She is openly selfish and independent-minded, something that the goddess Kali admires. Karnad allows her subversiveness to come through both her own words and those of the Female Chorus, which articulates her discontent with her conjugal life. Her sharp tongue and subtle subversiveness make her much more than a subaltern; rather, she is the closest to "complete" of all the characters.

City vs. Nature

Devadatta represents the city, a place dedicated to commerce and to the pursuits of the mind, not the body. The woods are associated with Kapila in that they are a place where the physical body feels most at home, most complete. Nature is not opposed to the intellect, but it values strength, perseverance, and resilience; there the currency is not money but physical power. Padmini is a woman of the city but increasingly drawn to the woods, which represents her desire for both Devadatta and Kapila. Her son is naturally of both places, though, being raised in one and then the other, which suggests his identity will be more complete.

Theatre and Its Conventions

Karnad plays with the different levels of reality and drama throughout the piece. Bhagavata asks Ganesha for a blessing and speaks of the play's beginning, which is then interrupted by an Actor and Hayavadana. This is part of the play, though we are supposed to think it is not, and following it Bhagavata segues into a completely different story. A chorus and Bhagavata comment on the action, the latter speaking to and about the audience occasionally. And at the end, the two seemingly disparate plots suddenly converge, all done in a way to make the audience reflect on the didactic nature of theatre, the fusion and fragmentation of drama and real life, and the nature of storytelling.

Indian Identity

Karnad alludes to post-colonial India's identity problems through his characters, especially Hayavadana. After British rule, Indians were left with the vestiges of colonial politics, education, social structures, and more, which existed alongside and in tension with traditional Indian ones. Indians wrestled with their varying degrees of participation within the colonial system, and now in its vacuum had to come to terms with their fractured identity. By having Hayavadana try—and fail—to find completeness in purely Indian patriotic behaviour, Karnad suggests how difficult this period is for his nation.

Mitrachi Goshta by Vijay Tendulkar

Tendulkar has always shocked the society with his controversial themes and stark commentary on current burning issue. His works cover the strong ethical concern exploring and critiquing the relations of power in their entire complex ramification. His *A Friend's Story*, written on an experimental topic, also criticize this relations of power along with the complex struggle to achieve the dominant position. The different power—blocks keeps on changing their strategies to achieve what they want. His works have generally awakened people of their long sleeps. The publication of his *Mitrachi Goshta: A Friend's Story* also brought a turning point in Indian theaters as they shocked the sensibility of the conventional audience by projecting the realities of life, human relationship and existence. The play depicted the tension between individual identity and social existence. Though he remains a detached observer and exposed vices and weakness of society and individuals, he has some compassion for the victim of circumstances. He is an individualist and presents individual versus society. He stands for individual freedom and his *Mitra* is also working hard for it. The play deals with a bold theme of lesbianism and peoples got surprised to witness a lesbian onstage that left her to flow with the stream and rebel with the society. The action of the play moves round the central character of Sumitra Dev, i.e. also *Mitra* in the play. *Mitra* is a carefree girl with a loud laughter and dares to see directly into eyes. She is quite careless of social norms and moral values but got trapped by society with its norms to dominate.

Biography of Vijay Tendulkar

Vijay Tendulkar was one of India's most influential and renowned playwrights of the 20th century, particularly in the Marathi language.

Tendulkar was born on January 6th, 1928 into a Brahmin family in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. He left school at age fourteen because he was involved with Gandhi's anti-British Quit India movement. He read voraciously, attended numerous theater performances, and began writing for newspapers. In the early 1970s, he turned to cinema, writing screenplays in what became India's new wave cinema movement.

Tendulkar said of his love of writing, "Give me a piece of paper, any paper and a pen and I shall write as naturally as the bird flies or a fish swims. For the last 50 years, I have been writing...at roadside restaurants and on the crowded local trains. I have written on the sickbed in the hospital in spite of the doctor's advice... It was a great relief. It was joy."

In the 1950s, Tendulkar moved to Bombay (Mumbai today) for his journalistic career and was strongly affected by the realities of urban slum life. He funnelled this knowledge and concomitant compassion into his work, but his early play *Grihastha* was heckled off the stage. Though he swore he would not write again, this assertion did not stick.

In 1956, *Shrimant* brought him more positive attention, though its subject matter of an unmarried, single mother was controversial. Tendulkar came to further prominence with 1972's *Sakharam Binder* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the latter a political satire and musical. Critic Shakti Bhakta explains, "Tendulkar's writings rapidly changed the storyline of modern Marathi theatre in the 1950s and 60s, with experimental presentations by theatre groups like

Rangayan.” Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Tendulkar wrote numerous screenplays for movies, such as Nishant (1974), Akrosh (1980), and Ardh Satya (1984). Overall, he wrote eleven movies in Hindi and eight in Marathi.

In the 1990s and 2000s, he returned to literature and theatre with the plays Safar (1991) and The Masseur (2001), and the novels Kadambari: Don and Kadambari: Ek. His first play in the English language was His Fifth Woman (2004).

Tendulkar was revered by much of India, but his acclaim was not universal. As his New York Times obituary stated, “Mr. Tendulkar was accused of obscenity and needless violence, crude exhibitionism of sexuality, anti-Brahminism, historical distortions and even plagiarism. He was burned in effigy in several Indian states after one of his political statements.”

Tendulkar was married to Nirmala and had four children, two of whom preceded him in death. He died on May 19th, 2008.

Final Solutions by Mahesh Dattani

Act 1

The play *Final Solutions* opens with Daksha (or Hardika), a newly married girl, writing her diary (on March 31, 1948). In the diary, she writes about her experience in her new house. She is not of good opinions regarding her in-laws. Though India had gained independence, yet she is imprisoned within the four walls of the house. She has a good taste for the songs of Shamshad Begum, Noor Jahan etc. She even wanted to become a singer like them but due to family restrictions, her desires remain unfulfilled. She got a chance to visit a Muslim girl Zarine, who also had a great taste for the songs of Noor Jahan and Shamshad Begum. In a course of time, they became best friends. The scene now shifts to the present (in a town of Gujarat) and she is an old woman now. An idol of Hindu God is broken down. There are rumours that it is broken down purposely by Muslims and thus due to the tension between Hindus and Muslims, Slogans by mobs of both the communities are heard alternatively. Smita (granddaughter of Hardika) is talking on the phone to the family of her friend Tasneem as Tasneem has just called and told her (Smita) and probably her own family as well that some bomb has blasted in her hostel. Smita's father Ramanik (son of Hardika) takes the phone from her daughter and assures the safety of Tasneem to her family and ends the call. As there is quite a tension outside, Hardika advises her daughter-in-law, Aruna (Smita's mother) to properly check doors and windows as the dogs have been let loose. Meanwhile, Javed and Bobby, two Muslim boys are in some argument on the side of the road in a nearby area. Suddenly some Hindu men come and start asking them questions and also search them. Finding a scull-cap in the pocket of Bobby, they at once recognise them as Muslims. As they try to kill them, Javed and Bobby run away and the mob chases them. They reach the door of Ramanik's house and start knocking at it. Ramanik, at last, opens the door. They at once rush in and lock the door. They plead Ramanik to save their life. Mob arrives at the door of Ramanik. They warn Ramanik to either hand over Javed and Bobby to them or they will break the door and come in. However, Ramanik refuses to do so. The mob starts throwing stones and sticks on the house and also abuses Ramanik. Aruna does not like Muslims in her house and forces her husband to throw them out of it. Ramanik bitterly refuses. Ramanik starts talking to Bobby and Javed. Bobby is polite while Javed is quite harsh in the conversation. Ramanik asks them about their studies and upon learning that Javed is a school drop-out start talking bad about him. Smita comes and recognises both of them.

Act 2

Aruna asks Smita how she knows both of them. Smita tells that Javed is the brother of Tasneem and Bobby is her fiancée. When Ramanik and Aruna start insulting Smita for knowing them Smita defends herself boldly by saying, there's no harm in that. It is also revealed that Javed does not live with his parents. Ramanik then asks how he can meet his sister. Javed says that unlike them (the Hindus) he loves the people of his community. Aruna gets outraged and Javed apologises. Mob throws stones at the house of Ramanik. Javed scolds Ramanik saying, "Those are your people." Ramanik tries to defend himself. He also tells how his grandfather was killed by Muslim mob soon after the partition. Ramanik offers them milk. Javed being in thoughts exclaims, "It must feel good being majority, they have full liberty to do whatever they like with them (Javed and Bobby). Ramanik still sympathetic explains how the conflict started. There were rumours that during the Rath Yatra of Hindus, some Muslims threw stones on the chariots that made the idols of God to fall and break into pieces and even Pujari was stabbed to death. The event led to the imposition of a curfew in their town. Smita comes with pillows for Bobby and Javed. When she asks them to sleep on the floor (as they have no extra space for them) Javed answers, "I'm used to it." At this Smita

starts asking him his real motive behind his coming to Amargaon. Bobby says that he came in search of a job. Ramanik offers him a job at his cloth-shop but Smita warns her father from doing so. When Ramanik inquires about the matter, she reveals that Javed was hired by a terrorist organisation and was thus expelled from his house. She also tells that she came to know about this from Tasneem. Javed condemns her for betraying her friend (as she promised Tasneem that she will not expose the reality of Javed). Smita acknowledges her mistake and being speechless runs away.

Act 3

Ramanik starts asking Javed about his involvement in terrorism in a teasing manner. Javed becomes furious and yells hot words. Ramanik angrily slaps Javed and Bobby rushes to calm them down. Bobby then tells when they were young, Javed happened to touch a letter of his Hindu neighbour who abused the former badly. Javed got angry and after some days threw pieces of beef meat in his house. That person came to Javed's house and abused him harshly. Telling the story, Bobby adds that Ramanik's community is partially responsible for makes him so because prior to that incident, Javed was the hero of his locality. Bobby and Javed decide to leave. Ramanik desiring to make Javed accept his job at any cost threatens them by saying that he will call the police. Javed first burst into the laugh and then tells that he was ordered to kill the Pujari in the name of Jihad. He reached the chariot and tried to stab Pujari but the latter begged for mercy and thus he became still. All his passions died and he threw away the knife but someone else took it and stabbed the Pujari to death. Ramanik is moved and calls Javed brave. Smita comes and apologises for exposing him. After a while, Aruna also comes and after ensuring that it is safe to go outside thinks of bringing water. Smita suggests taking the help of Bobby. Aruna being strict in her religious matters condemns Smita for such a suggestion and thus both mother and daughter fall into an argument. Smita exposes Aruna's blind-faiths and challenges them. Aruna being astonished for the queer behaviour of her daughter is quite shocked. While in chaos, she goes to take bath. Smita, Bobby and Javed go out to bring water. Through their discussion, it is revealed that Smita and Bobby loved each other but due to the communal problems they had to separate. Later Bobby became the fiancée of Javed's sister Tasneem. All the three friends become frank and start cracking jokes and even throw water on each other. Meanwhile, Hardika (Daksha) who was memorising how she was beaten by her husband for visiting Zarine's house (as there arose some conflict between the two families), scolds Javed and wishes that like her father (who was killed by Muslims) his sister should also suffer. Ramanik requests her mother not to blame them. When Aruna comes out after taking bath, Bobby unexpectedly goes in the small temple and in spite of denial by Aruna he respectfully takes the idol in his hands and talks about communal harmony and keeps back in its place. Both of them then go away. A little later Ramanik tells Hardika how he, his father and his grandfather burnt the shop of Zarine's father to buy it at a reduced price (in the name of communal hatred) and now he repents over his past deeds. He desires not to visit his shop again. Thus the play Final Solutions ends without any solutions to these communal issues that have remained in the society since ages.

Mahesh Dattani

Mahesh Dattani is considered as one of the best Indian playwrights and he writes his pieces in English. He is an actor, playwright and director.

A Look at His Early Years

Mahesh Dattani was born on the 7th of August in 1958 in Bangalore, Karnataka. He was educated at Baldwin's Boys High School and then went on to graduate from St. Joseph's College, Bangalore. After graduation, he worked for a brief period as a copywriter for an advertising firm. In 1986, he wrote his first play, 'Where There is a Will'.

Mahesh Dattani's Works

After his first play, Mahesh Dattani began to concentrate on his writing and wrote more dramas like *Final Solutions*, *Night Queen*, *Dance Like a Man*, *Tara*, and *Thirty Days*. From 1995, he started working exclusively in theatre.

All his plays address social issues, not the very obvious ones, but the deep-seated prejudices and problems that the society is usually conditioned to turn away from. His plays deal with gender identity, gender discrimination, and communal tensions. The play 'Tara' deals with gender discrimination, '30 Days in September' tackles the issue of child abuse head on, and 'Final Solutions' is about the lingering echoes of the partition.

It was Alyque Padamsee who first spotted and encouraged Mahesh Dattani's talent and gave him the confidence to venture into a career in theatre. Dattani formed his own theatre group, Playpen, in 1984.

He is the only English playwright to be awarded the Sahitya Academy Award. He got this award in 1998. He also writes plays for BBC Radio and he was also one of the 21 playwrights chosen by BBC to write plays to commemorate Chaucer's 600th anniversary in 2000.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT – IV – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH– SHSA5103

UNIT : 4 Fiction

Kanthapura By Raja Rao

Summary

Kanthapura is the most prolific and idealistic novel written by Raja Rao. Rao wrote this novel while in France, which is typically miles away from his homeland India. The prime purpose of this novel is to give an account of Gandhi's fight for freedom starting the year 1919 to 1930. The novel as well gives an account of Gandhi's influence on the Indian freedom movement.

The scene of the novel's action is Kanthapura, which is a village located in the South of India. The main character in this novel is Moorthy who is an educated youth from the metropolis. Moorthy is a top devotee of Gandhi's social defiance pressure group who is coming to this remote village to spread the gospel of Mahatma, which primarily focuses on freedom. He moves from one house to the other to preach the significance of Gandhi's struggle for freedom. He convinces people to be part of the defiance freedom movement to get out of the colonial master's captivity.

A few days later, Moorthy spearheads the formation of a Congress Committee in the village. Gandhi's people from the city bring publicity materials, which are given out to people freely to ensure that they are well informed about the objectives of the freedom movement. Congress forms a corps unit that is tasked with the responsibility of training followers of the movement to remain non-violent at all times including when they face oppression from the government forces. To assist in the organization of the freedom movement in the village, Ratna a youthful woman who is enlightened and brilliant on the issues of freedom struggle comes in to assist Moorthy.

In response to the formation of the Gandhi freedom movement in Kanthapura village, the colonial administration comes up with prompt strategies to counter Gandhi and contain his moves. The government posts Khan (police officer) to Kanthapura village to contain the situation. Bhatta actively assists the police officer by enlisting the most influential people from the city who are misleading the ignorant people of the Kanthapura village. Among the people enlisted are powerful religious leaders and Moorthy. Bhatta promises to teach any person misleading the village people a hard lesson.

Moorthy goes ahead to rally the village to protest the mistreatment from their plantation masters. They demonstrate and rally around the toddy agricultural estate. The colonial police

respond by wounding many villagers while arresting others who are late jailed. This move leads to the rigorous protests outside the coffee estates as villagers demand justice. This time, the colonial government responds more ruthlessly than the first time. The police do not spare the old, children and women during the picketing. The villagers working in the Skeffington Coffee Farm get angry when they see their fellow villagers being tormented by the government. They decide to join the protest and the situation becomes worse for the government. As a result, Moorthy is detained and decreed to a long-term jail term. Ratna remains and takes charge of the Congress to continue with Gandhi's struggle for freedom. She organizes and trains many young women to be front-runners in the fight for freedom.

The freedom fighters under Gandhi's movement launched a campaign influencing their followers not to pay taxes and land revenues to the red man's government. The freedom fighters educate their followers on the significance of remaining non-violent despite the government's move to destroy their farms and properties. The government responds by brutally shooting the protesters and wounding thousands. The merciless shootings make the protesters start responding violently and the situation becomes worse. All protesters are shouting praises for Mahatma Gandhi while condemning the acts of the red man's government. The government forces overpower the protesters who are later forced to flee the village.

Despite being defeated by the government, the villagers have demonstrated their bravery. They flee the village to unknown places where they find shelter. The villagers' actions through the freedom movement shake the British government which is later forced to withdraw their rule from India in the year 1947. This paves the way for the Kanthapura people under the leadership of Gandhi to walk towards self-rule.

Character List:

Moorthy

Moorthy is a young Brahmin (high social caste in India) who has returned to his village Kanthapura. He is heavily inspired by the Mahatma Gandhi's nationalist movement to liberate India. He is showered with love and respect by the people of Kanthapura, who decide to follow him unflinchingly. In the novel, he is referred to as the 'small mountain', while Mahatma Gandhi is the 'big mountain'. He manages to establish the Congress Party in adherence to Gandhian values in Kanthapura.

Bhatta

Bhatta is the chief priest of Kanthapura. He exploits the villagers and has nothing to do with the Gandhian philosophy. He goes on to oppose Moorthy in establishing the Congress Party. Bhatta is an indirect agent of the British government. He can be perceived as one of the antagonists of the novel.

Patel Range Gowda

Officially, Patel Range Gowda is the Primary Executive Officer of Kanthapura village. However, he acts as the mayor of the entire village. He has a strong and formidable presence, and no decision can reach its conclusion without Range Gowda's approval. He is often referred to as the 'tiger' of the village. He uses his social authority in order to assist Moorthy.

Rangamma

Rangamma is a widely respected woman who can read and write. She is a childless widow, but she does not let it bring her down. She is respected because of her strong resolution and high aspirations. She rejects Bhatta's religious dictatorship in favour of Gandhian Moorthy. She educates and leads the women of Kanthapura to form a non-violent resistance group called 'Sevis'.

Bade Khan

Bade Khan is a Muslim policeman who has recently arrived in Kanthapura. He finds lodging in Skeffington Coffee Estate. He is an agent of the British government and is hostile towards all forms of protests. Bade Khan goes on to viciously beat Moorthy when he tries to meet the coffee estate workers.

Kamalamma

Kamalamma is the sister of Rangamma. She stands in stark contrast to the values exhibited by Rangamma. She rejects her sister's conversion to the Gandhian lifestyle. The only concern on her mind is to somehow remarry her widowed daughter Ratna.

Ratna is the fifteen year old daughter of Kamalamma. However, she has more in common with her Aunt Rangamma. She, too, is inspired by the Gandhian philosophy. Despite being a widow, she does not care for traditional social propriety. She leads the Sevis after Rangamma's imprisonment.

Themes

The Evils of the Colonial Rule in India

In the novel, Rao explains vividly on the evils of the Red Man's administration in India. The exploitation of the Indians by the colonialists led to the formation of Gandhi's freedom movement. Most of the action and sufferings of the people of India is demonstrated in the village of Kanthapura, which is located in the southern parts of India. Moorthy, a strong supporter of Gandhi moves to the remote village to mobilize people on the evils of the colonialists in their country. Moorthy forms a Congress, which later forms a large following of villagers against the Red Man's administration. When villagers demonstrate against the oppression of their masters in the coffee plantations, the government sends its police officers to terrorize the protesters. Many people are killed and wounded in the protests. Moorthy is arrested alongside other freedom fighters for going against the will of the government. Throughout the novel, the reader can understand the hardships Indians had to go through before gaining the independence. There are torture, killings, and unlawful arrests. However, at last, the villagers and Indians at large emerge victorious when they achieve the self-rule.

The Place of Young Women in Leadership

Raja Rao's novel focuses on the capability of women in leadership. To be more specific, Rao talks of the young woman by the name Ratna who is well educated and versed with issues of organizing freedom movements. Ratna is the main character who assists Moorthy in the fight for independence. She is also a strong devotee of Gandhi's philosophies. She believes that people can fight for their freedom without necessarily engaging in violence. When Moorthy is arrested and imprisoned for an unknown period, Ratna takes the leadership of the Congress. She takes the lead role of training other young women to be leaders of the freedom movement. Therefore, the novel vividly describes the place of women in the fight against the Red Man's government oppression in India.

Education as a Powerful Tool to Fight Colonialism

Largely, the colonialists took advantage of the ignorance of the Indians to rule them. The people at the Kanthapura village are portrayed as ignorant. However, when Moorthy moves

into the village, things take a drastic turn. Moorthy is an educated youth from the Metropolis who understands how the evils of the Red Man's administration can be fought. He educates the villagers on the evils of the colonialists moving from one house to the other. He later organizes a Congress in the village in which publicity materials from the city are circulated free to the people to educate them on the objectives of the freedom movement and the importance of self-rule. Moorthy is assisted by a young educated woman by the name Trina to spearhead the objectives of the movement. Through education, the villagers become aware of the evils of the colonialists and they join hands to fight for independence. It is not an easy struggle but lastly, they manage to withdraw the British rule and walk to self-determination.

Analysis:

The novel Kanthapura is a detailed document suggestive of the inception of new ideas in a traditional Indian setting. The protagonist Moorthy, upon his return from the city, brings back nationalistic and Gandhian values to the village.

By focusing on a single village (Kanthapura), Raja Rao manages to exhibit the political and social turmoil brewing within India. The village is in itself a microcosm which can be interpreted as scaled down representation of the entire country.

The story, narrated by Achakka (a wise old woman), resorts to the age old oral tradition of storytelling in India. It feels as if all the events of the novel were narrated to the reader in a single setting. This was deliberately done by Raja Rao in order to conform to the tradition of 'sthala-puranas' (geographical history).

The novel focuses on the village as a united entity, in contrast to individuals. It is the story of the revelations, tribulations and rebellion of the village Kanthapura as a whole. Rao introduces the reader to a plethora of characters, however, it is the village itself that takes charge of the centre stage. There are many memorable characters such as Moorthy, Patel Range Gowda, Rangamma and Ratna, and all of these characters enable Kanthapura to stand up against the British Raj.

Kanthapura can also be referred to as a Gandhian novel. The morality of the novel has been borrowed from the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Kanthapura is an immaculate blend of fiction, history, and philosophy; and thus, it's one of the most celebrated novels of Indian literature.

The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga

Summary

The entire novel is narrated through letters by Balram Halwai to the Premier of China, who will soon be visiting India.

Balram is an Indian man from an impoverished background, born in the village of Laxmangarh. Early on, he describes his basic story: he transcended his humble beginnings to become a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore, largely through the murder Mr. Ashok, who had been his employer. Balram also makes clear that because of the murder, it is likely that his own family has been massacred in retribution.

In Laxmangarh, Balram was raised in a large, poor family from the Halwai caste, a caste that indicates sweet-makers. The village is dominated and oppressed by the “Four Animals,” four landlords known as the Wild Boar, the Stork, the Buffalo, and the Raven. Balram's father is a struggling rickshaw driver, and his mother died when he is young. The alpha figure of his family was his pushy grandmother, Kusum.

Balram was initially referred to simply as “Munna,” meaning “boy,” since his family had not bothered to name him. He did not have another name until his schoolteacher dubbed him Balram. The boy proved himself intelligent and talented, and was praised one day as a rare “White Tiger” by a visiting school inspector. Unfortunately, Balram was removed from school after only a few years, to work in a tea shop with his brother, Kishan. There, he furthered his education by eavesdropping on the conversations of shop customers.

Balram feels that there are two Indias: the impoverished “Darkness” of the rural inner continent, and the “Light” of urban coastal India. A mechanism that he dubs the “Rooster Coop” traps the Indian underclass in a perpetual state of servitude. It involves both deliberate methods used by the upper class and a mentality enforced by the underclass on itself.

Balram’s father died from tuberculosis in a decrepit village hospital, where no doctors were present due to abundant corruption within all the government institutions in the Darkness. After the father’s death, Kishan got married and moved with Balram to the city of Dhanbad to work. There, Balram decided to become a chauffeur, and raised money to take driving lessons from a taxi driver.

Once trained, Balram was hired by the Stork - whom he crossed path with coincidentally - as a chauffeur for his sons, Mushek Sir (known as the Mongoose) and Mr. Ashok. Officially, Balram was the “second driver,” driving the Maruti Suzuki, while another servant, Ram Persad, drove the more desirable Honda City.

As a driver in the Stork’s household, Balram lived a stable and satisfactory life. He wore a uniform and slept in a covered room which he shared with Ram Persad. When Ashok and his wife, Pinky Madam, decided to visit Laxmangarh one day, Balram drove them there, and thus had a chance to visit his family. They were proud of his accomplishments, but Kusum pressured him to get married, which angered him since that would cede what he saw as his

upward mobility. He stormed out of the house and climbed to the Black Fort above the village, spitting from there down upon the view of Laxmangarh far below.

Balram describes at length the corrupt nature of politics in the Darkness. A politician known as the Great Socialist controls the Darkness through election fraud. The Stork's family, involved in shady business dealings in the coal industry, must regularly bribe the Great Socialist to ensure their success.

As part of these political maneuverings, Ashok and Pinky Madam made plans to go to Delhi for three months. When Balram learned that only one driver would be brought with them, he spied on Ram Persad to discover that the man was secretly a Muslim who had lied about his identity to gain employment. Once his secret was out, Ram Persad left, and Balram was brought to Delhi as the driver of the Honda City.

Balram considers Delhi to be a crazy city, rife with traffic jams and pollution, and with illogically numbered houses and circuitous streets that are difficult to navigate. Ashok and Pinky Madam rented an apartment in Gurgaon, the most American part of the city, since Pinky Madam hated India and missed New York. Balram lived in the servant's quarters in the basement of the building. Teased and ostracized by the other servants, he nevertheless found a mentor in a fellow driver he refers to as Vitiligo-Lips, since the pigment of the man's lips is affected by the skin condition vitiligo. To escape the teasing, Balram chose to live in a tiny, decrepit room swarming with cockroaches.

After a while, the Mongoose returned to Dhanbad, leaving Ashok as Balram's sole master in Delhi. One night, a drunk Pinky Madam insisted on driving the car, and she accidentally killed a child in a hit-and-run. The next morning, the Mongoose arrived and announced that Balram would confess to the crime, and serve jail time on Pinky Madam's behalf. Balram was terrified by the prospect of going to jail, but was relieved when the Stork arrived and casually mentioned that they had gotten out of the incident through their police connections.

During this time, Balram's political consciousness grows more intense, and his resentment towards the upper class more violent. Much of the novel traces his growth from a meek peasant to an inflamed individual capable of murder in pursuit of his own success.

A few days later, Pinky Madam found Balram and asked him to drive her to the airport. With this abrupt departure, she ended her marriage to Ashok. When Ashok discovered that Balram took her to the airport without informing him, he furiously attacked the driver, who defended himself by kicking Ashok in the chest.

Dealing with the divorce, Ashok began to live a debauched lifestyle, frequently getting drunk and going out to clubs, while Balram cared for him like a wife. Ashok rekindled a relationship with his former lover, Ms. Uma. Their relationship grew more serious, but he remained anxious about telling his family about her. Meanwhile, on his family's behalf, Ashok frequently collected large sums of money in a red bag, using it to bribe government ministers.

Balram's family sent a young male relative, Dharam, for Balram to care for. Dharam is a sweet and obedient companion. One day, Balram took Dharam to the zoo, where Balram observed a white tiger in a cage.

Finally deciding to break free of the Rooster Coop, Balram fashioned a weapon from a broken whiskey bottle, and lured Ashok from the car. He rammed the bottle into Ashok's skull, and then stabbed him in the neck, killing him. He stole the red bag, filled with 700,000 rupees, and escaped with Dharam to Bangalore. In revenge for his actions, the Stork's family likely murdered all of Balram's family, though Balram remains unsure of their exact fate. Nevertheless, he chose to commit the murder knowing this was a likely outcome.

In Bangalore, Balram found great success. He launched a taxi service for call center workers, which he calls White Tiger Technology Drivers. By bribing the police, Balram was able to

gain influence and make his business successful. Demonstrating how far he has come, he is able to cover up a fatal accident through his connection to the authorities. He considers himself to be a quintessential entrepreneurial success story that represents the future of India, and presents himself as such to the Premier.

The White Tiger Character List

Balram

Balram Halwai, the story's narrator, protagonist, and anti-hero, tells of his rise from village peasant to successful entrepreneur. He has a significant faith in his exceptionalism, thinking of himself as a "White Tiger" not tied to conventional morality or social expectations. It is through this alternate system that he is able to rearrange his life and identity. Balram's dark humor, cynicism, and perceptiveness form the lifeblood of *The White Tiger*.

Balram was born in the village of Laxmangarh, into a life he considers miserable. Despite his intelligence, he was forced to leave school early to work. Nevertheless, he continued educating himself by eavesdropping on conversations. As he progressed through the echelons of the underclass, eventually being hired as a driver for Mr. Ashok and the Stork, he developed a severe resentment against the upper classes, which eventually prompted him to murder Mr. Ashok.

His other aliases include Munna, the White Tiger, and Ashok Sharma.

Mr. Ashok

Ashok is Balram's principal master, the Stork's son, and the Mongoose's brother. Exceedingly handsome, Ashok is also generally kind and gentle to those around him. Unlike the other members of his family, he trusts Balram immensely, and the latter senses a strange, profound connection between them. Ashok is childlike, with a short attention span, and generally dislikes his family's business dealings. Ultimately, his strange connection to Balram is not enough to save his life when Balram decides to murder him.

Pinky Madam

Pinky Madam is Ashok's wife, and just as good-looking as her husband. Because of her background, she is never fully accepted by Ashok's family. She is demanding, capricious, and deeply unsatisfied with life in India, constantly hoping to return to America, and is generally cruel to Balram. She eventually leaves Ashok to return to New York, and shows a deep grief over the hit-and-run that proved the last nail in the coffin of their relationship.

Mr. Krishna

Krishna is Balram's teacher in Laxmangarh before Balram is pulled out of school by his family. He is responsible for giving Balram his first "real" name, but he generally proves himself emblematic of the corruption and inefficiency of Indian schools, since he embezzles the government funds allocated for uniforms and food.

Vikram

Vikram Halwei is Balram's father, a rickshaw puller. Though he is not as attentive a parent as might be desired, he works extremely hard to provide for his family. Balram frequently thinks of his father and the sacrifices he made, and uses that resentment to inspire the murder. Vikram eventually died of tuberculosis in a deteriorating village hospital, a fate which largely motivates Balram to improve his station in life.

Balram's mother

Balram's mother died when he was very young, and her funeral is one of his most vivid early memories. Her body was swallowed up by the dark mud of the Ganga River. His mother had a short, miserable life, and Kusum frequently disrespects her memory.

Kusum

Kusum is Balram's grandmother, and the matriarch of the family, ruling through fear. Intimidating and sly, she attempts to exert her power over Balram, ensuring that he send money home once he becomes a driver, and later trying to coerce him into marrying. She has a habit of rubbing her forearms when she feels happy, a trait that Balram frequently comments upon.

Kishan

Kishan is Balram's brother, who takes care of him in the wake of their father's death. He is a strong, father-like figure who has a formative effect on Balram's own development.

the Stork

The Stork, actual name Thakur Ramdev, is one of the Four Animals, the four landlords who control Laxmangarh. A fat man with a large mustache, he owns the river and collects taxes from fishermen and boaters. He is father to Ashok and Mukesh (the Mongoose). His highly unethical business practices involve bribing officials, evading taxes, and stealing coal from government mines.

the Wild Boar

The Wild Boar is one of the Four Animals, the four landlords who control Laxmangarh. He owns the best agricultural lands around the village. He has two protruding teeth that resemble the tusks of a boar.

the Buffalo

The Buffalo is one of the Four Animals, the four landlords who control Laxmangarh. He is considered the greediest of the four landlords. He owns and operates the rickshaws, and his son was kidnapped and killed by the Naxals, for which he visited retribution on the entire family of the servant who aided in that kidnapping.

The Raven

The Raven is one of the Four Animals, the four landlords who control Laxmangarh. He owns the worst land, the dry, rocky hillside around the fort, and charges the goatherds who use this land for their flocks to graze. He is called the Raven because he likes “dip his beak into the backsides” of the goatherds who can’t pay. (“Dipping one’s beak” is a sexual euphemism that Balram uses).

The Mongoose

The Mongoose, actual name Mukesh Sir, is one of the Four Animals, the four landlords who control Laxmangarh. He is the Stork's son and Ashok's brother. A much worse man than Ashok, he does not question the family's business practices and condemns Ashok's interest in the American way of life. Mukesh is favored by the Stork and has more influence in the family than Ashok does.

Ram Persad

Ram Persad was the Stork's primary driver - and hence in charge of the Honda City - until Balram discovered that Ram was a Muslim and used that information to take control. After his secret is discovered, Ram Persad disappears without a word.

Vijay

Vijay is Balram's childhood hero, his model of a man who improved his station in life by forging his own identity. The son of a pig herder, Vijay's first success came with becoming a bus conductor. Balram and the other village boys admire his prestigious job and his uniform. Later, Vijay enters politics and quickly rises in the ranks. By the end of the narrative, Vijay is a powerful politician, just as corrupt and power-hungry as any of the rich elites in the novel.

Great Socialist

The Great Socialist is a powerful politician who controls the Darkness with the help of corruption and election fraud. He is described as having “puffy cheeks, spiky white hair” and “thick gold earrings” (86). People disagree as to whether he was always corrupt or if he began his political career with good intentions. Though his character essentially serves as an amalgam of typical corrupt Indian politicians, he is believed to be based on the actual politician Lalu Prasad Yadav.

Vitiligo-Lips

Vitiligo-Lips is one of the other drivers Balram encounters in Delhi. His lips are marked by vitiligo, a skin disease that affects many poor people in India and causes a lightening of skin pigment. Vitiligo-Lips serves as a sort of guide to Balram in Delhi, introducing him to city life, answering his many questions, and giving him access to a variety of illicit products ranging from *Murder Weekly* magazines to prostitutes. Since most of the other chauffeurs and servants in Delhi mercilessly tease Balram and make him an outcast, Vitiligo-Lips is crucial to Balram's survival.

Dharam

Dharam is a young relative of Balram's, sent to Balram by the family so he can be taken care of. Dharam is a sweet and obedient boy. Balram brings Dharam with him after the murder, and the two live together in Bangalore.

Ms. Uma

Ms. Uma is a former lover of Mr. Ashok's; he reconnects with her after Pinky Madam leaves. Though she begs him to marry her, Mr. Ashok is anxious about reintroducing her to his family. She is indifferent towards Balram, and ultimately plants the idea of replacing him into Ashok's head. Balram considers her a bad influence on his master.

Balram's family

Balram has countless aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews living in Laxmangarh. The family is very poor and traditional. Men and women sleep in opposite corners of the house.

The most cherished member of the family is the water buffalo, who is kept fat and healthy and provides milk. Balram frequently feels guilty because Ashok's murder likely caused the death and torture of Balram's family.

Wen Jiabao

Wen Jiabao is the Premier of China, to whom Balram addresses the letters that narrate the story.

Dilip

Dilip is a cousin of Balram and Kishan; he accompanies them when they move to Dhanbad.

Ram Bahadur

Ram Bahadur is the Stork's head servant at his mansion in Dhanbad. A cruel Nepali with little concern for Balram, he is blackmailed into making Balram head driver after Balram discovers that Ram Bahadur must have kept Ram Persad's secret.

the minister's assistant

The minister's assistant, Mukeshan, frequently takes advantage of Ashok when the latter comes to bribe his boss.

Anastasia

Anastasis is the prostitute Balram hires, hoping she will be like Kim Basinger, as Mr. Ashok's prostitute was. When he discovers that her blond hair is only dyed, he grows angry, and is assaulted by the manager.

The Manager

Anastasia's pimp is called "the manager." He assaults Balram after he screams at Anastasia.

Muslim shopowner

The Muslim shopowner in the secondhand book market of Old Delhi introduces Balram to Iqbal and the other great poets.

Ashok Sharma

Ashok Sharma is the final alias Balram takes for himself, after reaching Bangalore. It is obviously taken from his former master's name.

Mohammad Asif

Mohammad Asif works as a driver for Balram's company in Bangalore, and hits a boy who is riding a bike. Balram has to bribe the police to remedy the situation.

The Premier

Wen Jiabao is the Premier of China, to whom Balram addresses the letters that narrate the story.

The White Tiger Themes

Corruption in India

Throughout Balram's narrative, Adiga constantly exposes the prevalence of corruption throughout all of India's institutions. Schools, hospitals, police, elections, industries and every aspect of government are thoroughly corrupt, while practices such as bribery and fraud are entirely commonplace. Balram's approach to this truth largely involves a deeply cynical humor. However, there is an ugly component to his character arc. In order to escape the "Darkness" and enter into the "Light," Balram must himself become a part of this system. His victory is thus bittersweet; while he has succeeded in elevating his social position, he continues to live in a country paralyzed by corruption, which prevents true progress from taking place. Adiga's ultimate point seems to be that corruption necessarily breeds corruption, unless of course a greater revolution remakes society.

Globalization

The India described by Balram is in the throes of a major transformation, heralded in part by the advent of globalization. India finds itself at the crossroads of developments in the fields of technology and outsourcing, as the nation adapts to address the needs of a global economy. Balram recognizes and hopes to ride this wave of the future with his White Tiger Technology Drivers business in Bangalore, but this force of globalization has a darker component for him as well. It threatens and disenfranchises those adhering to a traditional way of life, such as his family in Laxmangarh. Hence, he must change who he is in order to compete in this new world. Adiga thus vividly conjures the tension between the old and new India, suggesting that succeeding in this world (as Balram does) requires a flurry of ethical and personal compromises.

Social Mobility

Balram frequently discusses the issues of social mobility in the new social hierarchy of India. Having idolized Vijay from childhood, Balram recognizes the possibility of moving up in the

world, but has to confront the reality of such movement throughout his story. One of the big issues is how India's social system has changed. Under the caste system, people's fates were predetermined, but they were happy, believing they belonged somewhere. However, the new social structure promises the possibility of social mobility, but actually only offers two social divisions: the rich and the poor. The poor are kept in an eternal state of subservience and servitude to the rich by the mechanism that Balram dubs "The Rooster Coop." However, they are now more unhappy because there is a possibility of social mobility that nevertheless remains out of their grasp. Balram ultimately finds a way to break from the Rooster Coop, but it requires him to compromise his ethics and personality - he has to kill his master and betray his family. That social mobility is a specter captured only through such difficult means is a comment on the unfortunate reality of a world built more on limitations than possibility.

Identity

The White Tiger is largely a story of self-fashioning, as Balram undergoes a transformative journey to construct his own identity. Inspired by his childhood hero, Vijay, who also rose from a humble background to achieve success in the upper echelons of Indian society, Balram dedicates himself to self-improvement, so much so that he is willing to destroy who he once was. He sees identity as fluid and malleable, a fact articulated through the many name changes he employs throughout the story. Ultimately, he even chooses a new identity for himself in imitation of his master, calling himself Ashok Sharma. And yet the novel is full of dramatic irony revealing that Balram cannot fully repudiate the person he once was. He remains full of unresolved guilt and provincial superstitions, reminding us that while identity might be entirely fluid, it is also entirely immovable as well.

Morality

Ultimately, *The White Tiger* is a tale about morality, suggesting that morality can be viewed as either rigid or flexible. Balram eventually embraces the latter option. In order to justify murdering Ashok and risking his family's lives, Balram develops an alternate moral system. He reasons that the money he steals from Ashok is rightfully his, since servants are exploited by the rich, and he convinces himself of his exceptionalism as "the white tiger" in order to rationalize his decisions. Believing he is the only one who has truly woken up to the truth of the "Rooster Coop," he feels compelled to change his life. In this sense, Balram has become a version of Nietzsche's "ubermensch," or over-man, who believes himself to be above the moral and legal limitations of society. Adiga poses a question through Balram: do we blame a criminal for his decisions, or do we try to understand those decisions as reactions to an overly oppressive and restrictive society? Assuming that a reader does not have a definitive answer, Adiga suggests then that morality is a fluid and unfixed concept.

Pairs and Dualities

The White Tiger abounds with instances of twinned pairs and dualities, each corresponding to one half of a central dichotomy: the rich and the poor halves of India. Balram poses India as broken up into two sections, the "Darkness" and the "Light." Examples of twinned pairs from each of these two halves include: the "men with small bellies" and "men with big bellies;" the hospital where Balram's father dies and the city hospital visited by the Stork; the beautiful blonde prostitute visited by Ashok and the uglier, faux-blond prostitute hired by Balram; the apartment building in Delhi and its servants quarters below; and the two versions of all markets in India (one for the rich, and a smaller, grimmer replica for the servants). The most significant of these twinned pairs is, of course, Ashok and Balram themselves. It is telling that Balram, the narrator, views the world as split into halves. It reveals the extent to which oppression has ruined his worldview.

Another means by which Adiga explores this theme is through the symbolic rearview mirror, which doubles everything through a reflection and hence functions as a conduit for the confrontation between Ashok and Balram. This particular image suggests that identity can be transferred across the divide - one can move from one area to another. Other instances of dualities in the text serve to further highlight the extent of Balram's transformation; for example, the two car accidents (Pinky Madam's hit-and-run and the death of the bicycling boy) demonstrate just how far Balram has come in his quest to become a successful entrepreneur. Balram was once a pawn in the game, whereas in the latter case he has found the power to be a representative of the more fortunate "Light."

Family

The extended Indian family plays an incredibly significant role in the traditional way of life in the Darkness. The family is the core social unit, so all its members are expected to act with selfless devotion to its interests. Though the poor ostensibly view this construct as a strength, Balram comes to see it as another way through which the poor are kept in the "Rooster Coop." Firstly, the expectations of family enforce limitations that can quash individual ambition (as they almost do with Balram). Further, since a servant's disobedience is visited upon his family, servants remain trapped by the whims of their masters. Social mobility becomes impossible. In order to break free and live the life of a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore, a city representing a new India, Balram must sacrifice his family. This conundrum seems to suggest that in order to thrive in the modern world and embrace the potentials of a New India, this traditional attachment to the family must be relinquished in favor of a newfound emphasis on individualism.

Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist, and speaker. Bhagat is the author of five bestselling novels, *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009) & *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition* (2011). Chetan Bhagat's debut novel *Five Point Someone - What not to do at IIT!* is one of the highest selling English novels published in India and remained on the bestseller list until now since its release in 2004. The novel begins in an unique way where the author takes the liberty of sharing his opinion that the book is not a guide on how to get into IIT but it cite examples of how screwed up our college years can get if we don't think straight. Although treated in a mild and rather casual way, the story of the IIT contains in it matters deeper than can be seen on the surface. That our structure of technical education has become a lifeless system, and needs revitalisation has been amply clear. The need for understanding the oft-quoted phrase 'Human Resource Development' by our educators is pointedly, though obliquely, suggested. But the real appeal of the work is probably its faithful depiction of growing years under pressure of conventional ambition. The paper attempts to throw some light on the aspects of post modernist thought process where the engineering youth tries to stand against the conventional system of imparting technical education and traditional way of evaluating the cognitive abilities of a student on the basis of CGPA.

Introduction:

Novel readership in India is on an all-time high in the present times. The circulation of novels is gradually increasing by leaps and bounds across the length and breadth of the country. The major credit of this remarkable inclination towards English language novels can be attributed to the popularity and prominence of the cult of campus novels. Although the popularity of campus novels dates back to the *Inscrutable Americans* by Anurag Mathur, it is the phenomenal success of Chetan Bhagat's debut novel, *Five Point Someone* that is credited with the revival of popular readership in India. The success of Chetan Bhagat's debut novel paved way for an era of popular English Literature dominated by campus-based novels. Soon afterwards, the campuses of some of the most renowned universities and colleges of India such as IITs, IIMs, JNU began being featured in the pages of the upcoming novels. Following the footsteps of Bhagat, several other aspirants donned the hats of popular fiction writers and unleashed their potential by creating campus-based stories. A few prominent works worthy of mention include 'Something of a MockTale' by Soma Das, 'Above Average' by Amitabha Bagchi, 'You Desire: A Journey Through IIM' by Harishdeep Jolly, 'The Funda of Mix-ology' by Mainak Dhar. These works targeted youth and college-goers and came up with fresh subjects that revolved around the glitzy college life that included campus love-affairs, student politics, joys and sorrows of friendship, drug and booze sessions, examination phobias, placement dreams, monotony of classroom studies and likewise.

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Chetan Bhagat's debut novel *Five Point Someone - What not to do at IIT!* is one of the highest selling English novels published in India and remained on the bestseller list since its release in 2004. The novel begins in an unique way where the author takes the liberty of sharing his opinion that the book is not a guide on how to get into IIT but it cite examples of how screwed up our college years can get if we don't think straight. The author is more concerned about what to do after getting admission into an IIT than the admission process itself. He points out that getting into IIT is not all that difficult as is made out to be. As he puts it, "If you can lock yourself in a room with books for two years and throw away the key, you can probably make it here."

In the 21st century, the development of internet has helped humans go beyond the limitations of national boundaries, time and geography. In the era of knowledge – based economy, where knowledge is transmitted in a rapid pace, those who have the knowledge are the winners. In the age of globalization the competition is very fierce and if one wants to prove his/her talents there should be a combination of multifarious potentialities in a student like technology, innovation, adventurous spirits and initiative as these are key factors to success. Talents can be nurtured through education and culture - related aspects. It is evident that education is the cradle of talented people and human resources; it is also the cornerstone of civilization. Chetan Bhagat through his novel *Five Point Someone* indirectly conveyed a serious message in a humorous tone that it is a wake up call for the elite technical institutes to replace the traditional teaching style of "I teach; you listen" with an approach that develops students' own abilities to collect, select, filter and assimilate information ; that inspires students' creativity by developing their life - long abilities; and that teaches students how to learn efficiently and actively. The emphasis should be placed on learning methods instead of knowledge accumulation. And we need to help students turn their knowledge into innovative ability and knowledge application, ability, both of which are much needed in profit creation. '*Five Point Someone*' in a mild tone points out that our technical education has become a life less system and needs reformation.

The Setting of the Novel :

The novel is set in the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, in the period 1991 to 1995. It is about the adventures of three mechanical engineering students, Hari Kumar, Ryan Oberoi, and Alok Gupta, who fail to cope with the grading system of the IITs. Ryan is a bit smart and outspoken, whereas Alok and Hari are mildly cry babies.

Chetan Bhagat gives a glimpse of the glaring effects of ragging which is infact quite common in engineering colleges through this campus novel. The freshers of Indian Institute of Technology including the three students Ryan Oberoi, Alok Gupta and Hari Kumar were called by the seniors up on the balcony for ragging at midnight. Baku and other senior students instructed them “Off with your clothes.” Such kind of embarrassing incidents in the name of ragging creates a great psychological effect on the minds of students which may increase the suicidal attempts. Ryan, good looking and a hefty man revolted against the age old tradition of ragging and the senior – fresher discrimination. He has saved Hari and Alok from the coke bottles at the very first day and they became good friends for all the four years of IIT and then.

The novel also touches an important chord the helplessness of the Professors’ to handle the brilliant students who can pose challenging questions based on their common sense. Prof.Dubey, Mechanical Engineering Department, mentions

“The definition of a machine is simple. It is anything that reduces human effort. Anything.

So, see the world around you and it is full of machines.” (p 9)

A student, Ryan asks: “Sir, what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something? That doesn’t reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it.”

(p 10)

This is a clarion call for the teaching fraternity to equip themselves to handle the cream students of institutions like IITs and encourage the students to think beyond the textbooks.

‘Five Point Someone’ focused the friendship of the prominent characters of the novel: Hari, Ryan and Alok. It is of this trio’s screwing the grades at the big time because of their over attachment with each other to have a fun and detachment from studies. In college life romance is like a harbinger which conveys the message of love in the tender hearts. The romanticism evoked with the love affair of Hari and Neha, the daughter of Prof. Cherian is noteworthy. Hari gets ready to do anything for his lady love Neha. Hostel life is all about friends, alienation from families, smoking cigars, drinking vodka and listening to Pink Floyd. Commitment to relationship overrules the fresh admitted undergraduates to such an extent that they are ready to do anything for earning name and fame. Ryan Oberoi always prioritizes his friends more than his parents. Alok , a resident of Rohini Colony, Delhi is a sincere guy but he too gets ready with Ryan and Hari in mischievous acts to overcome the shackles of poverty.

Ostensibly IITs are known as Centres of Excellence but the institute could not succeed to win laurels for the country by making significant technical contributions. The grading system to assess the students performance has not only overburdened the students but also spoiled their originality. The limitations of the IIT system was intricately brought out by the remarks of Ryan Oberoi in a get together party:

“You know guys, this whole IIT system is sick. Because, tell me, how many great engineers or scientists have come out of IIT? I mean that is supposed to be the best college in India, the best technology institute for a country of a billion. But has IIT ever invented anything? Or made any technical contribution to India? Over thirty years of IITs,

yet, all it does is train some bring kids to work in multinationals. I mean look at MIT in the USA... What is wrong in the system... This system of relative grading and

overburdening the students. I mean it kills the best fun years of your life. But it kills something else. Where is the room for original thought? Where is the time for creativity? It is not fair.”

Competition is so intense in IITs which has duly created lot of pressures among the students and one of the professors’s made a remark at the end of his class:

“Best of luck once again for your stay here. Remember, as your head of department Prof. Cherian says, the tough workload is by design, to keep you on your toes. And respect the grading system. You get bad grades, and I assure you – you get no job, no school and no future. If you do well, the world is your oyster. So, don’t slip, not even once, or there will be no oyster, just slush”

(p 11)

Hari Kumar, Alok Gupta and Ryan Oberoi joined Indian Institute of Technology with good All India Rankings but gave lot of preferences to fun and friends instead of focusing on majors, quizzes and assignments. The consequences were inevitable that they became underachievers. Their GPA (Grade Point Average) came to the bottom line.

The three underperformers (Ryan, Alok and Hari) invent C2D(Cooperate to dominate) formula to save time and plan to share the assignments for the sake of fun. According to them today’s exams, quizzes, GPA are useless. Ryan, Hari and Alok are all five pointers. They blame IIT system as sick and for it’s not contributing to nation building, and for churning the most intellectuals of the country. They say IIT do not care for their creativity and original thinking. To rebel against this established norm, they planned paper theft of

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Majors from Prof. Cherian’s room (at 9 flour of Insti-building) and were caught red handed. Finally a disciplinary action was taken against them and they were terminated for one semester. Alok jumped from Insti-roof but was fortunately saved with thirteen odd fractures. They have changed thereafter. All worked hard then more than fourteen hours a day, got extra grades and degrees in time.

It will be unjustifiable to say about some Professors’ attitudes like Prof.Veera who appreciated the creativity of the students. He loved creativity of Ryan though he was a five pointer and gave him an opportunity as Research Assistant of him. He tried his level best to save the three students from termination. Prof.Veera is a symbol of humanity who came to meet Alok in the hospital with a box containing ‘Kaju – burfi’ and disclosed the news of Ryan’s Lube – project approval. Prof. Veera has set an example before us that a teacher should encourage his/her students and motivate them a lot. A teacher has a missionary zeal and an angelic motive to recognize the latent talents both in achievers and underachievers and also treat them humanely.

The crux of the entire novel lies in the last part of the drama when Prof. Cherian, Head of the Engineering Department, addresses the convocation ceremony and congratulates the graduating students. During this moment he becomes quite emotional and narrates his own story.

“Once upon a time there was a student in IIT. He was very bright, and this is true, his GPA was 10.00 after four years. He didn’t have a lot of friends, as to keep such a high GPA, you only have so much time for friends.”

“This bright boy thought his classmates were less smart than him, were selfish and wanted to make the most money or go to the USA with minimum effort. And many of his classmates did go to work for multinationals and some went abroad. Some of them opened their own companies in the USA – mostly in computers and software.”

(p 258)

He confesses that this bright student was Prof. Cherian. Prof. Cherian was a topper with

10.00 GPA score. He also had a dream that his son will get into IIT but whereas his son, Sameer wanted to become a lawyer. Sameer killed himself for not fulfilling his father's dreams of cracking an IIT exam.

Prof. Cherian admitted that he called the three underachievers Hari, Ryan and Alok as students with low GPAs. Neha, his daughter defied him but trusted Hari Kumar and disclosed Sameer's letter to him. He adds,

“And that is when I realized that GPAs make a good student, but not a good person. We judge people here by their GPA. If you are a nine, you are the best. If you are a five, you are useless. I used to despise the low GPAs so much that when Ryan submitted a research proposal on lubricants, I judged it without even reading it. But these boys have something really promising. I saw the proposal the second time. I can tell you, any investor who invests in this will earn a rainbow.”

(p 261)

Through this novel the writer intends to convey a social message that GPAs are not the ultimate factor to decide students' potentialities and creativity. To become a topper with 10.00 GPA is a great achievement undoubtedly but there is something more in life which is yet to be achieved i.e. commitment towards family, friends and our internal desires and goals. Hari, Ryan and Alok had a dream to join Indian Institute of Technology which they fulfilled by taking admission into it but they screwed up for not taking the grading system seriously. As a result it landed them down to many unforeseen troubles and they had to remain satisfied with the little achievement they could manage with the support and encouragement of some well wishers like Prof. Veera.

Chetan Bhagat wrote the novel 'Five Point Someone' in a mild note and in some areas it has given an alarming call for the pedagogues to come out of their traditional text book theories and meet up the challenges posed by the intelligent students. Another most striking feature is that the whole background is set in an engineering institution where an engineering student should be encouraged to present his/her concepts in a creative way so that he can have hands-on experience only then a country can advance both technically and economically. Each and every student is bestowed with unique qualities and CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) should not be the criteria to ascertain their future prospects. One who is a five pointer in college may reach the pinnacle of his career and set an example for all those who are striving to achieve success. The trio suffers ridicule of the teachers as well as the classmates. However, they avow to reform the patriarchal system of education. They dislike the teaching method, which is as

old as the college itself. The students are asked to mug the subjects in order to score good grades. Bhagat puts emphasis on the observational teaching and hints towards a post modern thought of incorporating a technique called ‘learning by doing’. He believes this technique must help the students in getting rid of mugging. It must support them to apprehend the things in a natural way. The observational technique makes the students to observe the things minutely and find out solution in the objects. After all, if they fail to make it out, they are invited to discuss the same with the teachers and other classmates. At last, the student finds answer to his query. Nonetheless, such method is a good for nothing in the big sci-fi institute. Bhagat grieves for the sterile dogmatism of the education system. He finds the professors bigotry not to allow any prolific change in the system. Bhagat is straightforward in his approach to life. He listens to the voice of his soul, which he strongly believes in, is ever true. The man listening to the inner voice may suffer a big loss but finally emerges out victorious. For instance, all three friends suffer ignominy at college campus. All the teachers as well as the students take them for nuts, idiots and losers only because they under perform in the exams and notch five points something. But like others they are not muggers, they are freethinkers, true lovers of life, harbingers of innovative ideas, icons of liberty and precursors of the youth-calling-approach. They never lose confidence, work harder on the lube project and consequently their project is approved and they succeed to achieve big fame and name.

Conclusion:

Thus, the novel finally puts lot of emphasis on oft-quoted phrase ‘Human Resource Development’ which is one of the objectives of technical institutes. The technical institutes should develop the technical skills, key competencies and enhance the organisational performance of an individual. A resourceful and skilled employee can enliven the achievement of an organisation where he or she is a part and for these the technical institutes should motivate the budding technocrats to think beyond the textbooks.

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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT – V – INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH– SHSA5103

UNIT : 5 Short Fiction

An Astrologer's Day by R.K.Narayan

Summary

In an unnamed village in India, an astrologer lays out his tools of the trade, a mix of cowrie shells, obscure charts, a notebook, and other such curios. They serve no purpose but to create the illusion of mysticism. The astrologer has also painted his forehead with sacred ash, wrapped his head in a turban, and seated himself and his gear beneath a large tree. All of these things serve to give him an air of wisdom, transcendence, and prophetic power, though the narrator is quick to point out that none of these qualities actually belong to the man.

The astrologer has set up his little shop amidst a busy marketplace among people fencing stolen goods, presenting the same cheap food as a variety of gourmet delicacies, and auctioning off low-quality fabrics. The astrologer quickly established as a fraud, is in the company of other fraudsters and spin doctors selling their wares and making their livings. The marketplace is lit by various shop lights and flares, the dancing shadows of which enhance the astrologer's mystical quality. He notably has no light of his own, but simply borrows that of the other vendors.

The astrologer had never had any intention of becoming one but had been forced to leave his ancestral home and travel several hundred miles away with no plan and no money. Even so, he is a convincing holy man, using his own insights into human problems to offer vague but comforting advice to people in the market. He functions as a sort of therapist, offering self-affirming advice that he wraps in the guise of astrological wisdom. He is good at his trade; he tells people what they want to hear, and they leave comforted by it. Though it is not an honest living that the astrologer makes, it is still a well-earned one.

As the marketplace is emptying and the lights are being put out, a stranger named Guru Nayak appears. In the darkness, neither can see much of the other's face. Seeing the opportunity for one more client, the astrologer invites Guru Nayak to sit and chat. The stranger does so but is instantly sceptical of the astrologer. He aggressively wagers that the astrologer cannot tell him anything true or worthwhile. They haggle over the price and the astrologer agrees. However, when Guru Nayak lights a cheroot, the astrologer catches a brief glimpse of the man's face and is filled with fear. He tries to get out of the wager, but Guru Nayak holds him to it and will not let him leave.

The astrologer tries his usual tack of vague, self-affirming advice, but Guru Nayak will have none of it. The astrologer sincerely prays for a moment and then changes course. He reveals to Guru Nayak that he knows he was once stabbed through the chest and left for dead, and that now Guru Nayak is here searching for his assailant. He even reveals that he knows Guru Nayak's name, something he attributes to his

cosmic wisdom. Guru Nayak is greatly excited by all of this, believing the astrologer to truly be all-knowing. He presses the astrologer for the whereabouts of the man who stabbed him so that he can have his revenge. The astrologer tells him that he died several months ago, crushed by an oncoming lorry. Guru Nayak is frustrated by this but satisfied that at least his attacker died terribly. He gives the astrologer his money and leaves.

The astrologer arrives home late at night and shows his wife the money he has made, becoming briefly bitter when he realizes that although Guru Nayak has paid him a great sum, it is not quite as much as promised. Even so, his wife is thrilled. As they lie down to sleep, the astrologer reveals to his wife that a great burden has been lifted off of his shoulders. Years ago, the astrologer was the one to stab Guru Nayak and leave him for dead, which forced him to flee his home and make a new life as a fraudulent astrologer. He had thought himself to be a murderer but was now content that he had not in fact taken a life. Satisfied by this, he goes to sleep.

The theme of “An Astrologer’s Day”

The theme of the story focuses on a single day in the life of an ordinary astrologer who suddenly faces past life in the present drastic situation. The story has a twist in the tale. The otherwise adventure less life of the astrologer suddenly poses a grave problem from his past life and demands alertness to tackle the situation. The story describes of a single day in the lives of the sleepy town of Malgudi.

The story also deals with the darker side of human nature with its hypocrisies, shrewdness, revengeful nature and selfishness. The characters in the story are no exception to these qualities of human nature. Finally, all is well that ends well with the astrologer coming out with flying colours in his examination of befooling his opponent, saving his life and also saw to it that he does not face the man again in future.

R. K. Narayan Biography

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan (nuh-RI-yuhn) was born into a prosperous middle-class family on October 10, 1906, in Madras, India. There he spent his early years with his grandmother and uncle. Later he joined his parents, brothers, and sisters in the family home in Mysore. Mysore is probably the basis of his fictional city Malgudi, an Indian city as complex and as real as William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County. Although according to his memoirs he was never particularly enthusiastic about academic work, Narayan attended a Lutheran mission school and Christian College High School (both in Madras) and in 1930 received his B.A. from Maharaja’s College (later the University of Mysore). He married in 1933; his wife, Rajam, gave birth to their only child, a daughter named Hema, in 1938. Rajam died of typhoid in 1939. Narayan never remarried.

Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies by .Salman Rushdie

Introduction

“Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” is a short story in the genre of postcolonial fiction by British-Indian novelist Salman Rushdie. First published in 1987 in an anthology titled *East, West*, it follows a woman who yearns to travel to England to live with her fiancé. Most of the story takes place at the Indian British Consulate. Highly dialogic, the story deals with the difficulties of the migrant subject, and the distinct intersectional subjectivities that emerge from different marginalized narratives. The title is a reference to the classic film *The Wizard of Oz*, in which ruby slippers allow its protagonist, Dorothy, to travel home.

Summary

“Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” begins as Miss Rehana arrives at the British Consulate. She disembarks from a richly colored vehicle, and the driver bows to her with a flourish, strangely inaugurating her attempt to appeal for a visa at the inert and imposing building. Upon approaching the doors, she is informed that it is not yet open. She finds a number of other women waiting for appointments at the consulate, all of them accompanied by men whom she assumes are their husbands. One man, Muhammad Ali, appraises Miss Rehana and comes to talk to her as she is eating. He asks her if she would like to pay him for legal advice; when she replies she is orphaned and in poverty, he offers his service for free.

Muhammad Ali brings Miss Rehana to a quiet part of town where he works at a spare wooden desk. She gives him her personal information, revealing that she is engaged to a man named Mustafa Dar who lives in England. He looks at her visa application and informs her that it is unlikely for anyone to get a visa solely because she has a partner in England since the Consulate officials assume that all women applying for an English visa are falsifying their relationships. He warns her that the Consulate officials will ask her a number of very personal, even invasive questions in order to glean the truth about her background. Hearing this, Miss Rehana grows nervous at the prospect of having to prove her truth to a panel of doubters.

Muhammad Ali divulges that he is actually a con man and that he usually sells hopeful women false papers. He tells Miss Rehana that he will make an exception for her, and offers her a real British passport. She attacks him in response, indignant that he would suggest she is willing to commit a crime rather than wait for a legal pathway to England. She argues that doing so would only reinforce the prejudice the Consulate has against Indian women. Though he argues in response that it is the only way to gain a visa, she rejects him, going back to the Consulate while he waits.

When she returns, her expression of calmness causes Muhammad Ali to believe she somehow obtained a visa. She apologizes to him for her behavior earlier, offering to

buy him a meal to make up for it. She explains that her marriage was arranged when she was nine years old and that her prospective partner, Mustafa, is twenty-one years her senior. She reveals that he moved to England promising to later retrieve her, but never did; nor has she really met him. Having given the wrong answer to virtually every pressing question at the Consulate, she was denied a visa. Muhammad Ali expresses intense sadness at the abrupt foreclosure of her hope to immigrate but is startled to see that Miss Rehana is very happy. Advising him not to be sad, she gets on a bus to go back to work as a nanny in Lahore. With this surprise ending, “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” suggests the resilience of the immigrant subject who is normatively conceived of as contingent and alienated.

List of Characters

Miss Rehana – applies for a visa at the British Consulate to go to Great Britain.

Muhammad Ali – a crook who swindles vulnerable women applying for a visa.

Mustafa Dar – Miss Rehana’s fiancée who never physically appears in the story.

The Meaning of the Title

The word ‘rubies’ situates the story in the East, which in the collective Western imagination is full of exotic riches. The title indicates the central irony in the story; Muhammad Ali, who normally scams gullible women, this time offers what he thinks is genuinely good advice. But because his assumptions about Miss Rehana wanting to join her fiancée in England are false, the ‘good’ advice isn’t that good after all.

East, West

This short story questions the supposed superiority of the West over the East. Living in England doesn’t necessarily mean the liberation from constricting traditions. Joining her fiancée in England would relegate Miss Rehana to an inferior position. Rushdie subverts our preconceptions of the West as free and liberal and the East as conservative and constricting.

Rushdie achieves this effect by narrating the story from Muhammad Ali’s point of view. The old crook assumes that everyone dreams of going to England.

Gender and Power

In this story, the traditional gender dynamic is challenged. Normally, Muhammad Ali has power over the women he scams. But in this case, it is Miss Rehana who dictates the tone of the conversation. She chooses not to follow Muhammad Ali’s advice, which proves that she has agency.

Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri

Summary

The Das family is in India on vacation, and Mr. Das has hired Mr. Kapasi to drive them to visit the Sun Temple. The family sits in the car, which is stopped near a tea stall. Mr. and Mrs. Das are arguing about who should take their daughter, Tina, to the bathroom, and Mrs. Das ultimately takes her. Ronny, their son, darts out of the car to look at a goat. Mr. Das, who closely resembles Ronny, reprimands him but does nothing to stop him, even when he says he wants to give the goat a piece of gum. Mr. Das tells Bobby, the younger of their two sons, to go look after Ronny. When Bobby refuses, Mr. Das does nothing to enforce his order.

Mr. Das tells Mr. Kapasi that both he and his wife were born and raised in the United States. Mr. Das also reveals that their parents now live in India and that the Das family visits them every few years. Tina comes back to the car, clutching a doll with shorn hair. Mr. Das asks Tina where her mother is, using Mrs. Das's first name, Mina. Mr. Kapasi notices that Mr. Das uses his wife's first name, and he thinks it is an unusual way to speak to a child. While Mrs. Das buys some puffed rice from a nearby vendor, Mr. Das tells Mr. Kapasi that he is a middle-school teacher in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Mr. Kapasi reveals that he has been a tour guide for five years.

The group sets off. Tina plays with the locks in the back of the car, and Mrs. Das does not stop her. Mrs. Das sits in the car silently and eats her snack without offering any to anyone else. Along the road, they see monkeys, which Mr. Kapasi says are common in the area. Mr. Das has him stop the car so he can take a picture of a starving peasant. Mr. and Mrs. Das quarrel because Mr. Das has not gotten them a tour guide whose car has air-conditioning. Mr. Kapasi observes that Mr. and Mrs. Das are more like siblings to their children than parents.

Mr. Kapasi tells the Dases about his other job as an interpreter in a doctor's office. Mrs. Das remarks that his job is romantic and asks him to tell her about some of his patients. However, Mr. Kapasi views his job as a failure. At one time, he had been a scholar of many languages, and now he remains fluent only in English. He took the interpreting job as a way to pay the medical bills when his eldest son contracted typhoid and died at age seven. He kept the job because the pay was better than his previous teaching job, but it reminds his wife of their son's death. Mr. Kapasi's marriage was arranged by his parents, and he and his wife have nothing in common. Mr. Kapasi, seduced by Mrs. Das's description of his job as "romantic," begins fantasizing about Mrs. Das.

When they stop for lunch, Mrs. Das insists that Mr. Kapasi sit with them. He does, and Mr. Das takes their picture together. Mrs. Das gets Mr. Kapasi's address so that she can send him a copy of the picture, and Mr. Kapasi begins to daydream about how

they will have a great correspondence that will, in a way, finally fulfill his dreams of being a diplomat between countries. He imagines the witty things he will write to her and how she will reveal the unhappiness of her marriage.

At the temple, Mrs. Das talks with Mr. Kapasi as they stare at friezes of women in erotic poses. Mr. Kapasi admires her legs and continues to dream about their letters. Dreading taking the Dases back to their hotel, he suggests that they go see a nearby monastery, and they agree. When they arrive, the place is swarming with monkeys. Mr. Kapasi tells the children and Mr. Das that the monkeys are not dangerous as long as they are not fed.

Mrs. Das stays in the car because her legs are tired. She sits in the front seat next to Mr. Kapasi and confesses to him that her younger son, Bobby, is the product of an affair she had eight years ago. She slept with a friend of Mr. Das's who came to visit while she was a lonely housewife, and she has never told anyone about it. She tells Mr. Kapasi because he is an interpreter of maladies and she believes he can help her. Mr. Kapasi's crush on her begins to evaporate. Mrs. Das reveals that she no longer loves her husband, whom she has known since she was a young child, and that she has destructive impulses toward her children and life. She asks Mr. Kapasi to suggest some remedy for her pain. Mr. Kapasi, insulted, asks her whether it isn't really just guilt she feels. Mrs. Das gets out of the car and joins her family. As she walks, she drops a trail of puffed rice.

Meanwhile, the children and Mr. Das have been playing with the monkeys. When Mrs. Das rejoins them, Bobby is missing. They find him surrounded by monkeys that have become crazed from Mrs. Das's puffed rice and are hitting Bobby on the legs with a stick he had given them. Mr. Das accidentally takes a picture in his nervousness, and Mrs. Das screams for Mr. Kapasi to do something. Mr. Kapasi chases off the monkeys and carries Bobby back to his family. Mrs. Das puts a bandage on Bobby's knee. Then she reaches into her handbag to get a hairbrush to straighten his hair, and the paper with Mr. Kapasi's address on it flutters away.

Characters List

Mr. Kapasi

The Indian tour guide who accompanies the Das family on their trip. Mr. Kapasi was once fluent in many languages but now speaks only English. He once dreamed of being a diplomat but now works as a translator in a doctor's office, a job he acquired when his young son died from typhoid. Mr. Kapasi lives in a loveless, arranged marriage and no longer sees himself as a potential object of interest for women. He entertains fantasies about Mrs. Das but is ultimately horrified by her confession of infidelity and self-absorption.

Mrs. Mina Das

The self-absorbed wife of Mr. Das whose infidelity has isolated her from her husband and children. Mrs. Das cares only about herself and her needs and has little true connection to the people around her. After having an affair eight years ago and conceiving Bobby, she never told Mr. Das or Bobby the truth. Her need to confess her past transgressions horrifies Mr. Kapasi.

Mr. Das

The middle-school science teacher who hires Mr. Kapasi to accompany the family on their trip. Mr. Das takes a voyeuristic interest in India and its people, not really connecting with his surroundings except through his camera and guide book. Mr. Das is a passive, ineffective parent, incapable or unwilling to reprimand his children for misbehaving. In a moment of crisis, when Bobby is surrounded by monkeys, he fails to do anything but accidentally take a picture of the scene.

Bobby Das

The younger Das son, who is not actually Mr. Das's child. Bobby does not resemble Mr. Das physically or temperamentally. He is surly and treats Mr. Das disrespectfully.

Tina Das

The young Das daughter. Tina whines and misbehaves, seeking her mother's attention and failing to get it.

Ronny Das

The eldest Das child. Ronny does not listen to his parents, preferring to do what he wants to do.

Themes**The Difficulty of Communication**

Communication breaks down repeatedly in "Interpreter of Maladies," often with hurtful consequences. Mr. Kapasi, who is the interpreter of maladies, as Mrs. Das names him, has lost his ability to communicate with his wife, forcing him to drink his tea in silence at night and leading to a loveless marriage. He has also lost his ability to communicate in some of the languages he learned as a younger man, leaving him with only English, which he fears he does not speak as well as his children. Mr. and Mrs. Das do not communicate, not because of a language barrier but because Mrs. Das hides behind her sunglasses most of the time and Mr. Das has his nose buried in a guidebook. The children do not listen to their parents, nor do they listen to Mr. Kapasi about the monkeys. All these frustrated attempts at communicating with one another lead to hurt feelings. The Kapasis are trapped in a failing marriage. The Dases are openly hostile to each other. The Das children run rampant over their parents and everyone else. And Mr. Kapasi and Mrs. Das are unable to reach a level of friendship that they both may have sought, if only they could speak with one another openly. When Mrs. Das loses Mr. Kapasi's address at the end of the story, it marks the termination of the possibility that they could reach out to each other and the definite end to all communication between them.

The Danger of Romanticism

Every time a character in "Interpreter of Maladies" fails to see the truth about another person, the results are in some way harmful. The main conflict of the story centers on two people who romanticize each other, although in different ways. Mr. Kapasi sees Mrs. Das as a lonely housewife who could be a perfect companion to him in his own loneliness. He misses or ignores cues that she may not be interested in him for his

own sake because, at some level, he wants her to be this companion. He sees many details about her, such as her bare legs and Americanized shirt and bag, but he passes over others, such as the way she dismisses her children's desires and her selfishness with her snack. Such unflattering details do not fit with his conception of her. Likewise, Mrs. Das wants Mr. Kapasi to become a confidante to her and solve her personal and marital difficulties. She views him as a father figure and helper and misses or ignores indications that he may not fit those roles. For example, she doesn't notice that he is uncomfortable with her personal revelations and presses him for help even when he explicitly tells her that he cannot give it to her.

Besides romanticizing one another, the characters also romanticize their surroundings, resulting in insensitivity and danger. Mr. Das, for example, photographs the Indian peasant whose suffering he finds appropriate for a tourist's shot. He sees only what he wants to see—an interesting picture from a foreign land—not the actual man who is starving by the roadside. Even when Bobby is surrounded by monkeys, in genuine distress, Mr. Das can do nothing but snap a picture, as though this scene is also somehow separate from reality. Throughout their trip, Mr. Das fails to engage with India in any substantial way, preferring to hide behind the efficient descriptions in his guidebook. His romanticized tourist's view of India keeps him from connecting to the country that his parents call home.

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