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**JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV  
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**

**(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**CORE COURSE (CC): ENGLISH ELECTIVE**

**SEMESTER-I**

**BAB31102T**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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## **PREFACE**

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala was established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab. It is the first and only Open University of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all, especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The University has a network of 99 Learner Support Centres/Study Centres, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counselling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Prof. G.S Batra  
Dean Academic Affairs

# BACHELOR OF ARTS



## CORE COURSE (CC): ENGLISH ELECTIVE

### SEMESTER-1

### (BAB31102T): AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

**MAX.MARKS: 100**

**EXTERNAL: 70**

**INTERNAL: 30**

**PASS: 40%**

**CREDITS: 6**

#### **Objective:**

The course aims to migrate the learners to the wonderful world of English language and literature enriched by the variety of literary genres. By dealing with the engaging issues of universal relevance, they will understand certain basic features of the modes of expression associated with each genre as a reflection of cultural, historical and socio-political developments of the corresponding age.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES:**

Candidates are required to attempt any two questions each from the sections A and B of the question paper and any ten short questions from Section C. They have to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.

#### **Section-A**

**Introduction to Literature:** Defining Literature, Genres of literature, Literature and Society

**Important Trends and Movements in the History of English Literature:** Greek Classical Literature, Renaissance and Reformation, Introduction to the chief characteristics of:

- The Elizabethan Age
- The Neo-Classical Period
- The Romantic Period
- The Victorian Period
- The Modern Period

#### **Section-B**

**Prescribed text:**The following Units from Fluency in English Ed., Promodini Verma, Mukti Sanyal, Tulika Prasad, New Delhi: Macmillan India, 2009 are recommended:

Chapter 1- Reading Strategies

Chapter 3- Telling Stories

Chapter 5- Understanding Poetry I

Chapter 7- Understanding Values

Chapter 8- Understanding Poetry II

Chapter 10-Understanding Humour

Chapter 14- Understanding Narrative

Chapter 16-Reading Between the lines

**Suggested Readings:**

- Hudson, W.H. *An Outline History of English Literature*. Maple Press, 2012.
- Carter, Ronald and Peter Stockwell, eds., *The Language and Literature Reader*, New York: Routledge 2008.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *On Literature: Thinking in Action*, London: Routledge, 2002.
- Thornborrow, Joanna and Shan Wareing, *Patterns in Language: An Introduction to Language and Literary Style*, London: Routledge, 1998.
- Rees, R.J. *English Literature: An Introduction for Foreign Readers*, Delhi: Macmillan, 2004.



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## **BACHELOR OF ARTS**

### **Semester –I**

**BAB31102T: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**  
**COURSE COORDINATOR AND EDITOR: DR. VINOD KUMAR**

#### **SECTION- A**

| <b>UNIT NO:</b> | <b>UNIT NAME</b>  |
|-----------------|---|
| UNIT 1          | Introduction to Literature: Defining Literature, Genres of literature, Literature and Society   |
| UNIT 2          | Important Trends and Movements in the History of English Literature: Greek Classical Literature |
| UNIT 3          | Renaissance and Reformation, Introduction to the chief characteristics of The Elizabethan Age   |
| UNIT 4          | Important Trends and Movements in The Neo-Classical Period                                      |
| UNIT 5          | Important Trends and Movements in The Romantic Period and The Victorian Age                     |
| UNIT 6          | Important Trends and Movements in The Modern Age  |

#### **SECTION B**

**Prescribed text:** Fluency in English Ed., Promodini Verma, Mukti Sanyal, Tulika Prasad, New Delhi:  
Macmillan India, 2009

| <b>UNIT No.:</b> | <b>UNIT NAME</b>  |
|------------------|---|
| UNIT 7           | Chapter 1- Reading Strategies<br>Chapter 3- Telling Stories                 |
| UNIT 8           | Chapter 5- Understanding Poetry I<br>Chapter 7- Understanding Values        |
| UNIT 9           | Chapter 8- Understanding Poetry II<br>Chapter 10-Understanding Humour       |
| UNIT 10          | Chapter 14- Understanding Narrative<br>Chapter 16-Reading Between the lines |

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## SEMESTER-I

### COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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#### UNIT-I INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

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#### **STRUCTURE**

##### 1.0 Objectives

##### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 What is Literature

1.1.2 Non-Imaginative Literature

1.1.3 Imaginative Literature

1.1.4 Main Points

1.1.5 Activity I

1.1.6 Why do we study Literature

1.1.7 Main Points

1.1.8 Activity II

##### 1.2 Genres of Literature

1.2.1 Poetry

1.2.2 Sub-genres of Poetry

1.2.3 Prose

1.2.4 Sub-genres of Fiction

1.2.5 Sub-genres of Non-Fiction

1.2.6 Main Points

##### 1.3 Literature and Society

##### 1.4 Summing Up

##### 1.5 Questions for practice

##### 1.6 Suggested Reading

#### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

This lesson will introduce you to the following concepts:

- What is literature?



- What is the difference between Imaginative Literature and Non-Imaginative Literature?
- Why do we read Literature?
- What are the different literary genres and sub-genres of English literature?
- How does Literature Impact Society?

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the objectives stated above I have used terms such as literature, non-imaginative literature, imaginative literature, genres etc. Before I start explaining these terms, I will request you to think on your own and analyse what do these words mean or signify? It is quite possible that what I tell you and what you think or know about it, may differ. It does not matter. But try you must.

### **1.1.1 What is Literature**

The word literature derives from a Latin word "Littera" - a letter of the alphabet.

Literature means, "writing formed with letters including learning, a writing, grammar. Literature in the common early spelling was defined "... in effect a condition of reading, of being able to read and of having read." The common adjective associated with literature was "literate." **Francis Bacon**, one of the famous 17<sup>th</sup> century essayists uses the term "literature" as "learned in all literature and erudition-divine and humane."

Till 17<sup>th</sup> century literature was a category of use and condition. It signified "polite" or "humane" learning and specified a particular social distinction.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the word literature acquired a generalised social connotation. The revised alternative definition of literature was "printed books."

In broad terms literature can be defined as any written printed matter on any subject. This verbal material is intended for the public or of interest to the public.

Accordingly we can say that all writings such as private correspondence, journals, diaries, or anything written for one's own self or for a small group of friends or for a larger audience is literature. According to this definition we can also admit phrases like 'literature of medicine', 'literature of science', 'literature of mathematics' or 'literature related to history, philosophy or any branch of study and knowledge'.

The term literature is also used more narrowly for writings specifically considered to be an art form especially prose, fiction, drama, poetry. Oral literature can also be included in this category. From Renaissance onwards we see that there is an increasing tendency for specialization of literature to "creative" and "imaginative" literature. It has come to be seen over the times that there is a shift from learning to "taste and sensibility" as a criterion for defining the literary quality of any work.

Since all literature makes use of language, based on this particular use of language, it is possible to define literature as non-imaginative literature and imaginative literature.

### 1.1.2 Non-Imaginative Literature

Non-Imaginative literature primarily attempts historical, scientific or philosophical accuracy even though it may have stylistic grace and humanistic relevance. It may give pleasure too. The language of this kind of literature is "denotative". Manuals, advertisements diaries, historical documents, philosophical and religious treatises come in the category of non-imaginative or non-literary texts.

### 1.1.3 Imaginative Literature

The primary aim of imaginative literature is to produce a structure of words for its own sake. Language is charged with meaning. This kind of literature deals with events which are fictive or if they deal with actual events they deal in a way that accuracy may not be chiefly relevant but pleasure remains the basic principle.

**Northrop Frye-** a Canadian literary critic and theorist says "In literature, question of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aim of producing a structure of words for its own sake, and the sign values of the symbols are subordinated to their importance as a structure of interconnected motives. Wherever we have autonomous verbal structure of this kind, we have literature." The world created by the literary artist is complete, real and autonomous but fictive. In this fictive world most of the statements about experience are made not by logical propositions but by presenting the experience itself, so that the reader can sense its meaning directly as precepts.

### 1.1.4 Main Points

- All literature is a linguistic construct it makes use of verbal material.
- All literature is for the public or of interest to public.
- Based on the particular use of language literature can be classified as Non-imaginative/ Non-literary literature or Imaginative/Literary/Creative literature.

### 1.1.5 Check Your Progress-I

On the basis of what you have learnt so far, try to answer the following questions:

1. What is creative literature? Name two creative works you have read.
2. Can we say that all printed books are literature?

The title, "**An Advance Course in English Grammar**" is an example of which kind of literature? Try to give a reasoned answer.

### 1.1.6 Why do We Study Literature?

I have told you earlier in this lesson that imaginative literature is fictive. Literature begins with the telling of a tale. The writer creates certain events by means of auditory and

visual signs. The writer creates these events in his/her mind/imagination. These events may be true or may not be true.

But there is no denying the fact that fiction imitates real life. Greeks had a word to describe the imitation of real life in art and works of fiction. They called it **mimesis**. Fiction imitates real life in such a way that we can react to fiction with the same range of emotional responses we would feel in real life and we can feel a strong emotional connection with a character in a book although we know that his or her character is not a real person. This phenomenon is called the **Paradox of Fiction**.

We read literature to search for meaning. In literary works readers usually find deeper meaning and more carefully crafted devices. The literary text sometimes does something more than simply entertain.

**Tolstoy** believes that art, should be defined not through the pleasure it may give but through the purpose it may serve. Great masters of literature have laid bare the complexities of human mind, the deviant human behaviour and harsh and gruesome realities of life, the insidious ways various institutions have robbed human beings of respect and dignity. They have also portrayed the sublime aspects of life - the yearnings of human soul for higher consciousness. **Shelley** the famous Romantic Poet in his *A Defense of Poetry* says, "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth". **Iris Murdoch** one of the distinguished twentieth century novelists says, "Art is by far the most educational thing we have, far more than its rivals, philosophy, theology and science. Art is a great international human language, it is for all." **Shelley** believes, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." **Balzac** took pride in calling himself "the secretary of the society". We learn more from great works of literature, about men and manners, about people and societies than from other academic sources. The works of **Henry Fielding**, **Jane Austen**, **Charles Dickens** and all other creative writers tell us more about the ways of the world, about men and manners, than any other form of writings do.

Studying literature enables one to better understand the social situations, history, one's own emotions and various cultural practices. It narrates the stories of peoples' lives. It is for us to hear the voices of the past and work with the present. It is a way for the present to connect with possible future. We learn history we didn't experience, customs we are not familiar with, we hear the voices of those who have been silenced, marginalized-women, hapless children, slaves, aliens, it sets us thinking, it sensitises us, it sparks our imagination. All good books have one thing in common they are truer than if "they had really happened."

Fiction imitates reality and that can help us have a better understanding of the real world. We also enjoy literature/fiction because it helps us to escape from reality in order to clear our heads of what is going on in our life. It is possible to purge or cleanse ourselves of our emotions through art. **Aristotle** called this **Catharsis**.

### **1.1.7 Main Points**

- Writer has an important message about the meaning of life which he/she wishes to communicate.
- It is the reader who searches for the meaning.
- The writer tells a story he/she thinks needs to be told and readers often talk about what it really means.
- Reading of literature entertains us
- Literature enriches our linguistic experience, we learn how to use words in different contexts, we learn how to play with words to convey complex thoughts
- Literature educates us, instructs us, teaches us, ennobles us
- Literature heals us and purges us

### **1.1.8 Check Your Progress-II**

1. From what you have learnt so far, try to explain the terms: fiction, imitation, mimesis, paradox of fiction, catharsis.
2. Cite one novel you have read which told you about an event/person more than what you had earlier known.

## **1.2 GENRES OF LITERATURE**

When you begin to study literature, you are told by your teacher that this particular work is a poem or a drama, a novel or a short story or an essay. The literary works are written in these forms. Genre means a type of art, literature or music characterized by a specific form, context and style. Literature has four main genres - poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction.

All these genres have particular features and functions that distinguish them from one another. We can enjoy, understand and appreciate a work better if we know which category of genre we are reading.

Genres may be determined by setting, subject, style, time, literary technique, tone, content or length. The distinctions between genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined and even the rules designating genres were widely thought to be 18<sup>th</sup> century, the various genres were widely thought to be fixed artistic types. Since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century new literary forms developed. By the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century new genres were added to the existing ones that it becomes difficult to categories new works into the already existing generic frame work.

We need to be clear that genre is a category of composition. We can classify these categories as prose, poetry, fiction. These categories should not be confused with basic modes of literary art. e.g. lyric, narrative, dramatic categories of composition which can be defined according to several different criteria such as:

Formal Structure

Length

Intention

Origin

Subject Matter

There can be more limited sub genres also

Different genres have different roles. Poetry attempts to stir our imagination and enhances our imaginative or emotional power. The poet does this by carefully choosing and arranging language for its meaning, sound and rhythm. Fiction and drama help us to improve our communication skills. Non-fictional works help readers cultivate their analytical and persuasive skills.

I will now discuss the basic characteristics and principles of some of the major genres.

### 1.2.1 Poetry

Poetry is the most intense form of writing. The writer expresses his/her feelings, emotions and thoughts in a very personal way. Language used is rhythmical, figurative and metaphorical.

### 1.2.2 Sub Genres of Poetry Are

**Songs or Ballads:** Language used in these poems is simple. There is a set rhyme scheme and a set rhythm. There is repetition of lines. Sometimes it is accompanied by musical instruments. *'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'* by **S.T. Coleridge**, *'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'* by **John Keats** fall in the category of ballads.

I have given only two examples, look for some more, go through them; read them loudly; try to find their meaning. You will enjoy the experience.

**Lyric:** This allows the poet/speaker to express his/her feeling on a particular subject. **Odes, Sonnets, Haikus** are its various forms.

**Shakespeare's Sonnets, Odes of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats,** are famous for their lyrical quality and intense themes.

**Haiku** originally a Japanese form has been adapted in English also. One noun and a connective phrase with five syllables consists of the traditional haiku poems eg.

An old silent pond...

A frog jumps into

The pond, Splash! Silence again.

These poems are simple and to the point. They easily explain the idea/moment in simple lines.

**Epic:** Epic is a long narrative poem. The main characters are gods/heroes. Style is elevated, and ample use of heroic similies is made. There are wide ranging allusions. The poem begins with an invocation. **John Milton's 'The Paradise Lost', Dante's 'Inferno'** are the most famous **Epics**.

**Narrative:** It is a poem that tells a story. It is written in traditional form. It is structured in metered verse.

*The Canterbury Tales* written by **Chaucer** is a fine example of Narrative Poetry.

**Dramatic:** It is a narrative poem that uses invented characters. It includes dialogue, multiple characters and can be spoken or sung eg. **Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner, William Blakes's Songs of Innocence and Experience.**

I have cited one or two examples of each category of the poetic sub-genres. Read as many poems as you can. You can read these poems written in your own language. Just enjoy these, appreciate these. It is an experience worth having.

### 1.2.3 Prose

Let me now explain what is prose writing and how it differs from poetry. Prose is the first major literary genre. It does not have formal metrical structure and is not organised according to the finer patterns of poetry. It closely resembles every day speech. It is usually straight forward and may utilise figurative language. Prose has its minimum requirements - there must be some degree of continuity, coherence and logic.

Prose writing is often divided into two primary sub categories - fiction and non-fiction.

**Fiction:** Fiction is a narrative writing that originates from the author's imagination. Though it is designed to entertain but great works of fiction, inspire us to reflect, to examine and in the process these works inform us, educate us, persuade us.

### 1.2.4 Sub genres of Fiction

**Novel:** Novel is a lengthy narrative with plot, setting, character and conflict that imitates real life or situations. It encompasses all kinds of subject matter, including history, adventure, mysteries, romance, etc. **Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene** are some of the famous English novelists.

**Allegory:** Allegory is a story, play, poem in which characters and events represent particular qualities or ideas that relate to morals, religion or politics. **George Orwell's Animal Farm** is a political allegory.

**Novella:** Novella is shorter than a novel with a more simplified plot. However, the themes and characters are developed fully. **Albert Camus's The Stranger, Joseph Conrad's Heart**

of *Darkness*, Ernest **Hemingway's**, *The Old Man and The Sea* are some of the notable novellas.

**Short Story:** Short Story is a short prose narrative, very limited in plot. There are few characters. In the novel the characters get developed but in short story characters are revealed. **Katherine Mansfield, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells** are some of the renowned short story writers.

**Fables and Parables:** A fable is a short narrative that imparts a moral or a lesson. Fable/ Parable revolves around a general truth about life. Often times the characters are animals. Parables are allegorical. Many modern writers such as **Orwell, Kafka, Dr. Seuss** use aspects of fables in their work. **Orwell's** *Animal Farm* is one of the most famous fables in English literature. **Aesop's** *The Boy who Cried Wolf*, is a fine example of a Parable.

**Myths and Legends:** Myths have a great influence on literary works. A myth narrates a legendary story that usually concerns an event or a hero. A legend is a narrative that explains the origin of life, the occurrences in nature or the deeds of a figure of folklore. The story is often rooted in facts but is presented as fiction. The most famous legends of all times are *Lady Godiva, Robin Hood, El Dorado, King Arthur*.

**John Milton** in his *Paradise Lost* plays out the Genesis myth about the fall of man, **T.S. Eliot** in his *The Waste Land* uses the myth of Grail Quest and the Fisher King to highlight the hollowness of the modern life.

### **Non-fiction:**

Non-fiction is any content, written in prose. Its aim is to present only truth and accuracy related to the subject. The content can be presented either objectively or subjectively.

#### **1.2.5 Sub Genres of Non-Fiction:**

**Autobiography:** Autobiography is a narrative about one's life, written by that person himself/herself. It differs from a **Memoir** in that it usually covers the entire scope of the author's life, rather than focusing on a single period of his/her life. **Mahatma Gandhi's** Autobiography: *My Experiments with Truth* gives an account of his entire life.

**Narrative Non-Fiction:** Prose written about a series of true events, usually connected fall in the category of narrative non-fiction. Narrative non-fiction includes travelogues, histories, reports, articles, newspaper articles etc.

**Biography:** Biography is written account of a character's personality and accomplishments of a person's life. I will suggest you to read the biography of *Steve Jobs* written by **Walter Issacson**.

**Diaries and Journals:** Diaries and journals record personal often daily experiences, reflections and events. Diaries focus more on emotions and personal accounts whereas journals tend to be logs of events. These often describe the experiences of a group of people. Famous novelist **Virginia Woolf's** *Diary* entries reveal a lot about the novelist, her inner scape. Journal entries of **Martin Luther King** highlight the tribulations of the times, he was living in.

**Essay:** Essay is a narrative about a theme or a topic. Essay can be written in a formal or informal style. It often incorporates opinion of the author. Essays of **Francis Bacon, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt** cover varied subjects from social to political to philosophical.

**Speech:** Speech is not one of the primary genres of literature but these are important historical documents. Speeches can be found in prose, drama and poetry and their primary goal is to persuade, inform, demonstrate or entertain a reader, an audience or other characters. They can also be used in non-fiction or fiction depending on their purpose and use.

I will recommend you to listen to **Martin Luther King's** 1963 Speech *I have a Dream*. One of the most iconic speeches, it tells us much more about American history than the history books do. Also try to listen to **Jawahar Lal Nehru's** "*Tryst-with Destiny*" speech delivered on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947 which touches aspects that transcend India's history.

### **1.2.6 Main Points**

In this lesson I have told you that:

- Literary creations have been divided into various types of forms which we call genres.
- The knowledge of the generic type helps us to understand a literary work of art better.
- Classification of literary works into sub-genres also helps us to understand the nuances of a work art better. These help us to appreciate form, structure, texture, subject and theme in a proper context.
- But we have to keep in mind that generic parameters do not remain fixed. A work of art has its own individual status, worth and merit which ought not be overlooked.

### **1.3 LITERATURE AND SOCIETY**

No literature is written in a vacuum. It needs a referent, a background. The ideas thoughts, feeling, and vision stem from an encounter/experience with life. Even the medium-the language that the writer uses is a social and cultural construct. It cannot be denied that the age, the period and the society has an essential role to play in any creative process. Literature as an expression of an artist sensitivity can only find fulfillment in the social and cultural set up. No art can grow out of the sole attempt of a writer. The activity of writing is a corporate activity belonging not only to one human being but to a community. The writer and his work stand in a collaborative relation with the entire social and cultural background.

The writer is both a mediator and an individual. He is a product of a culture and also a recipient of its literary and intellectual heritage. It should be obvious, then, that all literature



is rooted in the age. Each work of art is the creation of innumerable processes of consciousness in which history, culture and art play a significance role.

All literature has deep rooted impression of the age in which it is created. A writer's world has its roots in the lived reality. Intentionally or unintentionally the writer is bound to reflect his age and society. The most valuable works of art so often carry an implication about the society they are written for.

Literature has played an important role in projecting the features of every age. **Geoffrey Chaucer** in his *The Canterbury Tales* describes his characters to paint an ironic and critical portrait of English society of the then times particularly of the Church. Although the characters are fictional they still offer a variety of insights into customs and practices of the time.

**Shakespeare's** plays reveal the extent of influence Elizabethan era has infused into his works. The events and personalities of the Elizabethan age helped **Shakespeare** create a vivid and colourful world to build his plays on and in return **Shakespeare's** genius helped to define this pinnacle of English history. To best understand **Shakespeare** it is critical to understand the age in which he lived and worked. Writers of the Augustan Age all grappled with the immediate social concerns and their ideals of moderation, decorum and urbanity made the literature of this period leave a heavy stress on the social aspects.

The romantic poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were rather subjective and introvert but they did belong to a particular society and their interaction among themselves. They were affected by life around them. Their work is not-outside the realm of human realities. **Wordsworth** did write about the solitary reaper, an idiot boy, Lucy Grey, Michael. **John Keats** - dejected and despondent - escaped into world of imagination but could not keep himself removed from the life that he had left behind and kept returning to the world of reality as a changed man but he returned any way. **P.B. Shelley** rebelled against the world, the world he was born in and bred.

The Victorian writers - **Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, Browning, Tennyson** ridiculed and satirised the vices of society. They dealt with social problems as reformers. *Great Expectations* written by **Charles Dickens**, represents the reality of the Victorian age. Other novelists of this age too described in their works squalor, mental turmoil, the predominance of materialistic values. These work gave a message for the need of love, understanding and companionship. **T.S. Eliot** depicting isolation, meaninglessness of life and the consequent frustration in his *The Waste Land* delineates the picture of 20<sup>th</sup> century waste land.

In the global world of 21<sup>st</sup> century with **World Wide Web** and interaction of social media in our lives, creative artists have either appropriated existing technology or created new technology to suit their particular needs.

The result has been new cultural forms that have called into question the nature of the fields within which they are created as well as the nature of the artists themselves and the

roles and responsibilities of their audience. The traditional novelist's digital counter-part in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is **hypertext fiction**. *Victory Garden* written by **Stuart Moulthrop** uses **hypertext** to allow readers to choose their own path through the story, thus, empowering the reader in a way never before. By empowering the readers in such a manner, the 21<sup>st</sup> century authors have expanded the possibilities of literary creation. One can see that technology enhances creativity. **Richard Florida** argues in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, "creativity is becoming an intrinsic part of working life. As we become a more technological society, we also become a more creative society because of many of the rote tasks that used to take up a lot of our time and effort, have become automated." What is more, technology increases our potential to engage in the types of experiences that lead to greater creativity. The fact that everyone has access to a wealth and diversity of ideas and the means to actualize intent, means that we all can be more creative. As **Jaron Lanier** puts it "in a virtual world of infinite abundance only creativity could ever be in short supply."

Having said so, I want to highlight one significant aspect of this issue. Computer Technologies have transformed the way we live, the ways we think and react to situations around us. This definitely opens new vistas both for new forms, new literary techniques, to come up. So far as the content of any literary creation is concerned it is the basic human emotions and frailties. Literary artist and his background are intertwined. A literary artist reflects what he sees - technology or not technology.

#### **1.4 SUMMING UP**

In this lesson, I have tried to explain

- What literature is
- What is the value of literature
- What do we learn from studying the literary texts
- How society impacts a literary artist and vice-versa

To conclude, I will say that literature stands as a voice that expresses values and beliefs and shows how people live as individual or as group, what their culture and tradition used to be. Reading literature gives us a great opportunity to increase our knowledge of the world. We acquire effective linguistic and cultural competence because the study of language is closely related to its literature. "Art, especially literature, is a great hall of reflection where we can all meet and where everything under the sun can be examined and considered." (**Iris Murdoch**)

#### **1.5 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

1. Literature has got a permanent value, critically analyse this statement.
2. All art is the expression of life. Try to correlate this statement to a literary text you have read and explain its meaning
3. Define Genre Explain the major generic categories by citing examples

## **1.6 SUGGESTED READING**

There is no better way to understand what literature is, how it influences our values and way of life than by reading original works written by creative writers. Read as many poems, plays, novels, essays as you can. Study these, reflect on these, analyse these and note down how a particular work has impacted you. You will soon end up getting addicted to the habit of reading. I am sure, the kind of pleasure and learning you will experience is going to be unique. To begin with I can suggest the following: Read sonnets of **Shakespeare, Milton**, Poems of **Robert Burns, Thomas Gray**, Novel is written by **Oliver Goldsmith, Sheridan, Henry Fielding Jane Austen, D.H. Lawrence**.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## SEMESTER-I

### COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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#### UNIT 2: GREEK CLASSICAL LITERATURE

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#### **STRUCTURE**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 What is Classics?
- 2.3 Epic
- 2.4 Poetry
- 2.5 Drama
- 2.6 Literary Criticism
- 2.7 Bullets to Remember
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Check Your Progress
- 2.10 References and Further Readings
- 2.11 Model Questions

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

**This lesson will help you to:**

- Enlist various genres in the classical period
- Discuss what is a classic
- Illustrate examples of various genres
- Distinguish various kinds of poetry
- Appraise various classical masterpieces
- Arrange various writings in your learning chart and plan to read any classical text

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Dear learners, in this lesson we introduce you to the Greek and Classical literature and its masterpieces. The lesson aims to make you understand the definition of classics and throw

light on various genres of Greek classical literature. This brief lesson has an objective to encourage our learners to study in more depth what Thomas Jefferson called a “sublime luxury,” the ancient Greek and Latin languages and literatures.

## **2.2 WHAT IS CLASSICS?**

Classics is the discipline that studies the language, literature, history, and civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome, two cultures that gave to the West the greater part of its intellectual, political, and artistic heritage. For centuries Western education comprised the study of Greek and Latin and their surviving literary masterpieces. Most of the English vocabulary that we use have their roots and attached meanings in Latin roots/morphs.

Times have changed, and the study of Greek and Latin no longer occupies the central place it once held in the curriculum. Classics today is a small, shrinking university discipline kept alive. But the classical writings are still the foundation of many of our institutions and their ethos. To remap and to graph our lives in a better way we do need to get back to classical literature in the present times too. Classical literature has come to us through translations of classical texts as well as popular films like *Troy* and *Gladiator* that is a testimony to our enduring fascination with the ancient Greeks and Romans.

The difference between classics and other disciplines in the humanities is that classics teach languages in a way that also introduces learners to the culture, history, philosophy, and literature of Greece and Rome. The possible areas of concentration in classics thus include the whole gamut of the humanities and social sciences: history, philosophy, art, architecture, literary criticism, grammar, rhetoric, archaeology, geography, political science, and the histories of science, medicine, engineering, war, mathematics, and geometry. Apart from these areas that are part of our humanities and social sciences studies and curriculum till date, classics also introduce one to more technical foundational disciplines like epigraphy (study of inscriptions engraved on stone, pottery, and sometimes wood), papyrology (study of writing on papyrus (paper made from reed) and also fragments of pottery and wooden tablets), palaeography (study of how words and letters are written on papyrus), textual criticism (study to establish as correct a version of an ancient text as possible based on all surviving manuscripts).

It is important to note that today we experience literature mostly by reading books silently by ourselves, in the ancient world literature was much more an oral and public experience. Thus, literature was necessarily social and political, rather than just a private taste or pastime. In other words, literature was taken much more seriously, its moral, political, and social implications more clearly accepted and recognized. Second, we possess only a fraction of all the ancient Greek and Latin literature that once existed, and much of what we do have exists only in fragmentary form. If we take the example of tragedy: we have thirty-three complete Greek plays from three playwrights. But in roughly a century of tragic performances (about 500-400 B. C.) there were probably a thousand plays produced, written by scores of poets which now exist only as names or in form of phrases and snippets of text.

## **2.3 EPIC**

The term epic refers to a long narrative poem that focuses on a heroic figure or group, and on events that form the cultural history of a nation or tribe. The epic hero undergoes a series of adventures that test his valour, intellect, and character. Among the conventions of the epic are the author's invocations to the muse, the opening of the action in the middle of things and the long lists, or catalogues, of ships or armies.

The earliest surviving literature of the West can be found in the two epics attributed to Homer (c. 750 B. C.) the Iliad and the Odyssey. Homer lived in the eighth century B. C. The Iliad and the Odyssey are written in dactylic hexameters, a metrical pattern consisting of six feet of dactyls (a long syllable followed by two short ones) or spondees (two long syllables), with the fifth foot always a dactyl, and the sixth foot consisting of two syllables, the last either long or short. Originally epic was performed by a bard who had memorized thousands of traditional "formulae," whole lines or set phrases such as "long-haired Achaians [Greeks]" or "rosy-fingered dawn," which he then combined into a coherent story as he was performing.

Homer's epics are concerned with the period of the Trojan War and its aftermath (the hero's return home or nostos), i.e., the twelfth century B. C. Homer's epics reflect the period of the ninth to eighth century B. C., when the power of aristocratic clans was being challenged by the rise of the city-states and consensual governments. The Iliad, the longer and probably the earlier of the two Homeric epics, covers a few weeks in the tenth year of the fighting at Troy. It focuses on the character of Achilles, the "best of the Achaians," who becomes enraged after a quarrel with Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek expedition and the brother of Menelaus, whose wife Helen ran off with the Trojan Paris and started the war. Homer traces the effects of Achilles' wrath, which include the death of his best friend Patroclus and the Trojan champion Hector, whose death at Achilles' hands signals the fall of Troy.

In this epical story Homer brilliantly reveals the destructive effects of the aristocratic hero's code of honour and vengeance, which in the end sacrifices the community to the hero's personal quest for glory. Homer shows us that a political community cannot exist when ideals are based on personal honour achieved through violence, that our humanity depends on the "ties that bind," or our obligations to other humans, obligations that the hero, by contrast, will sacrifice to achieve glory.

The Odyssey tells of the hero Odysseus's adventures on his return home after the fall of Troy. The story is full of fabulous locales, seductive temptresses, and fearsome monsters. But the Odyssey also movingly details the effects on the home front of a warrior's prolonged absence. Odysseus is a much more attractive character than the brooding, egocentric idealist Achilles. For one thing Odysseus is older, with a wife and son, and he displays a practical realism and an acceptance of those tragic limitations of life against which Achilles fails.

Besides the wily Odysseus, the Odyssey contains several remarkable female characters, particularly Odysseus's wife Penelope, whose tricky ways are the equal of her

husband's. The marriage of Penelope and Odysseus, based on similarities of character, virtues, and values, demonstrates the central role social institutions play in making human identity and a stable social order possible. The natural world is a harsh and dangerous place, but humans can flourish because they have minds like Odysseus's that can think up various strategies that allow life to be successfully navigated, and also because they live in communities whose shared values, institutions, and codes lessen the destructive effects of nature's forces and our own equally destructive appetites and passions. In both epics Homer describes an impressive depth and range of human behaviour and motivation. He also recognizes the contradictions and complexities of the soul and the tragic limitations of human existence.

After Homer other epics were composed on various subjects, including the Trojan War and its origins, the wars fought over the city of Thebes by Oedipus's sons and the return home of various Greek heroes. The collection of these stories is called the "Epic Cycle," and it has survived only in fragments and later summaries. In the third century A. D. Quintus of Smyrna picked up where Homer left off in the Iliad to tell the story of Achilles' death, the Trojan horse, and the sack of Troy, among other adventures. Another important collection of hexameter poetry once attributed to Homer and written in the epic style comprises the "Homeric Hymns," which date from the eighth to the sixth centuries B. C. These are thirty-three poems of various lengths describing the adventures and attributes of the gods. The most interesting is the one which tells the story of Demeter and her daughter

Persephone, who is kidnapped by Hades, king of the underworld, and the fifth, which describes Aphrodite's liaison with the mortal Anchises.

Among the Greeks, Homer's literary and cultural authority was similar to that of Shakespeare among the English-speaking peoples: he was a master impossible to imitate. Yet in the early third century B. C. Apollonius of Rhodes published amidst much controversy the *Argonautica* (c. 270-45 B. C.), a hexameter poem about the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. The *Argonautica* is on one level a reworking of Homer, repeating many of epic's conventions and stylistic elements, such as the "extended simile," a detailed comparison that goes on for several lines. Yet at the same time the *Argonautica* reflects more contemporary concerns, such as the psychology of sexual passion, magic and fantasy, science and geography, and a learned interest in the origins of cult and ritual.

The *Argonautica* was very popular among the Romans, and its influence can be seen in the *Aeneid* of Virgil (70-19 B. C.). Before Virgil, the *Annales* (c. 169 B. C.) of Ennius (239-169 B. C.) had used Latin hexameters to portray Roman history as a Homeric epic, but only fragments of the *Annales* have survived (Ennius also was inspired by the traditional Roman practice of making a yearly public record of events, which was called the *annales maximi*). Virgil's *Aeneid*, however, was for centuries arguably the most influential work of classical literature in the West (Homer's epics were lost to Europe for centuries). Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro, 70-19 B. C.) came from a village near Mantua and was educated in Milan, which suggests that his family was fairly wealthy. He lived for a while in Naples as a

follower of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, who counselled retreat from the world into a community of like-minded friends. The Aeneid tells the story of “pious Aeneas,” the Trojan who flees the fall of Troy to found the city of Rome, experiencing along the way Odyssean adventures and then having to fight Iliadic battles with the Latins once he reaches Italy. But the Aeneid is much more than just a Romanization of Homer. Virgil created a masterpiece that examines the possibilities of order on the divine, natural, psychological, artistic, ethical, and political levels.

Virgil recognizes the necessity of order, including the political, yet at the same time he acknowledges the terrible price that often must be paid to achieve that order. He sees a cosmos riven from top to bottom by the intimate interplay of order and chaos, a vast conflict in which struggling mortals have a role to play and a burden to bear, often at great personal cost. This combination of optimism and pessimism, hope and despair, idealism and grim realism gives the Aeneid its distinct character.

Another influential Latin work usually classified as an epic, since it is written in dactylic hexameters, is the *Metamorphoses* (c. A. D. 8) of Ovid (43 B. C.-A. D. 17). Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso, 43 B. C.-A. D. 17) came from the Abruzzi, or the “heel” of Italy. His father was descended from an old equestrian or “knightly” family. Ovid went to Rome for his education and toured Greece, as was usual for a young man of his social class. But the twelve books of Ovid’s poem do not address the usual epic subjects of warrior heroism and battle. Instead, starting with the creation of the world and ending with Julius Caesar’s transformation into a god, Ovid intricately interlocks scores of short tales whose common thread is change of bodily form. The *Metamorphoses* was an important influence on Renaissance literature, its tales providing the subjects for numerous paintings, sculptures, and literary works.

## **2.4 POETRY**

Hesiod (c. 700 B. C.) was a near contemporary of Homer and wrote didactic poetry, or poetry that teaches. He is often categorized as an epic poet, since he writes in the hexameters and style of Homer. His subject matter, however, is very different. Hesiod’s *Theogony* describes the creation of the cosmos and the birth and genealogies of the gods; especially important is the story of Prometheus, who steals fire from heaven and saves the race of mortals from extinction. The *Works and Days*, also written in hexameters, is a mix of maxims, proverbs, fables, parables, and myths. A moral treatise on the importance of hard work and the dangers of idleness, the poem is addressed to the poet’s brother Persis,

who apparently cheated Hesiod out of some of his inheritance and then squandered it.

Philosophers such as Empedocles (c. 492-432 B. C.) and Parmenides (c. 450 B. C.) set out their ideas in poems that addressed issues such as how the world works (physics), the nature of existence or being (ontology), and the means of gaining knowledge (epistemology). Later during the Hellenistic period (c. 300-100 B. C .) more specialized topics turn up in didactic poetry, such as Nicander’s (c. 130 B. C.) work on snakes, spiders, and poisonous



insects (*Theriaca*), his treatise on poisons (*Alexipharmaca*), and Aratus's (c. 315 B. C. - c. 240 B. C.) *Phaenomena*, which concerns the constellations.

The lyric genre of poetry comprised poems that were sung to the accompaniment of a lyre; this poetry is sometimes called melic, from the Greek word for "song." The solo performance of lyric was called monody, in contrast to choral songs performed by a group of singers who also danced in costume. The earliest lyric poetry dates to the seventh century B. C., and even in fragmentary form the influence of Homer is evident in its imagery and phrasing. In subject matter, however, lyric frequently focuses on the personal experiences of the poet, illustrated with traditional myths and covering themes such as love, politics, war, friendship, drinking, and settling scores with enemies.

Two important monodic poets came from the island of Lesbos. Alcaeus (born c. 625-620 B. C.) in his surviving fragments writes about friendship, the political struggles on Lesbos against various tyrants, exile, shipwreck, and drinking, all developed with vigorous descriptions and mythic exemplars. It is in Alcaeus that we find the earliest use of the "ship of state" metaphor. The most influential female poet of the times was Sappho (born c. 650 B. C.), known in ancient times as the "tenth muse." Sappho was born on Lesbos, an island near the coast of modern-day northern Turkey. Only two of her complete poems survive, along with numerous fragments, but in them we see a wide variety of subjects, including Sappho's brother and daughter, poetry, beauty, marriage, hymns to gods, myth, and political struggles on Lesbos. Sappho is most famous for her poems describing her powerful sexual attraction to girls, in which her emotions are vividly rendered with striking imagery, yet always poetically controlled. By the 8th or 9th century CE, Sappho was represented only by quotations in other authors' works. Only one poem, 28 lines long, was complete.

Choral lyric poetry was usually part of a public ritual or celebration. Examples include hymns to gods, including the "paean" for Apollo and the "dithyramb" for Dionysus, the maiden-song (*partheneion*), sung by a chorus of girls, and the wedding-song (*hymenaios*) among others. By the sixth century B. C. secular subjects appear in choral lyric: "panegyrics" to rulers and aristocrats who were the poets' patrons, and "victory odes" (*epinicia*) commissioned by aristocratic victors in public games such as the Olympics. These choral songs, often performed at competitions, were composed in elaborate metrical patterns and linked the occasion or subject to more generalized human experience. Two choral poets particularly noteworthy are Simonides (born c. 556 B. C.) and Pindar (c. 518-430 B. C.). Simonides composed, among many other genres of poems, victory odes and dithyrambs, the latter winning some fifty-seven competitions. Unfortunately, none of these poems survive intact.

Another influential genre of poetry is called elegiac, after the meter of the same name. This metrical pattern consists of couplets that alternate a dactylic hexameter line with a second made up of a dactylic pentameter. Elegiac poetry covers a wide range of subjects and lengths; its use in funeral laments and epitaphs gives us our modern sombre meaning of the word elegiac. The Athenian politician Solon (died c. 560 B. C.), whose reforms of the

Athenian constitution were important developments in creating Athenian democracy, wrote elegiac poems explaining and defending his political reforms.

The epigram is another important poetic genre, one that is sometimes confused with elegy because epigrams were also written in elegiac couplets. Originally epigrams were written as inscriptions on objects such as tombs, and many early epigrams are anonymous. An early writer associated with epigrams is Simonides. Epigrams were stylized and self-conscious while emphasizing on brevity and wit. Hellenistic writers of epigrams worth noting are Asclepiades, Callimachus, and Theocritus.

## **2.5 DRAMA**

The most influential art forms invented by the Greeks have been tragedy and comedy, which originated in Athens around the late sixth century B. C. In that city both were produced as events in civic religious festivals, tragedy at the City Dionysia in the spring, and comedy at the Lenaea in winter, though tragedies were produced at the latter festival as well.

As a civic-religious ritual, Athenian drama was literally “political,” the business of the polis or city-state, which managed the production of the plays performed in an open-air theatre on the slope of the Acropolis before some fifteen thousand citizens, whose elected representatives chose the prize winners. Hence, tragedy confronted issues important to the whole community. It raised questions about the fundamental conditions and limitations of human existence and the conflicted relationship of individuals and the state, the family and political power, passion and reason and law. It is important to note as well that the playwrights enjoyed a remarkable freedom of subject matter and theme, which resulted in drama being an important vehicle of political criticism and commentary.

As an art form tragedy combined the grandeur of epic’s towering heroes and gods with the music, dance, and complex metrical patterns of choral lyric. Typically, each of the three playwrights chosen to compete would produce three tragedies and a “satyr” play, a sort of comic-obscene interlude centred on the adventures of satyrs- lusty woodland wild men addicted to sex and wine and their father Silenus. In the early fifth century the three tragedies themselves formed a trilogy tracing a single story. Later, the three plays told independent stories. After the production, a panel of ten citizens would award first, second, and third prizes. The communal importance of tragedy can also be seen in the chorus, which frequently functions as the audience’s representative on stage, both in its reaction to and commentary on the action and in its interactions with the characters.

The earliest tragedian whose work survives intact is Aeschylus (c. 525-456 B. C.), who composed between seventy and ninety tragedies and won first prize thirteen times. Seven of his tragedies have survived, along with fragments of others. In Aeschylus’s plays, terrible suffering results from a human nature driven by its passions and appetites into arrogance and excess (“hubris”), which bring down the retributive justice of the gods. This is the tragic vision: we live in a world defined by absolute limits that we attempt to transcend only at our peril. Yet Aeschylus also sees hope in the community and its political values,

which can create a more stable order and minimize the disorder created by the passions. In the *Oresteia* (458 B. C.), the only surviving complete trilogy from Greek tragedy, Aeschylus traces the development of Athenian democracy from the dark Mycenaean world of domestic violence, betrayal, blood-guilt, and vengeance in the household of the king Agamemnon to the sunlit world of democratic Athens and its institutions.

The next tragic poet whose work has survived is Sophocles (c. 496-406 B. C.), who wrote more than 120 plays and won some twenty first prizes. We have seven of these plays, including perhaps the most famous of Greek tragedies, *Oedipus Tyrannos* or *Oedipus Rex* (date unknown), which Sigmund Freud misread spectacularly. Rather than a drama of the “family romance,” as Freud thought, the *Oedipus* is really about the limits of reason to acquire sure knowledge in a world made uncertain by our own passions and the vagaries of time and chance. This theme is related to a representative feature of Sophocles’ drama that Aristotle called “recognition” (*anagnorisis*): that moment when the protagonist realizes he has misjudged and misunderstood reality and now must pay for his mistake in suffering. Yet

Sophocles acknowledges that despite our limitations, the need to search out the truth of the human condition is the driving force of human life, one admirable even if it leads to disaster.

The last tragedian whose work has survived is Euripides (c. 480 s - 407/6 B. C.). He wrote about ninety plays, nineteen of which have come down to us (though a few of these might not actually be by Euripides). Substantial fragments of nine other plays have survived as well. Euripides won only four victories, but later he became the most popular of the fifth-century tragedians. Euripides is thought of today as more of a “realist” than Aeschylus or Sophocles; the way in which he explores the darker psychological complexities of characters buffeted by their passions and desires makes him, and them, more accessible to us moderns. He is particularly interested, in characters like Phaedra from the *Hippolytus* or Medea from the play of that name, in the destructive effects of sexual passion on the psyche. His plays detailing the ravaging effects of war, such as the *Trojan Women* and the *Hecuba*, testify to the remarkable freedom dramatic artists enjoyed in Athens, as these plays were produced during the Peloponnesian War with Sparta and were intended as pointed commentaries on Athens’s sometimes brutal behaviour during that conflict. In addition to these thirty-three tragedies, hundreds of fragments from many other playwrights have survived, offering a tantalizing glimpse into a dramatic world of which we know only a fraction.

With comedy, the accident of survival has left us even less than what we have from the tragedians: only eleven plays from one dramatist have survived, though numerous fragments of others are also extant. The plays of Aristophanes (c. 450 - c. 386 B. C.) come at the end of what is known as “old comedy,” a term used to distinguish the genre from its later evolution. In Aristophanes’ comedies the political dimension of ancient drama is most obvious, for the fantastic plots, gross humour, obscenity, parody, satire, and outsized characters are all written with the explicit intention of commenting on and criticizing the Athenian democracy and its politicians, leaders, and philosophers, who are named and pilloried on stage in full view of their fellow citizens.

In his comedies, Aristophanes shows how the passions and appetites of humans, particularly the sexual, can be powerful forces of social and political disorder, and so require greater supervision and control than that provided by radical democracy. Yet like Athenian democracy, his comedies are in some senses egalitarian, in that he presents all humans, regardless of their wealth or rank or prestige, as

subject to the same limitations and weaknesses. The subversive nature of Aristophanes' comedy is perhaps most obvious in the *Lysistrata*, in which the Greek women go on a sex-strike to force their husbands to end the war between Athens and Sparta.

The last two plays of Aristophanes, the *Wealth* and the *Women at Assembly*, are considered to be early examples of "middle comedy," a new style of comic drama that predominated during the fourth century B. C. Since no other examples from some eight hundred plays have survived, it is difficult to pin down precisely what characterized middle comedy. Judging by Aristophanes' last two plays, it seems that the role of the chorus was lessened and songs written specifically for it were eliminated.

From the genre of "new comedy," which dominated the third century, we are fortunate to have one play, the *Dyskolos* or *Grumpy Old Man*, and substantial portions of several others by Menander (c. 344-292 B. C.), who wrote around one hundred comedies. In Menander's plays the political criticism, obscenity, and fantastic plots have disappeared, and the chorus performs only between the acts. His plots involve the adventures of various stock characters such as the boastful soldier, the parasite, the misanthrope, the clever slave, and the handsome but slow-witted young man in love.

## **2.6 LITERARY CRITICISM**

The widespread role of poetry in ancient public life ensured that thinking critically and systematically about the mechanics and purpose of poetry became an important intellectual activity. A long-lived critical concept that first appears in the work of Plato (c. 429-347 B. C.) is that of imitation ("mimesis"), the idea that poetry creates imitations of situations and emotions. Plato thought this was a bad thing, for he believed that witnessing certain sorts of feelings created them in the viewer and made them more acceptable. Thus art, for Plato, has a moral and practical effect, helping to create the right and wrong sorts of people through what it imitates.

The *Poetics* of Aristotle (384-322 B. C.) established several ideas about literature and particularly theatre that would later influence the Renaissance. We have already encountered his idea that tragedy's imitation of events arouses "pity and fear" in the spectator and leads to the catharsis of these emotions. Thus, contrary to Plato, who distrusts the depiction of such emotions because they will inspire the real thing, Aristotle sees a therapeutic value in the arousal and vicarious discharge of these emotions. Other important ideas from the *Poetics* include that of hamartia, the tragic flaw or error that inflicts a reversal ("peripetia") of fortune on a basically good person, and Aristotle's proposition that poetry is more philosophical than

history, since the former is more universal and treats of things that could be rather than merely those things that are.

Another Greek treatise of lasting influence is *On the Sublime*, which is attributed to Longinus (c. first century A. D.). Longinus goes beyond the discussion of mechanical correctness in writing to explore the “sublime,” the experience of delight and awe that overcomes a reader in the presence of genius. Thus Longinus gives its due to the emotional experience of literary beauty, which he illustrates with analyses of passages of Greek poetry and prose. After the publication of a French translation of Longinus’s work by Nicolas Despréaux-Boileau in the seventeenth century, the sublime became an important concept both in literary appreciation and in philosophy.

Perhaps the most influential work of ancient literary criticism is the *Ars poetica* of Horace, a verse letter addressed to two brothers named Piso. In this poem Horace sets out with wit and charms the rules for good poetry. That a poem must be a unified whole, its language appropriate to its theme, and its style suited to its subject matter are just a few of Horace’s rules that influenced later poets such as Alexander Pope. The influence of the *Ars poetica* can be seen in the many now-famous terms and phrases it contains: the “purple patch,” a phrase that is unnecessarily florid; *in medias res*, the need to start a story in the “middle” rather than all the way back at the beginning; “even Homer nods,” the acknowledgment that even a master will sometimes make a mistake; and most importantly, the idea that literature should “delight and instruct,” that is, please us aesthetically as well as provide philosophical or moral insight.

Unfortunately, we have only a small portion of all the literary scholarship that flourished in the ancient world. We can only imagine the value of lost works like Aristotle’s treatise on comedy, Eratosthenes’ work on the same subject, or the Epicurean Philodemus’s *On Poems*, to mention a few. And we should note as well the many scholars and grammarians who studied literary texts, most of whose work is lost or survives only in fragments. These scholars tried to establish correct texts, compiled bibliographies and dictionaries, produced commentaries on authors, and devised principles of interpretation. But enough ancient literary criticism and scholarship has survived to indicate that among

the ancients the study of literature and language was a complex and sophisticated discipline, one that set the terms for the subsequent study of literature in Western culture.

## **2.7 BULLETS TO REMEMBER**

### 1. Classics

- Language, literature, history, and civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome
- Moral, political, and social implications of literature
- Literature and classical studies also taught skills
- Oral literature and public experience

## 2. Epic

- Long narrative poem that focuses on a heroic figure or group
- Epic is about the cultural history of a nation or tribe
- Characteristics: author's invocation to the muse, the opening of the action in the middle of things (in medias res), and the long lists/catalogues of ships or armies
- Mostly written in hexameters
- Homer- Iliad and Odyssey
- Major themes included the story of Achilles' death, the Trojan horse, and the sack of Troy, among other adventures
- Virgil- Aeneid
- Ovid- Metamorphoses

## 3. Poetry

- Didactic poetry- poetry that teaches or prescribes
- Hesiod- Theogony
- Lyric poetry sung with the accompaniment of musical instrument lyre and is a short song
- Lyric was based on the personal experiences of the poet covering themes such as love, politics, war, friendship, drinking, and settling scores with enemies
- Monody meant solo performance of lyric (poets Alcaeus and Sappho)
- Choral songs were lyrics performed by a group of singers at a public ritual or celebration (poets Simonides and Pindar)
- Elegiac poetry used in funeral laments and epitaphs (poet Solon)
- Epigrams were written as inscriptions on tombs (poets Simonides, Asclepiades, Callimachus, and Theocritus)
- Epigrams were mostly anonymous and known for brevity and wit

## 4. Drama

- Athenian drama was mostly political
- Tragedy was performed at the City Dionysia in the spring
- Comedy was performed at the Lenaia in winter
- Tragedy writers (Aeschylus's Oresteia, Sophocles Oedipus Rex, Euripides)
- Comedy writers (Aristophanes Wealth and the Women at Assembly)

- New comedy (Grumpy Old Man and plays by Menander)

## 5. Literary Criticism

- Plato's mimesis- poetry creates imitations of situations and emotions
- Aristotle's Poetics- theory of literature especially drama- tragedy and related terms hubris, anagnorisis, hamartia, catharsis, peripetia
- Longinus- On the Sublime
- Horace -Ars Poetica

### **2.8 SUMMARY**

Dear learners this lesson magnifies the importance of reading classics in the whole gamut of production of large amount of literature in various periods. You have learnt how classical age its attributes and literature was holistic in its approach to not only portray but handle human life. The writings were an able guide to mark the way and answer right from wrong or even endow skill into a human being who savoured this literature. The lesson has helped you to not only enlist various genres and canonical authors but also relate their works to the age as well as your life as a human within the social boundaries and constructions.

### **2.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Which playwright was the chief exponent of Old Comedy in ancient Greece?

- (a) Aeschylus
- (b) Diogenes
- (c) Sophocles
- (d) Aristophanes**

2. Which playwright is best known for his play Oedipus the King?

- (a) Aristotle
- (b) Aristophanes
- (c) Sophocles**
- (d) Euripides

3. Who was the first of Classical Athens' great tragic dramatists?

- (a) Aeschylus**
- (b) Aristophanes
- (c) Euripides

(d) Sophocles

4. What ancient Greek poet is known chiefly by quotations in other authors' works?

(a) **Sappho**

(b) Homer

(c) Hesiod

(d) Pindar

5. Who wrote The Iliad and The Odyssey?

(a) Hesiod

(b) **Homer**

(c) Aristophanes

(d) Sophocles

6. Who was against mimesis?

(a) Aristotle

(b) Horace

(c) **Plato**

(d) Jung

## **2.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS**

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## **2.11 MODEL QUESTIONS**

1. What do you mean by classics?

2. Why is it important to read classics when we have our own contemporary literature?



3. Enlist and give examples of various kinds of poetry from Greek classical literature.
4. What is an epic? What are its constituents? Give to story of any one classical epic.
5. How was drama an important vehicle of political criticism and commentary in the classical times?
6. Throw light on literary criticism from the classical ages.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## SEMESTER-I

### COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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#### UNIT 3: ELIZABETHAN AGE: RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

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#### **STRUCTURE**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Renaissance
- 3.3 Reformation
- 3.4 Characteristics of the Age of Elizabeth or Age of Shakespeare
- 3.5 Literary Features of Elizabethan Age
- 3.6 Elizabethan Age in a Capsule
- 3.7 Bullets to Remember
- 3.8 Summary
- 3.9 Check Your Progress
- 3.10 References and Further Readings
- 3.11 Model Questions

#### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

**This lesson will help you to:**

- Enlist literary features of Elizabethan Age
- Describe the characteristics of the Elizabethan Period
- Discuss what is Renaissance and Reformation
- Illustrate examples of various genres
- Distinguish various kinds of poetry
- Appraise various classical masterpiece
- Arrange various writings in your learning chart and plan to read any text of the period.

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Dear learners, in this lesson we introduce you to the Elizabethan Age. The lesson aims to make you understand the definition of Renaissance and Reformation. This brief lesson has an objective to encourage our learners to study the literature of 45-year reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) and savour sonnets and drama that were the highlights of this period. It is important to note that at times the post Elizabethan Age including the reign of James I (Jacobean Era) is also counted as Elizabethan Age (1558-1616).

### **3.2 RENAISSANCE**

The English Renaissance was a cultural and artistic movement in England dating from the early 16th century to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is associated with the pan-European Renaissance that many cultural historians believe originated in northern Italy in the 14th century. This era in English cultural history is sometimes referred to as “the age of Shakespeare” or “The Elizabethan era.”

Thus, Renaissance is the period from approximately 1400 to 1650 when Western Europe underwent a series of radical changes in art, literature, religion, and politics. In the 19th century, under the influence of the historian Jacob Burckhardt’s *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), the era was regarded as one in which a miraculous “rebirth” took place. From Burckhardt’s perspective, it was a time when the religious trappings of the Middle Ages were discarded and “modern man” came into existence.

The term was first used to describe the rediscovery of the classics of Greece and Rome associated with the 15th-century movement known as Humanism. Humanist movement laid emphasis on individual as opposed to collective identity. One major evidence of the focus on individual and treating man as the crown of creation was the Protestant emphasis on the individual interpretation of the Bible. Apart from discoveries and inventions in the field of art, the discovery of perspective (the representation of three-dimensional objects on a flat surface), also led to an emphasis on the individual human form.

Apart from the quest of human body and mind all over Europe, people were writing courtesy books, which told people how to behave (etiquette). Civility was supposed to be the mark of the cultured man, who begins to be called a ‘gentleman.’ The gentleman was brave, interested in the arts, always courteous and graceful, knew Latin, and was a brilliant conversationalist. Thus, ‘Civility’, ‘courtesy’ and ‘manners’ were key words in Renaissance culture.

Man being the centre of creation or treated as important gave individualistic colour to the Renaissance times. It is important to note how in Europe, Martin Luther (1483–1546) and later John Calvin (1509–64) led a Reformation of Christianity. The individual’s experience of faith and God became more important than the church’s rituals or priests’ role. Next Christopher Columbus’ discovery of America marked an important change in European life. More commercial transactions across the seas began. Travellers sent back reports of the new

sights they saw and the new people they met. Europe's idea of the world changed drastically because it came in contact with other cultures and new ways of thinking.

The Renaissance rejected religious and superstitious beliefs in favour of actual scientific experiments and logical/rational thinking. In 1543, Copernicus argued that the sun is at the centre of the universe as opposed to the Ptolemaic theory which argued that the earth is at the centre of the universe: a theory endorsed by the church. This meant that the earth was not the most important unit of the universe. Discoveries of planets and heavenly bodies by Kepler and Galileo changed European visions of creation. Astronomical images fill John Donne's metaphysical poetry, for instance. Francis Bacon encouraged experiments in science. Rene Descartes explored the forms and processes of human thinking.

To sum up Renaissance meant 'rebirth,' its major implications were new discoveries and inventions, quest for knowledge, civility, travel and new world, new religion, individualism, and human as the most important being on earth.

### **3.3 REFORMATION**

Reformation was the 16th-century religious movement that rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Its religious consequences, the establishment of Protestantism, led to a series of important political and social changes in the history of England. In 1517 Martin Luther, protesting against the unprincipled and flippant practices that were disgracing religion, began the breach between Catholicism, with its insistence on the supremacy of the Church, and Protestantism, asserting the independence of the individual judgment. In England Luther's action revived the spirit of Lollardism, which had nearly been crushed out, and in spite of a minority devoted to the older system, the nation as a whole began to move rapidly toward change. Advocates of radical revolution thrust themselves forward in large numbers, while cultured and thoughtful men, including the Oxford Group, indulged the too ideal hope of a gradual and peaceful reform.

Drawing upon the Reformation Movement in Europe, monasteries were dissolved and traditional religious communities were destroyed. With this, England moved away from Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. This meant that all the tenets of the Catholic Church were rejected. Reformation also meant that the King of England was all-powerful. Dissent was often brutally suppressed. As a result, the literature of the time, from early Tudor to Jacobean, often reflected the elite opinions of the members of the court. This also led to the Bible becoming a common text in the hands of the people to read in the vernaculars to directly communicate with the God. The consequences produced by the conjunction of the Renaissance and the Reformation resulted in the growth of a new spirit of nationalism, repudiation of Pan-European Papal authority, the growth and development of national languages, and ultimately the growth and development of Puritanism. Puritanism which came to England at a later date implied a strict ethical life in conformity with the teachings of the Bible; and the theology of Puritans was mainly derived from the philosophy of John Calvin (1509-64) known as Calvinism.

### **3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE OF ELIZABETH OR AGE OF SHAKESPEARE**

1. **Political Peace and Stability:** Elizabeth was a wise and sagacious Queen who followed the policy of balance and moderation both inside and outside the country. A working compromise was reached with Scotland and the rebellious Northern barons were kept in check. So, she could successfully establish peace in the traditionally disturbed border areas.
2. **Social Contentment:** Increasing trade and commerce enriched England, and for the first time, systematic care was taken of the poor and the needy. The wealthy were taxed to support the poor or to give them employment. Social contentment and the improvement in living greatly contributed to the development of literary activity.
3. **Religious Tolerance:** The Queen, who followed a wise policy of moderation and compromise, affected religious tolerance and peace. Upon her accession she found the whole nation divided against itself. The North was largely Catholic, and the South was strongly Protestant. Scotland followed the Reformation intensely, and Ireland zealously pursued its old religious traditions. Elizabeth favoured both religious parties and the Catholics and the Protestants acted together as followers of the Queen. People were granted full religious freedom. Anglicanism was a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism, and the Queen made Anglican church a reality in England. Further, the defeat of Spanish Armada established Reformation in England.
4. **The Queen's Popularity and the Upsurge of Patriotism:** Elizabeth loved England ardently and made her court one of the most brilliant courts in Europe. The splendour of her court dazzled the eyes of the people, and combined with her policies did much to increase her popularity and prestige. Worshipping the Queen became the order of the day. She was Spenser's Gloriana, Releigh's Cynthia, and Shakespeare's "fair vestal throned by the West."
5. **Expansion:** In English history this is the most remarkable period for the expansion of both mental and geographical horizons. It was an age of great thought and great action, an age which appeals to the eye, imagination and the intellect. New knowledge was pouring in from all the directions. The great voyagers Hawkins, Forbisher, Raleigh and Drake brought home both material and intellectual treasures from the East and the West. Renaissance and its spirit of adventure and exploration fired the imagination of writers. The spirit of action and adventure paved the way for the unusual development of dramatic literature. There was a great liberty given to men to live and do as they pleased, provided the queen was worshipped and there was no conspiracy against the state. In this age anything and everything was tried, especially the drama.
6. **Foreign Travels and Fashions:** Italy the home of Renaissance fascinated the Elizabethans. All liked to visit Italy and stay there for some time. People were fond not only of Italian

books and literature, but also of Italian morals and manners. The Elizabethan literature was immensely influenced by contemporary Italian literary activities.

7. **Backwardness of the Age:** It was an age of great diversity and contradictions. It was an age of light and darkness, the age of reason and unreason, the age of wisdom and the age of foolishness, the age of hope and of despair. The barbarity and backwardness, the ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages still persisted. Disorder, violence, bloodshed and tavern brawls still prevailed. The barbarity of the age is seen in such brutal sports as bear baiting, cock fighting and bull fighting, to which numerous references are found in the plays of Shakespeare. Despite the advance of science and learning people still believed in superstitions, ghosts, witches, fairies, charms and omens of all sorts. Supernaturalism was thus an important feature of Shakespearean drama.

### **3.5 LITERARY FEATURES OF ELIZABETHAN AGE**

1. **The New Classicism:** By the time of Elizabeth the Renaissance, as it was called, had made itself strongly felt in England. In particular, there was an ardent revival in the study of Greek. The new passion for classical learning, in itself a rich and worthy enthusiasm, became quite a danger to the language. In all branches of literature Greek and Latin usages began to force themselves upon English. The new classical influences were a great benefit: they tempered and polished the earlier rudeness of English literature.
2. **Abundance of Output:** The interest shown in literary subjects encouraged a healthy production. Pamphlets and treatises were freely written: the topics were either of a personal and scurrilous character or related to literary questions that became almost of national importance. Books played a central role in the rise and spread of humanistic thought during the Renaissance, especially with the reprinting of Greek and Latin texts on politics, philosophy and ethics and rhetoric. Printing thus helped disperse a wide variety of ideas and was a crucial factor in the 'evolution' of the Renaissance in Elizabethan Age.
3. **The New Romanticism:** The romantic quest is for the remote, the wonderful, and the beautiful. In the Elizabethan age there was a daring and resolute spirit of adventure in literary as well as in other regions; and there was an unmistakable buoyancy and freshness in the strong wind of the Renaissance spirit. Elizabeth Age idealized the women; love and loss were the major themes in the literature of the period.<
4. **The Drama:** The bold and critical attitude of the time was in keeping with the dramatic instinct, which is analytic and observant. The actors themselves were at variance, so much so that outrageous brawls were frequent. On more than one occasion between 1590 and 1593 the theatres were closed owing to disturbances caused by the actors. In 1594 the problem was solved by the licensing of two troupes of players, the Lord Chamberlain's (among who was Shakespeare) and the Lord Admiral's. Another early difficulty the drama had to face was its fondness for taking part in the quarrels of the

time, for example, in the burning ‘Marprelate’ controversy. Owing to this meddling the theatres were closed in 1589. Already, also, a considerable amount of Puritanical opposition was declaring itself. In spite of such early difficulties, the drama reached the splendid consummation of Shakespeare’s art; but before the period closed decline was apparent.

5. Poetry: Though the poetical production was not quite equal to the dramatic, it was nevertheless of great and original beauty. As can be observed from the disputes of the time, the passion for poetry was absorbing, and the outcome of it was equal to expectation.
6. Prose: For the first time prose rises to a position of first-rate importance. The dead weight of the Latin tradition was passing away and English prose was acquiring a tradition and a universal application.
7. Scottish Literature: A curious minor feature of the age was the disappearance of Scottish literature after its brief but remarkable appearance in the previous age. At this point it took to ground, and did not reappear till late in the eighteenth century.

### **3.6 ELIZABETHAN AGE IN A CAPSULE**

The literature of the 45-year reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) is largely known as Elizabethan Age and encompasses of two literary periods: the end of the Early Tudor era in the 1560s and the Elizabethan Age. Though the term Elizabethan involves literary activity up to the death of Shakespeare (1616), but the latter part of Shakespeare’s career properly belongs to the Jacobean era.

Elizabethan literature is characterized by an intense national pride and a sense of optimism expressed in rich and ornate language. England during this time was isolated from the rest of Europe even as it set about creating an individual identity for itself, especially under Elizabeth I. This took the form of elaborate ideas of ‘Englishness,’ the creation of a whole new iconography, mapping, civic rituals and the beginnings of overseas exploration. Reigning for about 45 years, Elizabeth I gave stability to England. After the 1588 victory over the Spanish fleet (known in history as the Spanish Armada), England became the most powerful force on the seas and her navy began travelling and conquering huge areas of the globe. With the extensive use of improved magnetic compasses, the astrolabe and maps, sailors could travel further into the unknown and eventually made the Renaissance the great age of exploration and travel.

It was a period of linguistic experimentation and discovery, reflected in the magisterial **prose** of Richard Hooker’s *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594) and the mannered experiments of John Lyly’s euphuism on account of Renaissance. After Reformation in 1611, also came the Authorized Version of Bible as a work done by 47 scholars nominated by James I as a religious prose. Sidney is responsible for *An Apologie for*

Poetrie (1595), a defence of literature from Puritan attack and an early example of literary criticism in English. In this light Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579), William Webb's *Discourse of English Poetry* (1586), and George Rutenham's *Art of Poesie* (1589) were other remarkable works in the field of literary criticism. Character writing was another form of prose at this time which focussed on the virtues and vices of the individuals. The famous character writings were by Thomas Dekker (*Bellman of London* 1608 and *A Strange Horse-Race* 1613), Joseph Hall (*Virtues and Vices*), and George Herbert (*A Priest to the Temple*). Sir Francis Bacon who wrote both in Latin and English was famous for writing essays, scientific and philosophical prose (*The Advancement of Learning* 1605), historical prose (*History of Henry VII* 1622). The prose romances were developed during this period which later anticipated novel in the eighteenth century. Bacon (*The New Atlantis* 1626 that remained unfinished), George Gascoigne (*The Adventures of Master F. J.* 1573), John Lyly (*Euphues the Anatomy of Wit* 1578 and *Euphues and His England* 1580), Sir Philip Sidney (*Arcadia* 1590), Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe were famous prose romance writers of the time.

This Age was more popular because of its **drama**. Among the early Elizabethans the outstanding playwrights are Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, John Lyly, George Pele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge and Thomas Lodge who were called as University Wits. Marlowe, who died at age 29, produced two of the greatest plays in the language, *Doctor Faustus* (1588-92) and *Edward II* (1592-93). Kyd wrote *The Spanish Tragedy* (1578), a very successful tragedy of revenge and a play. Among the later Elizabethans, the works of Thomas Dekker (*The Shoemaker's Holiday*, 1599), George Chapman (*Bussy D'Ambois*, 1603), and Thomas Heywood (*A Woman Killed with Kindness*, 1603) are notable. Following earlier Elizabethan plays such as *Gorboduc* by Sackville & Norton and *The Spanish Tragedy* by Kyd provided much material for *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare. Though most dramas met with great success, it is in his later years (marked by the early reign of James I) that he wrote his greatest plays: *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Tempest*, a tragicomedy that inscribes within the main drama a brilliant pageant to the new king. This 'play within a play' takes the form of a masque, an interlude with music and dance coloured by the novel special effects of the new indoor theatres. William Shakespeare had written 37 plays in all out of which one was a fragment. Post Shakespearean drama we witness another new kind of drama *The Comedy of Humours* by Ben Jonson that was based on the four humours in medieval medicine and their respective proportion in human body according to which a character's temperament, complexion or constitution was decided. Ben Jonson came out with his first plays *The Case is Altered* and *Every Man in His Humour* in 1598. His later comedies were *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), *Volpone* (1605), *Epicone* (1609), and *The Alchemist* (1610). In the later part of the period John Webster was famous for his revenge-horror tradition and wrote his best tragedies *The White Devil* (1609-12) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613-14).

Shakespeare also popularized the English sonnet (a poem of 14 lines) which made significant changes to Petrarch's model of writing sonnet **poetry**. In 1609 his collection of 154 sonnets was published. The sonnet was introduced into English by Italian sonneteers



Thomas Wyatt and Surrey in the early 16th century. Variety of poetical forms- lyrics, elegy, eclogue, ode, sonnet, madrigal etc. were written successfully in this age. The period was marked by love poetry (Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Spenser's *Amoretti*, Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonais*), patriotic poems (Warner's *Abbion's England*, Daniel's *Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*, Drayton's *The Barons War* and the *Ballad of Agincourt*), philosophical poetry (Brooke's poems on *Human Learning*, *On Wars*, *On Monarchy* and *On Religion*) and satirical poems (John Donne's *Satires* and Drummond's *Sonnets*). In poetry the age witnessed the epic achievement of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) and the flowering of the Elizabethan sonnet, particularly those written by Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, and Shakespeare. Elizabeth herself, a product of Renaissance humanism, produced occasional poems such as *On Monsieur's Departure*.

The death of the 70-year-old queen in 1603 ushered in a new royal family, the Stuarts, a new century, and a new tone in literature. James I ruled over England and the period was known as Jacobean Period that is sometimes marked as the later part of Elizabethan Age. After the Queen's death the earlier ardour and easy enjoyment of colours and words was on the decline. Under the reign of James I life's gaiety was lost and sadness began to prevail and ushered in an era of more serious literature that was self-conscious, moral or religious without any light hearted joy.

### **3.7 BULLETS TO REMEMBER**

#### 1. Renaissance Elizabethan Poetry

- Idealization of women
- Classical allusions and European Renaissance references
- Individualist, but with some contemporary themes
- Upper-class, elite and aristocratic in tone and style
- Love and loss are the central themes
- The focus is almost entirely on the emotional state of the speaker in the poem
- In the love lyric, the melancholic lover pleads for his mistress' attention and the poem takes the form of a complaint about his lady's indifference or cruelty
- The lady is often portrayed as fickle and this fickleness is the cause of the gentleman's pain
- Constant merging of the poet and lover and the invocation of a close link between the poet's mood and the seasons
- Elizabethan poets, while continuing to be under the influence of Homer,
- 'Time' both past and present was a constant theme
- Mutability, transience and change become central concerns
- Many poets made use of religious allegory

- The use of myth to express contemporary political concerns was common (the most famous poem of this category being Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*)
- Metaphysical poetry used unusual logic and images which were exaggerated and not always easy to understand mixing wit and seriousness
- The metaphors were strange and artificial, and were called 'conceits'
- Metaphysical poetry combines both great religious fervour and human love/sensuality (e.g John Donne)
- The use of irony and paradox, which makes it difficult to decide whether the poet is being serious or casual

## 2. Elizabethan Non-Fiction

- Used the pamphlet form
- Polemical and political in theme
- Instructional pamphlets and courtesy books on etiquette and morals were a common form
- Also discussed social issues such as the suitability of the forms of entertainment and morality on the stage
- Several of the pamphlets were satiric in tone
- Religious writing, works of criticism and rhetoric appeared in large numbers

## 3. Fiction of the Age

- Love, marriage and courtship remained the main themes in fiction
- There were many satires on London life, its corruption, moral depravity and lack of faith
- There was a variety of romances: pastoral, courtly, middle-class, etc.
- In some cases, the fiction dealt with lower and working class life. Every day, working-class language and speech were used in several novels
- The trickster or the cheat was a central figure
- Themes of honour and chivalry, courage and fidelity were important
- Genres included love and romance tales, adventure, courtly fiction and what may be called 'intrigues.'

## 4. Elizabethan Drama

- The comedies used Italian or Latin comedies as source
- Comedies were often romances or congratulatory works in praise of a patron or monarch

- Love and its tribulations were the main theme, as seen in Shakespeare's comedies
- History plays and chronicles were common
- Tragedy used Seneca as a model
- Tragedies were melodramatic, full of emotional speeches and scenes, and used a great deal of stage spectacles
- Tragedies were concerned with the darker side of human characters: immorality, greed and cruelty. They also touched upon the melancholic aspect of human life (a theme shared with Jacobean drama)
- Politics and history interested almost all the playwrights.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

Dear Learners keep in mind the approximate timelines: Elizabethan Age 1558-1616, Renaissance 1400-1650, and Reformation 16<sup>th</sup> century. Elizabethan Age was also known as the Age of Shakespeare or even the golden age of literature that extends from the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 to the death of James I in 1625. Renaissance and Reformation were important movements of this age. It was an era of peace, of economic prosperity, of stability, of liberty, and of great explorations. The lesson also explains how it was an age of contemplation and action, an era which led to the efflorescence of various genres of literature, especially poetry and drama.

### **3.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Elizabethan Era is named after?
  - (a) Elizabeth Taylor
  - (b) Queen Elizabeth I**
  - (c) Elizabeth Arden
  - (d) Elizabeth Barrett Browning
2. Which famous writer from the Elizabethan Era is considered by many to be the greatest writer of the English language?
  - (a) Christopher Marlowe
  - (b) Thomas Kyd**
  - (c) Chaucer
  - (d) William Shakespeare**
3. What pair of author wrote the first English tragedy Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex?
  - (a) Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton**
  - (b) Thomas Sackville and Nicholas Udall

- (c) Nicholas Udall and Thomas Norton
- (d) Thomas Sackville and John Heywood

4. Sonnet is a poem of how many lines?

- (a) 10
- (b) 12
- (c) 10 and a half
- (d) **14**

5. Which Period in the history of English Literature is known as the “Golden Age of English Poetry”?

- (a) Jacobean Period
- (b) Anglo Saxon Period
- (c) **Elizabethan Period**
- (d) Victorian Period

6. The victory of which fleet in 1558 made England powerful?

- (a) **Spanish Armada**
- (b) Tirpitz
- (c) Titanic
- (d) Suez fleet

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### **3.11 MODEL QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand by Reformation?
2. Give a brief of Elizabethan period pointing out the major characteristics of literature of this period and important works.
3. What do you understand by the 'Revival of Learning'? Discuss in the light of Elizabethan age.
4. Write an essay on the influence of Humanism on English literature.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## SEMESTER-I

### COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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#### UNIT 4: THE NEOCLASSICAL AGE

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##### **STRUCTURE**

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 The Enlightenment

4.3 Augustan Age/ Age of Enlightenment/ Long Eighteenth Century/ Age of Sensibility/ Neo Classical Age

4.4 Historical Background and Characteristics of the Age

4.5 Literary Characteristics of the Age

4.6 Neo-Classical Age in a Capsule

4.7 Bullets to Remember

4.8 Summary

4.9 Check Your Progress

4.10 References and Further Readings

4.11 Model Questions

##### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

This lesson will help you to:

- Enlist characteristics and literary features of the Neo-Classical Age
- Describe Neo-classical
- Discuss what is Enlightenment
- Illustrate examples of various genres
- Appraise the prose writing of the period
- Arrange various writings in your learning chart and plan to read any text of the period

## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Dear learners, in this lesson we introduce you to the literature of the post-1700 period. It marks the departure from the Restoration period of 1660-1700 which embodied many of the intellectual concerns of the Enlightenment. Hence, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Augustan Age or the Neo-Classical period (1700-1750) was marked by reason, rationality, empiricism, and scientism which informed the thinking of many authors of the time. It is also famously called as 'Age of Pope' since Alexander Pope was a famous author who wrote in this age.

## **4.2 THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

The Enlightenment refers to the rise and growth of modern rational and scientific thought in Europe from the last years of the 17th century through the 18th century. It was marked by a rigorous mathematical and scientific approach. Experimentation and logic were revered. The discovery of other worlds and races helped Europe to rationalize and classify human beings along a scale. This led to the rise of ethnography as the study of the earth and its people. The knowledge was largely organized and classified.

## **4.3 AUGUSTAN AGE/ AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT/ LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY/ AGE OF SENSIBILITY/ NEO-CLASSICAL AGE**

'Augustan' was a term derived from the name of the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BC-14 AD). In the Roman age, it marked the flourishing of literature and poetry, with the three great Roman writers: Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. The term is also used to describe the early to mid-18th century in English literature, when writers like Addison, Pope, Swift and Steele imitated the works of the Roman writers. Further, the term 'Age of Enlightenment' indicates the intellectual changes that mark this period. The rise of rationalism is the key feature of the Enlightenment. In this age everything from plants to words was tabulated, organized and classified hence it is often called as the 'long eighteenth century.' This is the period of the dictionary, the encyclopaedia and other such classificatory systems which sought to provide models and paradigms for knowledge.

The term 'Age of Sensibility' gestures at the renewed interest in the senses, and the tensions that characterize debates about the supremacy of reason versus the primacy of 'feeling.'

'Neoclassical' is used to describe this period because many of the writers and artists had an interest in the classical Greek, Roman and Latin literatures and arts. The revival of 'classical' forms of art is termed 'neoclassical.' John Milton, Ben Jonson and Francis Bacon in England and Jean Racine in France were admirers of classical art. An interest in the classical ages and ancient civilizations was revived with the archaeological re-discovery of the Pompeii ruins. During the post-Restoration period, figures such as Dryden and Pope also sought models in Homer and adapted ideas about art from Plato, Aristotle, Horace and Cicero. Pope's famous Essay on Criticism revived neo-classical principles of clarity, order and logic, harmony, control and decorum (which often meant a proper choice of subject

matter). The emphasis was more on pragmatism and reason than on the emotions and was clearly a reaction against the exuberance of the Renaissance humanist view of man. The Augustan age, with its emphasis on form (a feature of ancient art), is thus known as the Neoclassical Age. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a revival of interest in classical authors with Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot.

#### **4.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE**

1. **The Rise of the Political Parties:** In the reign of Charles II the two different parties ‘Whig’ and ‘Tory’ came to emerge into the domestic political scene. The Whig party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom as opposed to the Tory view of royal divine right. Hence the Whigs supported the Hanoverian succession, whereas the Tories were Jacobites. The Tories, whose numbers were recruited chiefly from the landed classes, objected to the foreign war upon the score that they had to pay taxes to prolong it; and the Whigs, representing the trading classes generally, were alleged to be anxious to continue the war, as it brought them increased prosperity. In the matter of religion the Whigs were Low
2. **Churchmen and the Tories were High Churchmen.** In order to propagate their ideologies and programs both the political parties used the services of authors and bribed them. Literature in this period was not honoured for itself but for the sake of party. This led to emergence of lot of political pamphleteering and periodicals that became the mouthpieces of their political opinions.
3. **The Foreign War:** The War of the Spanish Succession was successful under the leadership of Marlborough, who besides being a great general was a prominent Tory politician. The Tories, as the war seemed to be indefinitely prolonged, supplanted (1710) the Whigs, with whom they had been cooperating in the earlier stages of the war, and in 1713 they concluded the war by the unfortunate Treaty of Utrecht. Contemporary literature is much concerned both with the war and the peace.
4. **The Succession:** When Anne ascended the throne the succession seemed to be safe enough, for she had a numerous family. Nevertheless, her children all died before her and in 1701 it became necessary to pass the Act of Settlement, a Whig measure by which the succession was settled upon the House of Hanover. On the death of Anne, in the year 1714, the succession took effect, in spite of the efforts of the Tories, who were anxious to restore the Stuarts. The events of this year 1714 deeply influenced the lives of Addison, Steele, Swift, and many other writers.
5. **The Spirit of the Age.** After the succession of the House of Hanover the first half of the eighteenth century was a period of stabilization and steadily growing wealth and prosperity. The evils of the approaching Industrial Revolution had not yet been realized, and the country was still free from any kind of class consciousness. It was an age of tolerance, moderation, and common sense, which, in cultured circles at least, sought to refine manners and introduce into life the rule of sweet reasonableness. The Established



Church pursued a placid middle way and all religion was free from strife over dogma and the fanaticism which it called 'enthusiasm' until Wesley and Whitefield began the Evangelical Revival. This middle way of control and reason, and the distrust of 'enthusiasm,' are faithfully reflected in the literature of the period.

6. Clubs and Coffee Houses: People began to take great interest in political activity. So, there was a great addition to the number of political clubs and coffee houses, which became the centres of fashionable and public life. These coffee houses were entirely dominated by the party and a Tory would never go to a Whig coffee house and vice versa. The coffee house gave rise to purely literary associations, such as the famous Scriblers and kit-cat clubs. The Tatler by Steele was a Journal that was based upon the clubs, accounts of Gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment. This was another impact that the good manners and "good form" came to be highly valued. Thus, urbanity, polish, refinement, elegance, lucidity and matter-of-factness became the well-recognised qualities of style both in prose and poetry in this period.
7. The New Publishing Houses: The rising interest in politics coupled with the decline of drama, resulted in a remarkable increase in the size of the reading public. Consequently, a large number of men took interest in publishing translations, adaptations and other popular works of the time. They opened their publishing houses and employed cheap writers of the period, who lived in miserably in Grub Street.
8. Rise of the Middle Class and the New Morality: It was a period of comfortable aristocratic rule in which the middle classes, especially the rich merchant cooperated with the aristocratic rulers. The predominance of the middle class made it an age of tolerance, moderation and common sense. The Church also pursued middle way and the religious life was free from strife and fanaticism. The middle class thus lived in a moralizing atmosphere even if not totally unblemished in order to be at peace with conscience and feel secure from divine retribution.

#### **4.5 LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE**

1. An Age of Prose and Reason: The new social and political conditions demanded expression not simply in books, but especially in pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers. Poetry was inadequate for such a task still it was used to meet the same end and had become prosaic just like the prose. Eighteenth century celebrated the terse vigour of Swift's satires, artistic finish of Fielding's novels, sonorous eloquence of Gibbon's history and Burke's oration. The poetry of the first half, as represented by the work of Pope was polished and witty but lacked fire, fine feeling, enthusiasm and imaginative appeal. The poetry in this period was surely a study of life but failed to delight or inspire. Matthew Arnold called eighteenth century as "an age of prose."

2. Satire: Nearly every writer of the first half of the eighteenth century was used and rewarded by Whigs or Tories for satirising their enemies and for advancing their special political interests. Satire is a literary work which searches out the faults of men or institutions in order to hold them up to ridicule is at best a destructive kind of criticism. The satires of Pope, Swift and Addison were doubtlessly the best in English language.
3. The Classic Age: The Age of Pope is often named the Classic Age or Neo-Classical Age. The writers of this age regarded the old English authors with contempt and indifference. These writers claimed the formal classical qualities of moderation, tolerance, and good sense. They were guided by reason, good sense and wit and wanted order and balance, every kind of excess and irregularity was abhorrent to them.
4. Literature of the Town: The literature of this period is based on town and the fashionable upper circles of the city of London. Almost all the authors deal with urban themes and were urban in outlook and temperament and had shown interest in the middle class.

#### **4.6 NEO-CLASSICAL AGE IN A CAPSULE**

The period between 1660 and 1780 is known variously as the Age of Enlightenment, the Age of Sensibility, the Neoclassical Age, the Augustan Age or the 'long eighteenth century.' After the Civil War and the Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, an event commonly known as the 'Restoration,' England sought stability in society, politics, and religion. Early victories in the Anglo-Dutch wars (1665-67) were later negated by heavy losses. Peace was restored after King Charles signed the Treaty of Breda (1667). The Parliamentary system was now in place and two parties, the Tories and the Whigs, emerged. In 1688, James II was replaced by William of Orange in a coup that was almost entirely peaceful and is known in history as 'the Glorious Revolution' or 'Bloodless Revolution.' Commerce became even more important during the period and it was greatly facilitated by the founding of the Bank of England in 1694.

In terms of intellectual contexts, 'reason' and 'rationality' replaced speculation and abstract reasoning. The age rejected a mere passive acceptance of handed-down truths, preferring empirically verifiable and studied ideas. The founding of the Royal Society of London in 1662-63 marked the start of a scientific enterprise that facilitated the rise of an Enlightenment sensibility in England. The Society was a step in the institutionalization of scientific enquiry and was frequented by scientists and natural philosophers. The increasing use of the telescope and microscope revealed worlds too distant and/or too small to be seen by the naked eye. Further, travellers' accounts from their journeys to various parts of the world proved that there were other people, cultures and civilizations (Jonathan Swift's 1726 novel Gulliver's Travels is a mocking account of such journeys to different parts of the earth). A new theory of the cosmos and a new vision of the world had to be created. The

'Plurality of Worlds' theory, propagated by Giordano Bruno (for which he was eventually burnt at the stake as a heretic), proposed that there are several worlds other than the earth. Fontenelle's *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686), originally in French, was translated and became very popular. England entered the slave trade in 1660, though Portugal and Spain had indulged in it for a long time. Other people and races began to be seen as primitives and, therefore, suitable to be slaves to the superior European races. The 18th century is actually the period of the founding of European colonialism in Asian and South American countries. In India, with the Battle of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764), the English East India Company would establish itself as a 'political' power.

The Act of Union in 1707 joined Scotland to England and Wales. Minor resistance to the Hanoverian dynasty came in the form of James II's grandson: Bonnie Prince Charlie. Called the 'Young Pretender', Bonnie Prince Charlie led the rebellion against the Hanoverians in 1745. In the Battle of Culloden (1746), he was defeated, thus marking the end of Stuart attempts to regain the throne of England. However, 'revolution' continued to trouble the British imagination in the form of the American Revolution of 1776 and the French one of 1789. Other disturbances that shook the country's peace during the period included the two Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, the 'Porteous Riots' of 1736 in Edinburgh and the Gordon Riots of 1780 in London. These disturbances indicated public anger at London's governance and authoritarianism. It also gestured at the Scottish dissatisfaction with England's regime (England feared that the Scots would take French help to rebel against England). Thus the 18th century, in the aftermath of the Restoration and the Bloodless Revolution, was not really a peaceful period. The mass of the people remained unmoved by London's attempts to impose social order. Rapid changes in urban life upset established rhythms and caused anxiety.

London became the centre of England, as commercial enterprises, banking and the arts began to be concentrated in the city. The result was a large-scale migration of job-seekers and workers from country to city. William Hogarth (1697-1764) captured some of the frightening and ugly aspects of London's city life - especially its suffering, poverty, cruelty and hypocrisy - in paintings like 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane.' Hogarth's work best illustrates the disrupted social order of the age. The coffee house culture, for which the period is famous, took culture out of drawing rooms and into the streets. Men - they were invariably men - sipped coffee and discussed current events, politics and literature. These meetings eventually resulted in long-lasting and influential relationships and friendships in English literature.

There was a pronounced enthusiasm for Greek and Latin literature as evidenced by the numerous translations, and this interest gives the age its name 'Neoclassical.' It is significant that many 17th century authors like Isaac Newton wrote in Latin - the language of respectability and erudition. Literary figures like Alexander Pope turned to Greek and Latin texts, translating and adapting them into English. The publication of an *Essay on Criticism* and his mock-heroic **poetry** *The Rape of the Lock* stormed him into popularity. Pope used heroic couplets that consisted of two iambic pentameters (lines of ten syllables) rhyming

together. It was called heroic as it was used to write epic verse that celebrated heroic feats. Pope made an innovation in the heroic couplet by introducing a pause at the end of every line to complete the sense at the end of the couplet. The poets usually looked the world in a hierarchy of 'The Great Chain of Being.' Matthew Prior, John Gay, Edward Young and Samuel Garth were some other poets of the time who wrote in artificial and conventional style.

The Age of Pope was also known as the Age of **Prose**. Dryden was the first great pioneer of modern prose who wrote *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*. Daniel Defoe was born a journalist and pamphleteer who was moral and social reformer of his age. He was a great pioneer of the periodical essay and influences *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Jonathan Swift was known for *The Journal of Stella* and his *Drapier's Letters* (1724). His prose satires *The Battle of Books* (1704) and *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) were the finest in English Literature. Their style was terse, lucid, simple, direct, vigorous, and suggestive. Sir Richard Steele founded *The Tatler* on April 12, 1709 which was inspired by Defoe's *The Review*. *The Tatler* appeared three times a week and Steele wrote under the pseudonym of Bikerstaff. The general purpose of this paper was to expose the false arts of life, pulling off the disguises of cunningness, vanity, and affectations and recommend general simplicity in dress, discourse, and behaviour. Joseph Addison contributed to the periodical *The Spectator* that he founded in collaboration with Sir Richard Steele.

*The Spectator* was called as the forerunner of **novel**. There was no novelist in the Age of Pope. Richardson, Smollet, Sterne, and Fielding were known as the four wheels of novel who were in their infancy. *The Spectator* contained all the elements of social comedy except a harmonious plot. The material for the novels of manner or the social comedy was found in *The Coverly Papers*. These events were more casual and of every day. Both Addison and Steele had shown their sense of characterization in *The Spectator*, which is essential for novel writing. The characters were named and individualised. The character of Sir Roger is both type and an individual. Will Honeycomb was a middle-aged beau, Sir Andrew Freeport a city merchant, Captain Sentry a soldier, and Mr. Spectator a shy, reticent person who resembled to Addison himself. This prose exposed both the minor and the major lapses in the English society of that time with a view to reform it. Daniel Defoe was another author who in his later part of life wrote fiction. His works were called as fictitious biographies. His fictional works include *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of Plague Year* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724). Swift came out with his famous satire in form of allegory with his work *Gulliver's Travels*. The voyage to Lilliput and Brobdingnag satirised the politics and manners of England and Europe, that to Laputa mocked the philosophers, and the last country of Houyhnhnms defiled and satirised the whole human race.

The production of **drama** in this age was almost nil. Addison's *Cato* was the only noteworthy work in form of tragedy. Steele's *The Constant Lover* was comedy that didn't amuse but preaches. So he became the founder of highly genteel, didactic and vapid kind of play known as *Sentimental Comedy* which became popular in the Age of Johnson which

marked the transition to the Romantic Age in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. George Lillo wrote domestic dramas like *London Merchant* and *Fatal Curiosity*.

Class consciousness was very strong. This is the age when sensibility and taste become key words. Taste, the age believed could not be acquired and was something obtained by virtue of birth in the correct family or class. Men were ‘gentlemen’ and women, ‘ladies’ because of their class and taste. The very idea of a ‘gentleman’ gets further established during the Augustan age and the long 18th century. Hence, manners and mannerisms and the appropriate taste in the arts were central to social status in 18th century English society.

The neoclassical reverence for classical texts established the “Ancients” as the norms against which all other writing was to be tested. Among classical authors, none wielded greater authority than Aristotle. Neoclassical critics transformed Aristotle’s observations on Greek tragedy into prescriptions for all plays, and his comments on unity of action into rules governing the ‘unities,’ which all plays were exhorted to imitate. Despite the rigidity of this format, French drama flourished during this period, which saw the great tragedies of Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine and the comic masterpieces of Jean-Baptiste Molière.

Age of Johnson or Transitional Age (1750-1798) is also counted under the Neo-Classical Age according to some historians. This Age ends with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. This Age was marked by the end of rivalry between the Whigs and Tories and the hence there was a decline in political pamphleteering and satires. The French Revolution of 1798 led to the birth of revolutionary ideas of democracy, equality, and fraternity. Another Renaissance came to this age with re-reading of old English authors especially the genre of ballads. Apart from the Augustan poets Samuel Johnson and Churchill we find poets returning to nature, revolting against the conventional literary techniques and writing about death and melancholy. This gave rise to Graveyard poetry and Scottish **poetry**. James Thomson wrote *The Castle of Indolence*, Oliver Goldsmith came up with *The Traveller* and *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*, Thomas Gray’s *The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* was quite popular, William Collins penned *Oriental Eclogues* and *Ode to the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands*, William Cowper wrote *Table Talk* and George Crabbe came up with poetical works *The Library*, and *The Village*. Robert Burns and William Blake are early representatives of Romantic Age. Burns famous poems are *The Cotter’s Saturday Night* and *Tam O’ Shanter* and Blake wrote *Poetical Sketches* and *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*.

This age also had remarkable development of **prose**. Dr. Johnson worked on *Dictionary of the English Language* and wrote *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, a philosophical novel in 1759. Oliver Goldsmith wrote essays *On the English Clergy* and *The Popular Preachers*. Edward Gibbon who wrote *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) was the greatest historian of the time. David Hume’s *History of England* in 6 volumes appeared between 1754-1761. The age was also marked by philosophical writings by Edmund Burke who wrote *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) and *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). Adam Smith wrote

The Wealth of Nations (1776) a fine work on history of economics and William Godwin wrote Political Justice and expressed revolutionary ideas.

The new prose style, spread of education, democratic movement, decline of drama and new reading public led to the rise of the **novel**. Samuel Richardson wrote his first novel Pamela (1740-41) in form of letters called as epistolary novel. Henry Fielding another from the four wheels of the novel wrote Joseph Andrews (1742), Tom Jones and Amelia. He was the first novelist who formulated the theory of novel in the prefaces of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. Tobias Smollet was a novelist of sea and sailors. His novels were called as episodic or panoramic as they were different strings of adventures attached together e.g. The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748) and The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1750). He picaresque tradition was influenced by Le Sage's Gil Blas. Laurence Sterne became famous for his The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1760) and A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy (1768). Though the novels were written on the realistic lines but the interest in nature, scenic descriptions, and Middle Ages in the later part of 18<sup>th</sup> century led to a new type of Gothic fiction in prevalence. Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1764), Mrs. Anne Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), William Beckford's The History of the Caliph Vathek (1786) and Matthew Lewis's The Monk belonged to the Gothic tradition.

The Age marked a reaction to the previous sentimental comedies and Oliver Goldsmith (She Stoops to Conquer (1773)) and R. B. Sheridan (Rivals (1774) and The Scheming Lieutenant (1775)) pioneered the anti-sentimental movement in terms of **drama**. Tragedy comes off worst of all in this age. Johnson's Irene (1749) and John Home's Douglas (1756) were the tragedies of the time.

In English literature neoclassical principles triumphed during the Augustan Age, particularly in poetry where Alexander Pope's masterly employment of Heroic Couplets constituted the standard until the first stirrings of Romantic Movement in the last decades of the 18th century. The neoclassical period is frequently identified with the Enlightenment in its emphasis on the principles of rationality, order, and logic. It celebrated the development of reason as the ultimate human achievement in art as well as in life, a position that the Romantic emphasis on imagination later challenged.

#### **4.7 BULLETS TO REMEMBER**

##### 1. 18th Century Non-fiction/Prose

- Influenced by Montaigne and Francis Bacon
- Dealt mostly with morals and manners
- Often served the purpose of social commentary
- Used everyday life as theme
- Aim was to amuse while also providing information and advice

##### 2. 18th Century Fiction

- Emphasis on sentiments and manners
- Satiric exploration of human follies and vices
- The ‘growing up’ or bildungsroman narrative
- Some experimentation in structure by Sterne
- Comic effects normally produced by the idiosyncratic character
- Social commentaries were popular, especially those that discussed virtues and moral failings
- Rise of the picaresque tradition
- The origins of a Gothic sensibility derived from medievalism

### 3. Augustan Poetry

- Satire was a predominant form, often using specific public and literary figures as the subjects of criticism and mockery, especially in Pope
- Highly self-conscious, crafted and metrical, but used simple, unassuming language
- Poets who were less satiric used wit and gentle irony rather than caustic mockery
- A deep sense of humanism in the writings of Goldsmith, Gray, and Pope
- Classical authors and learning figured prominently in the works and hence the age was called as ‘neoclassical’
- The ‘graveyard school’ was obsessed with decay and death
- A deep sense of humanism in the writings of Goldsmith, Gray, and Pope

### 4. Augustan drama

- Satires, especially political ones, continued to be common
- Some sentimental comedy
- More emphasis on plot
- Wit continued to be the key element

## **4.8 SUMMARY**

Dear Learners this lesson helped you pave the change in social and political history of England from the Renaissance to Reformation and the Neo-Classical Age. We have read how the political and social changes exhibited good sense, rationality, and avoidance of enthusiasm that had left an indelible mark on the literature of the period. It marked the emergence of heroic couplet in poetry and satires in prose. This witty, serious and lucid prose gave birth to the seeds of the novel that was yet to bloom in the Age of Johnson.

## **4.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. The Neoclassical era was so named because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) people loved classical music
  - (b) it was a time where writers imitated the classical structures of the Romans and the Greeks**
  - (c) new social classes were created
  - (d) it was a time when people were very classy
  
2. Most neoclassical poets viewed the world in terms of a strictly ordered hierarchy. What was this hierarchy called?
  - (a) The Foundational Ladder
  - (b) The Way of the World
  - (c) The Great Chain of Being**
  - (d) The Order of Angels
  
3. Which mock epic begins: “What dire offence from am’rous causes springs, / What mighty contests rise from trivial things?”
  - (a) Dryden’s Mac Flecknoe
  - (b) Pope’s The Rape of the Lock**
  - (c) Pope’s The Dunciad
  - (d) Dryden’s Absalom and Achitophel
  
4. The Neoclassical period in literature ended in 1798 when \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) people were recovering from the shock of the French Revolution
  - (b) people tired of wit and satire
  - (c) people wanted to start writing poetry with emotion
  - (d) Wordsworth published Lyrical Ballads**
  
5. Which Act was passed to unite England and Scotland to form Great Britain?
  - (a) The Act of Union**
  - (b) The Act of Settlement
  - (c) The Middle Act
  - (d) Blue Laws
  
6. This famous neoclassical poet wrote on profound themes such as death, but he also had a lighter side. He once wrote an ode to a cat drowned in a tub of gold fishes.



- (a) **Thomas Gray**
- (b) Ben Jonson
- (c) William Collins
- (d) Alexander Pope

7. Samuel Richardson's Pamela was which kind of a novel?

- (a) Dark novel
- (b) Copied novel
- (c) Stream of Consciousness novel
- (d) **Epistolary novel**

#### **4.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS**

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#### **4.11 MODEL QUESTIONS**

1. Why is 18<sup>th</sup> century called as neo-classical age?
2. 'The Age of Pope is an age of prose, reason and good sense.' Discuss and illustrate.
3. Assess Pope's contribution to English poetry.
4. Discuss the causes which contributed to the rise of periodicals and pamphlets in this age.
5. Can you anticipate the rise of novel from the 18<sup>th</sup> century prose? Comment.
6. Describe the transitional age of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

## SEMESTER-I

### COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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#### UNIT 5: IMPORTANT TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE- ROMANTIC PERIOD; VICTORIAN PERIOD

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##### **STRUCTURE**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Definition of 'Romantic'
- 5.3 Romantic Period
- 5.4 Romanticism: its Nature and Definition
- 5.5 The Rise of Romanticism
- 5.6 Romanticism: A Revolt against New-Classicism
- 5.7 Romantic Revival
- 5.8 Main Points
- 5.9 Chief Characteristics of Romantic Poetry
- 5.10 Main Points
- 5.11 Chief characteristics of Romantic Prose
- 5.12 Summing Up
- 5.13 Questions
- 5.14 Suggested Reading
- 5.15 Objectives
- 5.16 Introduction
- 5.17 Victorian Poetry
- 5.18 Major Victorian Poets
- 5.19 The Pre Raphaelite-Movement
- 5.20 Major Pre Raphaelite-Poets
- 5.21 Victorian Prose: Fiction
- 5.22 Characteristics of the Victorian Novel
- 5.23 Major Victorian Novelists
- 5.24 Victorian Prose: Non-Fiction

5.25 Summing Up

5.26 Questions

5.27 Suggested Reading

## **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

In this unit I propose to discuss two significant periods of English literature. First, I will introduce you to the literature written and produced between 1798-1832 known as the Romantic period. In the second part of the unit, I will focus on the literature written between 1837-1901- literature we classify as Victorian. I will focus on the historical background of these two periods, their chief literary characteristics and the major literary figures.

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Before I go on to discuss in detail these two literary periods, I want to share with you, why it is important for us to study literary periods, movements and trends. When it comes to studying English Literature it is about 1500 years of it to study. We know that literature holds mirror to the society, to the values of the time it is written in so it is important to know about people who created it as well as those who consumed it. In the process we get to know some facts that anthropology or history might have missed.

Moreover, situating a text in a certain period gives us basically an easy interpretive in - how does the author we are studying, reflect the tropes of his/her time, how does he/she assimilate them, how does he/she reject them, is he/she looking forward, is he/she looking backward, is he/she presenting a critique of the society, is he/she creating the next movement? We also come to know how a particular work of art was received by the audience, in what way a particular text influenced its readers.

Before I try to explain the Romantic Period in literature and what caused Romantic Revival, and what was the contribution of the Romanticists to English literature, let me try to explain the meaning of this word.

## **5.2 DEFINITION OF ROMANTIC**

- When we say or hear the word ‘romantic’ immediately what comes to mind is that it has something to do with love or a close loving relationship. Yes, this is the correct meaning. However this word has an extended meaning also.
- The word also refers to someone who is not practical and has a lot of ideas that are not related to life. Something which is exciting, mysterious and has a strong emotional appeal, is also said to be ‘romantic’.

- When we use 'romantic' in relation to art and literature, it means a style of art, music and literature. This style of art was popular in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that dealt with beauty of nature and human emotions.

If we go to the history of the word, the use of 'romantic' in English goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it was used to describe imagination and inventiveness in story-telling.

In the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Romanticists were those who were dissatisfied with the then existing culture and who were enthusiastic about new art forms

### **5.3 THE ROMANTIC PERIOD**

Having explained the meaning of the word 'Romantic', let me now tell you about The Romantic period in English Literature.

There is difference of opinion among the literary historians about the beginning date for the Romantic period. Some believe that it started in 1785, immediately following the Age of Sensibility. Others say it began in 1789 with the start of the French Revolution and still others believe that 1798, the year **Wordsworth** and **Coleridge** jointly published their *Lyrical Ballads* is its true beginning. I will start my discussion about – The Romantic Period from the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by **Wordsworth** and **Coleridge** opened a new chapter in the history of English Romanticism. Until now the movement had no unity, no fixed programme and no aim. It was not a conscious movement at all. **Wordsworth** and **Coleridge** emphasized the aims and objectives of the new poetry. **Coleridge** wrote about objects and incidents unfamiliar and supernatural. He made them look natural and familiar. **Wordsworth** on the other hand was to write about subjects taken from ordinary and common place life and make them look unfamiliar. In this way they enunciated the theory and methods of the new poetry and gave it a new consciousness and purpose and opened a new chapter in the history of Romanticism. **Shelley, Byron, Keats, Walpole, Jane Austen, Walter Scott** are notable Romantic writers.

The Romantic Period is said to come to an end with the passage of **Reform Bill** in 1832.

### **5.4 ROMANTICISM: ITS NATURE AND DEFINITIONS**

Romanticism is “a movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.”

The term "Romanticism" has been variously defined by various writers. **Walter Pater** defines it as "addition of strangeness to beauty". **Watts Dunton** defines it as "*The Renaissance of Wonder*"

There are some theorists who stress the subjective element of romanticism. These writers define Romanticism "as a withdrawal from outer experience to concentrate upon inner experience". Some other theorists like to emphasise the emotional aspect also. They like to emphasise the "accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked and directed by the exercise of imaginative vision."

Some important words in the definition cited above are **beauty, wonder, subjectivity, inner experience, emotion, imagination.**

Taking clue from these words, we can say that Romanticism is an expression of heightened imaginative feelings. Since imagination has no bounds, romanticism also denotes unfettered freedom from all bondages of rules and regulations.

It leaves its pursuers in free delights of their romantic fancy. It paves the way for wonder and delight. It ushers in new attitudes and a new way of looking at life, a way of exuberance and emotional enthusiasm. Romanticism thrives on the impulse to confront life and nature, with the eyes of inquiry and wonder.

## **5.5 THE RISE OF ROMANTICISM**

The romantic movement is the result of long and gradual growth and development.. Romantic literature is essentially characterized by romantic spirit. **Romantic spirit** is marked by exuberance, vitality, sense of wonder, mystery, love of daring and adventure, curiosity, restlessness, nature, free flow of imagination and feeling.

The poets of the romantic age were not the first romantics. The romantic spirit was evident in the literature during the "Renaissance" also. The Renaissance widened man's intellectual, spiritual and physical horizons and all Renaissance literature is characterized by love for learning, beauty and imagination. In the Elizabethan age, the great works of dramatists like **Marlowe** and **Shakespeare** and of poets like **Spenser** were inspired by the Renaissance

In literature Romanticism stands for liberalism, beauty and curiosity. The romanticists have no interest in objective rationality. These writers trust their heart over their head. They believe that knowledge is gained through intuition. They rely on imagination. These writers try to escape from the harsh conditions of life and escape to the beauties of nature.

The Romantic spirit suffered a total eclipse and decline during the **New-Classical age**, only to find its revival in Romantic literature.

English Romanticism is said to be both a **revolt** and a **revival**.

It is a revolt against 18<sup>th</sup> century conventions and traditions.

It is a revival of old English mastery of poetry.

## **5.6 ROMANTICISM : A REVOLT AGAINST NEO-CLASSICISM**

In the history of English literature, the period of over one hundred years from 1660 to 1789 is known as the **Classical age** or the **Pseudo Classical** age or the age of **Neo-Classicism**. The literature of this age was mainly intellectual and rational. It was deficient in emotion and imagination. It dealt exclusively with artificial life of the upper classes of the city of London. Its form and diction were as artificial as its theme. Nature did not find any place in the literary works of this age. There was no feeling for those who lived outside the confines of fashionable London society. The eighteenth century attitudes propagated reason, judgment and rationality. The Romanticists revolted against these attitudes with emphasis on inquiry and wonder.

### **5.7 ROMANTIC REVIVAL**

Romantic Revival was prompted by an intellectual and imaginative curiosity. The power of imagination and return to nature played a prominent part in the revival of romanticism. A poet named **James Thomson** wrote a poem "*The Seasons*" which was published in 1730. It's "*The Seasons*" is a series of four poems about the four seasons – winter, summer, spring, autumn. It took the poet four year to complete it. Written in Blank Verse the poem gives a meditative feeling. This is the first really important poem in which nature instead of remaining subordinate to man is taken as the central theme. Poets such as **Thomas Gray, Williams Collins, Robert Burns, William Cowper** and **Thomas Crabbe** followed the trend set by **James Thomson**. Poets such as **Bishop Percy, Chatterton, James Macpherson** turned back to middle ages for theme and inspiration. These poets, we may call them "Pre-Romantics" played historically a significant role in the Romantic Revival.

### **5.8 MAIN POINTS**

Let me briefly sum up the points I have discussed so far:

- Majority of literary historians believe that the romantic period begins from 1798 and continues till 1832.
- Romanticism begins as a revolt against Neo-Classical attitudes to life and literature. It revives the medieval and Elizabethan spirit in literature.
- Romantic Spirit is characterised by imagination, passion, curiosity and beauty.
- The Revival of Romanticism, in fact, is Return to Nature.
- The works of some major poets like **Thomson, Gray, Collins, Burns, Cowper** and **Crabbe** mark the revival of romanticism.
- The publication of the Lyrical *Ballads* in 1798 is a long step forward in the history of Romanticism.
- The movement ended in the year 1832.

### **5.9 CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC POETRY**

The Romantic period in English literature is chiefly known for its Poetry. Poetry written during this period has a unique flavor. There is endless variety in Romantic poetry.

Reading poetry of this age is "like passing through a new village, meeting a score different human types and finding in each one something to love and to remember."

Romantic poetry is a poetry of escape. Many of the romantics escaped from reality, from the life of sorrows, cares and miseries, to the past, especially back to the middle ages. **Coleridge, Scott, Keats** deal with the past and the middle ages. **Byron** presented the romance and enchantment of the East. The Romantics believed that there are more things in heaven and earth than are ordinarily perceived in life by common people. This feeling arouses their curiosity in the unearthly and the supernatural. Supernaturalism is a unique quality of romantic poetry.

Subjectivity is an important feature of the Romantic poetry. The Romantic poets liked to vent out their personal feelings and emotions. **Wordsworth** claimed that poetry is the "The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". These poets did not describe external facts of life. They interpreted and expressed their personal feelings and emotions. The lyrical beauty and strength of their craft has become the treasure of English literature.

The Romantic poetry is marked by humanitarianism, love, sympathy and understanding of the human heart. They described the lives of common men and women. They were votaries of freedom and rebelled against tyranny and inhuman laws. Except **John Keats** all romantic poets were filled with revolutionary ardour and cried for equality, liberty and fraternity.

In the poetry of the Romantics, focus of attention shifted from town to country life and from the artificial decorations of drawing rooms to the beauty and loveliness of nature. They adored nature for her own sake. They minutely observed all her aspects and expressed these in a lyrical and musical language. Glamours of artificial life were discarded. They were close to the elemental simplicities of life and nature.

Poetic style practised by the romantic poets had a different flavour. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Classical poets had adopted **Heroic Couplet** to express their thoughts. But the Romantic poets experimented with different varieties of stanza forms. Their focus was on simplicity. Unlike the classical poets who used the inflated and artificial mode of expression Romantic poets adopted a more natural and spontaneous diction. The variety of metrical forms created a new melody in English poetry.

**Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley Byron, Keats** and **Scott** are some major Romantic poets. I will be briefly mentioning the contribution of these poets. I will recommend that you must go through some of these poems to fully understand and appreciate the poetic creed and style of these poets.

**Wordsworth** was the first romantic poet to discover a new wonder of nature. Nature in all its forms was the source of his poetic inspiration. In one of his poems he says

"To me the meanest flower can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

'*The Lines written above Tintern Abbey*' and '*Ode*': The Intimations of Immortality, clearly reveal that nature was for Wordsworth the embodiment of the Divine Spirit. The fundamental principle of his philosophy rests on the belief that, nature is the greatest of all teachers. Spiritual communication is possible only through nature. Though an ardent lover of nature he is not a lesser poet of man. His poems like '*Idiot Boy*', '*Michael*', '*The Solitary Reaper*', reveal his hold on life and human isolation and suffering.

**Coleridge** known for his poems such as "*Kubla Khan*" "*Christabel*" "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*" took to the supernatural as his province and treated it in a purely poetic way. We can see that **Wordsworth** saved naturalism from the hard liberalism and Coleridge saved supernaturalism from a coarse sensationalism by linking it with psychological truths.

**Keats** is a unique phenomenon in the history of English Romanticism. He represents a unique balance of Classicism and Romanticism. Highly imaginative and emotional matter is enclosed in forms of perfect beauty. His most distinctive poetic achievement is his **Odes**. The internal debates in the **Odes** center on the dichotomy of eternal transcendent ideals and the transience and change of the physical world.

**Byron** is regarded as one of the greatest English Poets. He is known for his brilliant use of the English language. A leading figure of the Romantic Movement he is recognised for a massive amount of emotionally stirring literary works. One of his most famous works '*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*' records a young man's travels in foreign land. Though **Byron** stands apart from other romantic poets philosophically and stylistically, yet the core of his thinking and the basis of his poetry is romantic aspiration and "he evidences a romantic zeal for life and experience."

**Shelley**: Major themes of Romantic Poetry - restlessness, brooding, defiance of any kind of authoritarianism, power of the visionary imagination and of poetry, the pursuit of ideal love, the search for freedom get revealed in his works. "*The Spirit of Solitude: and Other Poems*" is Shelley's public initiation into the Romantic idiom of poetry pioneered by **Wordsworth**. His Odes "*Ode to the West Wind*", "*The Cloud*", "*To a Skylark*" and "*Ode to Liberty*" are the finest examples of his poetic genius.

**Scott** : Romanticism found a less subtle but far more popular and influential interpreter in **Walter Scott**. The whole movement for the revival of the romantic past culminated in his work. **Scott** rejected the classic epic and his "*Romantic Tales in Verse*" as he called them, represent a natural development of the old ballad and medieval romance. In style he is vigorous, free and rapid but often careless, diffused and common place.

## **5.10 MAIN POINTS**

Let us try to recapitulate the main characteristics of the Romantic Poetry.

- Protest against the rigidity of rules



- Return to nature and human hearts
- Interest in old sagas and medieval romances
- Sympathy with the toilers of the world
- Emphasis on individual genius
- Return to the Renaissance Spirit and the Elizabethans instead of **Pope** and **Dryden** as literary models.
- Variety of metrical and poetic forms – revival of **The Spenserian Stanza**, **The Ballad**, meters like **The Blank Verse**, **The Lyric**, **The Ode** and **The Sonnet**.

### **5.11 CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC PROSE**

Though Romantic literature is best known for its poetry, a few prose writers also have made significant contribution. The romantic poets had revolted against the 18th century rigidities of poetic style. The prose-writer had no such agenda to propagate. Many 18<sup>th</sup> Century prose writers were concerned about the suitability of various prose styles for various purposes. Prose writers in the Romantic period were rather more concerned with subject matter and emotional expression than with the appropriate style. There was a decline of the 'grand' style and most form of contrived prose was written for didactic purposes. Romantic Prose writers preferred spontaneity rather than formality and contrivance. The prose works of the Romantic age reveal that there is focus on the individual. They write primarily about rights and freedom of an individual and their ability to exert will even against what might necessarily be logical. Many novels have been written on the theme of rebellion in the face of oppression and characters doing things that might seem irrational because it is really what they wanted to do.

Some outstanding prose writers are **Charles Lamb**, **Hazlitt** and **De Quincy** who wrote prose for its own sake in the form of **Essays** and attained excellence. Some romantic poets **Coleridge**, **Shelley**, **Keats**, **Byron**, too wrote excellent prose in their critical writings, letters and journals. But the grand masters of the prose style were novelists like **Scott** and **Jane Austen**.

Let me briefly discuss the contribution of some prose writers who are primarily famous for their essays.

**Charles Lamb** - a well known literary figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century is known for his *Essays of Elia* and *Last Essays of Elia*. These essays are famous for his wit and ironic treatment of everyday subjects. He brought a new kind of warmth to English prose writing which has been called "The Personal Essay", he talks intimately to the reader, about himself, his own personality, his whims and experiences and cheerful and heroic struggle against his misfortunes. **Lamb's** contribution to the English essay lies in transforming the tone from formality to familiarity.

**William Hazlitt**: "The radical conscience of Romanticism" Hazlitt is celebrated for his brilliant prose. He remains one of the English language's most outstanding and prolific authors. His remarkable essays fill 20 volumes. **Hazlitt** is considered one of the greatest

exponents of the personal essay - the essay - written in the first person which is more discursive and is free to wander away from the cultural theme. "*The Role of Laughter*", "*Hate*", "*The Idea of Meeting Yourself*" are some of his essays a student of literature must read.

**Thomas De Quincy** is best known for his "*Confessions of an English Opium Eater*". He is a versatile essayist and an accomplished critic. His essays display an acute psychological awareness. Writing somewhat in a new kind of prose, which was ornate and impassioned he rivaled Romantic poetry in his intensity and evocation.

Any discussion related to the Romantic prose remains incomplete without discussing the contribution of the novelists. In this section, I am going to tell you about how the Romantic movement impacted the novelists.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century novelists **Defoe, Fielding, Richardson** and others had attempted to portray real life and deal with things as they saw. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there came to be seen a shift in this trend. The novelists writing in the Romantic period drifted away from the mundane realities of life and introduced romantic aroma in their works. This particular kind of writing came to be known as **Gothic Romances**.

**Gothic Romances** included as their subject:

- Nature
- Mysteries and magic
- Supernatural elements
- Past Events and Life of the Middle Ages
- Haunted and Supernatural landscape.

Because of these characteristics, the novel of this time also came to be termed as "**The Novel of Terror**." Some major practitioners of this genre were **Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Ann Radcliff, Maria Edgeworth**. The "**Novel of Terror**" brought a great disrepute to novel as the reading public found the themes repulsive.

It was **Sir Walter Scott** who set the novel on its feet again. He delved into the past, romanticised it with his splendid gifts of imagination, and developed an almost new genre **The Historical Novel**.

Chief Characteristics of the **Historical Novel** are:

- An imaginative but a realistic construction of the past.
- A realistic picture of the life of that period as well as of making use of the language of that period

Important Historical novelists are **Maria Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott**. **Scott's Waverly** remains the most remarkable contribution to the genre of **Historical Novel**.

**Jane Austen** was doing something new with the novel. She admitted that she could not sit down to write a serious Romance. She professed : "I must keep to my style and go on in my own way." She was using this art form to describe desirable probable reality and the kind of people one felt one already knew. **Austen** used fiction to describe social reality within her own time and class - the gentry and impersonal classes of Southern England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By doing so she was able to introduce something closer to real morality in describing the range of human relationships that we all are likely to encounter in ordinary life. Her plots play within the "realms of the possible" This was the beginning of the **Social Novel**. In her six major novels "*Sense and Sensibility*", "*Pride and Prejudice*", "*Mansfield Park*" "*Emma*", "*Northanger Abbey*" and "*Persuasion*" **Austen** created a comedy of manners of middle class life in England of her time. Her distinctive literary style rests on mainly on blend of parody, free indirect speech, irony and literary realism. Her masterpieces provide the principles for the writers of succeeding generations. She successfully documented her ideas about marriage, power and love in her writings. Even today she is considered one of the best authors.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Answer the following in one word:**

- a. **The author of Kubla Khan was .....**
- b. **Novel Sense and Sensibility was written by.....**
- c. **Sir Walter Scott was a Psychological Novelist: Yes or No .....**
- d. **A Collection of Poems under the title 'Songs of Innocence' was penned by.....**

### **5.12 SUMMING UP**

In this part of the lesson I have introduced you to the Romantic period in English literature. I have given you

- The definition of Romanticism
- Romanticism as a revolt against Neo-Classicism
- Romanticism as a revival of the Romantic Spirit
- Characteristics of the Romantic Poetry and prose
- Contribution of some major poets, prose writers and novelists.

To conclude, I will say that Romanticism stands apart from other literary epochs because it asserted, the importance of individualism, therefore, romantic writer had the liberty to conform to the ideals of the movement. Romantics focused on many themes - idealism, imagination, religion, utopia, memory, heroism, nature, sentimentalism and adopted techniques which characterised their works and the movement.

### **5.13 QUESTIONS**

1. Mention in detail the basic tenets of Romanticism
2. What are the Chief Characteristics of Romantic Poetry?
3. Discuss the contribution of Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen to the English novel?

#### **5.14 SUGGESTED READING**

- A Critical History of English Literature ed., by David Daiches.
- The Oxford Companion to English Literature ed. by Margret Drabble.
- An Outline History of English Literature by W.H. Long.

#### **5.15 OBJECTIVES**

In this lesson I want to continue with the discussion about Victorian literature. I will focus on the chief characteristics of the Victorian Poetry and the literary contribution of some of the Major Poets.

I will also discuss the Pre-Raphaelite Movement and the contribution of some Pre-Raphaelite poets. I propose to acquaint you with the chief characteristics of the Victorian Prose-Fiction as well as Non-Fiction. I intend to introduce you to the major victorian novelists as well non-fiction prose writers

#### **5.16 INTRODUCTION**

After 'Romantic Revival' English Literature entered a new period. With the advancement in science and technology, with expansion and progress, the literary trends started witnessing a change. There was greater emphasis on '**Realism**' Victorian literature marks the fusion of romantic and realist style of writing.

In this section I propose, to talk about

- Victorian Poetry
- Pre-Raphaelite Poetry
- Victorian Prose

#### **5.17 VICTORIAN POETRY**

Victorian Poetry marks an important era in the history of poetry providing the link between Romantic movement and the modernist movement. Victorian era lasted about sixty years. **Tennyson** stands at one end of the era and **Hardy** who lived up to 1928, at the other end. Poetry written during this long span was influenced by several social, political and cultural factors, as was literature written in general. However, if we try to make an effort to underline some common strands running consistently we can see its feeling for nature, its

idealism, its subjectivity and its variety of nature. What sets them apart from the Romantics is that the Victorians possess the Romantic sensibility but they do not possess that Romantic belief. The new findings of science deprived the Victorians of the romantic creed of nature.

Victorian Poetry can be studied by dividing it into two main groups: The High Victorian Poetry and the Pre Raphaelite Poetry

Among the high Victorian poets some of the outstanding names are those of **Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Hardy** and **Hopkins**. From the poems written by these poets we can identify some salient characteristics.

We can see the poets focused on masses. The themes pertained to the city life. These poets took responsibility of reforming society and gave voice to the commoners. Confronted with the consequences of the Industrial revolution there is sometimes a sense of pessimism which pervades their work. Victorian poets were enthralled with classical and medieval literature. They loved the heroic stories and courtly attitudes.

The Victorians worked in many genres and metrical forms. **Browning's Dramatic Lyrics** and **Monologues** are highly characteristic of his age as well as being significant for the future. Equally important are **Hardy's** ironic Lyrics.

To sum up the characteristics of the Victorian poetry, I would say that on the one hand traditional poetry got reformed in the hand of high Victorian poets and on the other hand, stage was being set for more innovations to come in the form of Modernism.

### **5.18 MAJOR VICTORIAN POETS**

The Victorian giants are **Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold** and **Thomas Hardy**.

**Tennyson** famous for his *Poems: Chiefly Lyrical, Poems, In Memoriam* are some of his memorable poems. *The Lady of Shallot* and *Lotos Eaters* are fine examples of artistic workmanship. **Tennyson** became the voice of people, expressing in exquisite melody their doubts and their faith, their griefs and their triumphs. It was in recognition of his work that he was appointed the Poet Laureate.

**Robert Browning** famous for his poems remains one of the most remarkable poets. His Most acclaimed poems include the monologues *Fra Lippo Lippi, My Last Duchess*,

*Andrea Del Sarto*. His reputation rests mainly on his dramatic monologues. In order to appreciate his poems we need to be familiar with the technique of **Dramatic Monologue**.

**Dramatic Monologue** is a type of poetry written in the form of a speech of an individual character. M.H. Abrams identifies the following three features of the **dramatic monologue** as it applies to poetry.

- The single person who is patently not the poet utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem in a specific situation, at a critical moment.
- This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people, but we know of the auditor's presence and what they say and do only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker.
- The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader in a way that it enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character.

What we infer from M.H. Abram's explanation of the term is that only the word and thoughts of the speaker are relayed. This means that the other side of the conversation, if there is one, is left to the reader's imagination.

**Mathew Arnold:** Arnold's contribution to the Victorian Poetry is best summed up in his letter which he wrote to his mother in 1869. I quote from his letter: "My poems represent on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and, interested in the literary productions which reflect it. It might be fairly argued that I have less poetic sentiment than **Tennyson** and less intellectual, vigor and abundance than **Browning**, yet because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of development and likely enough to have my turn as they have had theirs."

**Arnold** may, as he himself admits or as literary critics also agree, not be as remarkable as **Tennyson** or **Browning** but he cannot be written off as an indistinct poet. His poem, "*Dover Beach*" has drawn the attention of the critics for its careful diction, spell binding rhythm and cadence.

I have very briefly mentioned the contribution of some of the major poets. I strongly recommend that you read the poems, I have mentioned, try to relate these to the time there

were written in, try to compare them with some of the poems written by the Romantic poets. Can these poems be said to be the fusion of imagination - a romantic trait and realism – a victorian trait? Make your own opinion. There are some other poets like **Hopkins, Hardy, Elizabeth Barret- Browning**. Make an effort to go through the poems written by them also. I also recommend you to read **Hardy's** *'Your Last Drive'* and *'The Darkling Thrush'*; **Hopkins's** *'The Wind Hover'* and *'The Wreck of Deutschland'*. Also read the **Sonnets** written by **Elizabeth Barret Browning**.

### **5.19 THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT**

**The Pre-Raphaelite Movement** flourished in the late Victorian Period. It was originally not a literary movement but an artistic movement. In 1848, Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood was founded in England by three young painters **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Millais** and **W.H. Hunt**. **D.G.R. Rossetti** turned to poetry from painting. Rossetti and many others were gifted writers. Their work gave rise to **Pre-Raphaelite Literary Movement**. In poetry movement came in the shape of a revolt against contemporary main-stream Victorian Poetry.

**The Pre-Raphaelites** were influenced by middle ages. They were inspired by romance, chivalry and superstition of the middle ages. Art was everything for these poets. They had no morality to teach, no reforms to introduce through their poems. Love of beauty was their creed. They created beauty for its own sake. The only belief they had was **Art for Art's Sake**. **Art for Art's Sake** expresses the philosophy that "the intrinsic value of art is that it is divorced from any didactic, moral, political or utilitarian function." Art is created for its own sake. It has no social or moral purpose.

### **5.20 MAJOR PRE-RAPHAELITE POETS**

**Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, John Everett Millais** and **William Holman Hunt** and **Morris** are important Pre-Raphaelite poets.

**Gabriel Rossetti's** *'Wood Spurge'*, **Christina Rossetti's** *'Dream Land'*, *"In the Artist's Studio"* highlight the poetic creed with its commitment to sincerity, simplicity and moral seriousness. Love for the Middle Ages surfaces in the poems of **Rossetti** and **Morris**. Many of **Rossetti's** poems like *"The Blessed Damozel"*, *"Sister Helen"* go back to the Middle Ages. Similarly most of **Morris's** work like *Guinever and other poems, The Haystack in the Flood*, are steeped in the medieval spirit.

**Swinburne** another important Pre-Raphaelite poet is rather boldly sensuous in his poems. His poem "*Tristram of Lyonesse*" is often cited as an example of "fleshly", sensuous and over musical work.

**Christina Rossetti** - the only Pre-Raphaelite woman poet is famous for her sonnet "*In An Artist's Studio*."

**The Pre-Raphaelites** did not recognise any boundaries. In their bold experiments with material, form and technique, their poetry is quite innovative.

### **Summing Up:**

To conclude, I will say that after the Romantic Poetry, the Victorian poetry may appear static, repetitive and didactic. Yet split between conventionality and anti-conventionality, doubt and faith, adaptation and intellectual reforms, it makes an important and significant contribution.

## **5.21 VICTORIAN PROSE: FICTION**

In this part of the lesson, I will introduce you to the Victorian Prose - both fiction and non-fiction.

The Novel became the leading literary genre of the Victorian age. As we know the Victorian age is a complex and critical age. The middle class rose in power and importance. With the spread of education the number of reading public increased. The middle class reader wanted to read about the identifiable, known and recognizable experience of life. The novel with its flexibility and adaptability was the best art form suited to mirror immense social changes taking place. The Victorian novel with its emphasis on realism presented a picture of life and people who were like the people encountered by readers and this was kind of life people wanted to read about.

## **5.22 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTORIAN NOVEL**

The novel as a 'genre' rose in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. **Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Lawrence Sterne, Samuel Richardson**, wrote some brilliant novels. But it was in the Victorian period that the novel got mass acceptance and readership.

The Victorian novel adhered to the philosophy of realism. It held up mirror to the society. There was an attempt to describe daily struggles of ordinary men that the middle class reading public could associate with. The writer and their reader shared a sense of belief values and ideals because they belonged to the same middle class.



The novel asserted a belief in the innate goodness of human nature. The moral angle allowed for inclusion of larger debates related to questions of moral degradation prevalent in society then, to the questions related to women, to child abuse, to religion and faith.

But we have to remember that presentations of the real world are not mere photographs but pictures coloured by their individual imagination and idiosyncrasies. "Often the picture presented is fanciful and romantic." The Victorians are all able to make their characters live. "The Characters may not be real, there may be much in them that is improbable and false, but they are amazingly and indomitably alive" It is a crowded space inhabited by energetic, vital, living, breathing individuals.

### **5.23 MAJOR VICTORIAN NOVELISTS**

**Charles Dickens** is the most famous Victorian novelist. Famous for his novels like *Pick Wick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, **Dickens** presents a wide range of characters - eccentrics villains, unfortunates, hypocrites, social-climbers, nouveaux- rich, criminals, self-deceivers- placed against social background. His novels offer commentary on social problems and the plight of the poor and the oppressed.

**George Eliot** an "intellectual' novelist is famous for her novels like *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Romola*, *Middle March*. She presents wide range of characters - shallow, insincere, mystics, cultured free thinkers. She definitely enlarged the scope of the novel.

**William Thackeray** - a prominent Victorian novelist famous for his works *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*, *The Book of Snobs*, *Vanity Fair*, *Pen Dennis*, *The History of Henry Esmond*, has a keen eye for social pretension. A moral realist he brought to the surface the hypocrisies, vanities, snobberies and all prevailing selfishness which lay behind the mask of the socially successful.

**Bronte Sisters-Ann, Charlotte and Emily** produced notable works of the period. *Wuthering Heights* by **Emily Bornte** is written in the tradition of *Gothic Romance* from a woman's perspective. *Jane Eyre* written by **Charlotte** also has a Gothic novel flavor. **Ann Bronte's** *The "Tenant of Wildfell Hell"* is written in the realistic style and is regarded "The first sustained feminist novel."

**Thomas Hardy** is an important novelist of the later decades of the Victorian era. He wrote novels which came to symbolise the Victorian age. His novels "*Under the Greenwood Tree*" "*Far from the Madding Crowd*" "*The Mayor of Casterbridge*" "*Tess of the*

*d'urbervilles*” and “*Jude the Obscure*”, need a special mention for portraying the plight of the rural folk. His works epitomise the social contradictions which plagued the Victorian society in the wake of large scale industrialisation and consequent urbanisation.

Other significant novelists of this era were **Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, George Meredith** and **George Gissing**.

#### **5.24 VICTORIAN PROSE (NON-FICTION)**

Another important feature characterising Victorian literature is in the variety of non-fictional prose. **Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Macaulay, Arnold** are some important prose writers known for their prolific output. They focus on the matters of immediate public concern and on society while also encompassing within its realm – theology, histories, scientific endeavours, biographies, ethical, and philosophical treatises, literary and art-criticism and so on. Their prose was inventive, it had vitality and variety. It was interesting and edifying.

**Thomas Carlyle** is one the most representative prose writers of the Victorian age. Famous for his books “*Sartor Resartus*” on “*Heros, Hero Worship and Heroic*” in History, “*The French Revolution -A History*” he is also famous for his scathing criticism of Victorian society. He developed a writing style so distinct that it has been referred to as "Carlylese". The prose and the content of his work continue to fascinate the reader.

**John Ruskin:** John Ruskin is a leading Victorian prose writer. He wrote essays treatises, poetry, travel guides, manuals and letters covering a variety of subjects. “*Unto This Last*” which he himself proclaimed to be the "central work of my life", his Essays on “*Political Economy*”, “*Time and Tide*”, “*Fiction Fair and Foul*” are some of his acclaimed works. His prose is varied, his style with vast range of allusions, colloquialisms, rhetorical flight, juxtaposition of the ridiculous and the sublime, continues to baffle the reading public.

#### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Answer the following in one word:**

- a. **The author of *Far from the Madding Crowd* was .....**
- b. **The Pre-Raphaelites did not recognise any boundaries: Yes or No.....**
- c. **His novels offer commentary on social problems and the plight of the poor and the oppressed.....**
- d. **Who was the main exponent of Dramatic Monologue? .....**

### **5.25 SUMMING UP**

I have briefly touched upon the contribution of two very important prose writers of this era. To sum up this discussion I want to once again emphasise that "the thematic and stylistic range of prose extends from the poetic raptures of **Thomas Carlyle** to the scientific jargon of **Charles Darwin**, from the exquisite discoveries of **John Ruskin** to the precise political judgement of **John Stuart Mill**.

I would like to conclude this section with a comment that novel was rapidly establishing itself as a dominant literary form. The majority of the novels of this age continued to handle the problem of men in society and to deal with moral situations as these emerged in a specific social world with specific social and economic characteristics. The same trend we witnessed in the work of prose writers.

### **5.26 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Q1. Write notes on

1. Pre Raphaelite Movement
2. Dramatic Monologue
3. John Ruskin

Q2. Discuss the characteristics of Victorian Poetry.

How is it different from Romantic Poetry?

Q3. What was the impact of Industrialization on Victorian Society and Literature?

### **5.27 SUGGESTED READING**

1. A Short History of English Literature, Cambridge University Press.
2. English Social History by G.M. Trevelyan.
3. A Critical History of English Literature by David Daiches.

# **BACHELOR OF ARTS**

## **SEMESTER: I**

### **COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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#### **UNIT-VI: THE MODERN PERIOD**

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Structure

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Background

6.3 Major Influences

6.4 Literary Movements

6.5 Bloomsbury Group

6.6 Symbolist Movement

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6.10 Surrealism

6.11 Main Points

6.12 Modern Poetry: Themes

6.13 Modern Poetry: Technique

6.14 Main Points

6.15 Modern Drama

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6.17 Main Points

6.18 Modern Novel

6.19 Stream-of-Consciousness Novel

6.20 Main Points

6.21 Summing up

6.22 Questions

6.23 Suggested Readings

## **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

In this section, I will introduce you to the Modern Period in English Literature – literature written between 1901 to 1950. I propose to discuss the background and the time around which changes in the social and intellectual background came to be seen, what were the influences which caused those changes and how literature of the age was influenced, what caused artistic experimentation. I will also discuss some of the important literary movements. I will explain the characteristics of Modern English Poetry and Drama. I will conclude the discussion by exploring the characteristics of Modern English Novel.

## **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

I would like to say that the period of modern literature is one of the most volatile periods when society witnessed rapid transformation of institutions and values. The society saw an abrupt break away from the old traditions. Science, technology, innovations, research, knowledge, two world wars, global political strife, brought in its wake disintegration, disillusionment, anxiety. The old beliefs and structures came to be examined and interrogated. Modernism began as a revolt against Victorian attitudes. In the Victorian age we see that the voice of authority is accepted in family, in politics, in literature. The Victorian temper was characterised by acceptance and desire to affirm and conform, however, there came to be seen an abrupt break in the established institutions and values.

## **6.2 BACKGROUND**

The world started witnessing winds of change around 1870. I will like to quote **Raymond Williams**, "The temper which the adjective Victorian is useful to describe is virtually finished in 1880's. The new men who appeared in the decade and who have left their mark, are recognizably different in tone."

Let us first examine what was the social and political scene after the death of Queen Victoria.

After Queen Victoria her son Edward VII ascended the throne. "**The Edwardian Era**" (1901-1910) usually includes some years before and after his reign.

In 1910, King George V ascended the throne and continued upto 1936. From 1936-1952, King George VI ruled over England. It was a period of great political tribulation with huge economic impact.

During the time of King George V, the world witnessed the **First World War** (1914-18). It was the time of the rise of Socialism, Communism, Fascism, and Indian Independence movement. During the time of King George VI the world had to suffer the deadliest ever war- the **Second World War**. It was during this time that India attained its independence.

Till Queen Victoria's time England was the most powerful imperial world power. It exerted a huge political influence across the world. After the two world wars, its global reach

was weakened. The cultural environment could not remain unaffected. Writers examined the world around them and tried to express it through their writings.

The three things that weave a common thread though out the 20<sup>th</sup> century English Literature are

- Effects of Colonial Expansion
- Global War Fare
- Artistic Experimentation

The British policy of Colonial expansion was at its peak during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Bulk of Victorian literature was influenced by Colonial ideology. Literary critics have explored the pervasive influence of Colonial ideology throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century on British culture and society.

The two World Wars shook the foundations of the Western world causing a wave of social and artistic change.

**The First World War fought** between 1914-1918 hastened the dissolution of familiar boundaries. **D.H. Lawrence** succinctly expresses what in essence had died. "It was in 1915 the Old World ended. In the winter 1915-16 the spirit of the old London collapsed, the city in some way perished from being the heart of the world and become a vortex of broken, passions, lusts, hopes, fears and horrors. The integrity of London collapsed and genuine debasement began."

After the **First World War** tensions started growing. During 1920-1930, the world saw economic conflict and an increased competition among Western Colonial Powers. In 1930 there was World Wide Economic Depression. **The Second World War** fought between 1939-1945 proved a "global night mare of devastation, suffering, death. Art and literature was in crisis."

### **6.3 MAJOR INFLUENCES**

With the growth of new ideas in politics, invention of new theories in Science and Technology, Philosophy and Psychology, there was virtually an explosion of knowledge in the world impacting every aspect of life including art and literature.

The most pervasive influence on literature of the modern age is that of **Sigmund Freud** (1856-1939). **Freud** was an Austrian neurologist. He was the founder of Psychoanalysis. His theory of Subconscious proved that there lay a swamp of irrational motives, involving sex, parental authority, fixation and sexual repression. The whole paraphernalia of the unconscious gave freedom to the literary artist in his search for new ways of describing human behaviour. Freud's theory of the Sub-conscious paved way for The Stream-of-Consciousness novel.

Another important influence was that of **Carl Gustav Jung** (1875-1961) He was a Swiss Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst. **Jung** propounded the theory of **Collective Unconscious**. He believed that the modern man is related to the primitive man by a common cultural tie. The influence of his theories on modern novel is immense. The novelists dredged up old myths and reinterpreted them in the light of modern experience.

**Henri Bergson** left a profound influence on the ways in which modernist literature represented time and consciousness. **Bergson** maintained that all the past is always present in the mind along with the present with its interpenetration into the future. This is what one critic has called "one concentrated now". Further more, **Bergson** believed that all time is relative, all reality is relative, even the nature of human experience is relative. To attain a complete picture of reality another faculty of mind i.e. intuition, is necessary. His theories nourished the Symbolist Doctrine which created the atmosphere for much of the modernist literature.

Modernist literature follows the maxim as **Ezra Pound** – an eminent poet put "Make It New". There was a conscious effort to part ways with traditional ways of writing poetry fiction and prose. Modernist writers experimented with literary form and expression. Their search for newer modes of expression set way for many literary movements.

#### **6.4 LITERARY MOVEMENTS**

The task of the literary writer became extremely difficult. Post-Victorian, Post World War world had become a disturbing enigma. Nothing was constant, Nothing was fixed. Everything was held open to interrogation. The principle of selection which the Victorian writers applied could not hold good in the context of myriad realities and experiences and emotions. New techniques had to be devised. "The Social aspect of the world changed so much" as e.g. **E.M. Forster** put it. "The New World - its horrors and uncertainties and anxieties created a void which was partially filled with literary experimentation."

And the writers who took up the challenge were known as **Avant Garde** writers. These Avant Garde writers revolted against the photographic representation of life and reality. They experimented with new modes and methods.

#### **6.5 THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP**

**The Bloomsbury Group** was formed in first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by a group of friends including English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists. The best known members of the group include **Virginia Woolf, John Meyard Keynes**- an Economist, **E. M. Forster** and **John Strachey**.

The formation of the **Bloomsbury Group** ushered in an era of Intellectual Liberalism. In the first half of the century Intellectual Liberalism was a dominant trend of fiction. Their works and outlook deeply influenced literature, aesthetics, criticism, and economics as well as attitudes towards feminism, sexuality.

The Bloomsbury Group has had its critics too. They were criticized for their elitist life styles and liberal ideas. Yet it is important to remember that these thinkers and innovators did much to shape the development of Modernism.

## **6.6 SYMBOLIST MOVEMENT**

**Symbolist movement** ushered in the Modernist Revolution in literature.

**The Symbolist Movement** originated in 1857. The chief inspiration was a French poet **Charles Baudelaire**. The movement was a reaction against a type of language that says rather than subjects. One of the important beliefs of the symbolist literature artist was "Poetry should not inform but suggest and evoke, not name things but create their atmosphere." **Arthur Symons** whose book *The Symbolist Movement* advocated "to name is to destroy to suggest is to create", **Joseph Conrad, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce** are some of important novelists who made extensive use of symbols in their works.

## **6.7 IMAGISM**

Imagism is considered to be the first organised modernist literary movement in the English Language which gave modernism its start. Imagists rejected contemporary poetic traditions. They called for a return to classical values. They advocated directness of presentation, experimented with non-traditional verse forms. They used free verse. Some important Imagist poets were **Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Amy Lowell, T.S. Eliot**.

The movement though had a short life it deeply influenced the course of modernist poetry in English.

## **6.8 IMPRESSIONISM**

**Impressionism** was an art movement started by a group of French Painters. Their aim was to render the effects of light on objects rather than the objects themselves. In the literary sense Impressionism applied to work with passages that concentrated on the subjective reception of impressions. The impressionists sought to escape from the world of reality to their own created imaginary world. We can see the impressionist influence in the works of **W.B. Yeats** and **J.M. Synge**.

## **6.9 EXPRESSIONISM**

**Expressionist Movement** originated in Germany as a reaction against **Naturalism**. The author undertakes to express inner experience by representing the world as it appears to his/her state of mind or to that of one of his/her characters. Expressionist Literature was not concerned with society but man. It made use of the Sub-conscious. The expressionist discarded conventional restrictive method in favour of unrestricted freedom. **T.S. Eliot's** *The*



*Waste Land* may be considered expressionist in its fragmentary rendering of Post-War desolation.

## **6.10 SURREALISM**

**Surrealism** is the by product of many experiments which the writers have been making in order to explore the most appropriate ways/technique for the expression of their experience. Surrealism drew heavily on **Freud's** work. It may be said to be an outgrowth of the **Symbolist Movement** and **Dadism**. During the First World War **Dadism** had arisen as a protest, advocating the use of infantile language against all established language, against all established logic, institutions and values. **Andre Breton**, an important member of **Dadism** movement broke away from **Dadism** and founded a new school with his **First Surrealistic Manifesto** in 1924.

"Surrealism seeks to break down the boundaries between rationality and irrationality exploring the resources and revolutionary energies of dreams, hallucinations, and sexual desire. Influenced both by the **Symbolists** and by **Sigmund Freud's** theories of unconscious the Surrealists experimented with automatic writing and with the free association of random images brought together in surprising juxtaposition." (**The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms**)

## **6.11 MAIN POINTS**

- Modernist literature developed in the early twentieth century.
- Literary Modernism developed because of general sense of disillusionment with the Victorian attitudes
- **Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Henri Bergson**, influenced the modern sensibility.
- The two World Wars shattered man's belief in all established structures.
- The anxiety and void created by Wars was filled by literary experimentation.
- **Avant Garde** writers experimented with new Literary Forms.
- All literary forms came to be influenced by explosion of knowledge and literary experimentation.

## **6.12 MODERN POETRY: THEMES**

I have already explained how new studies in the field of psychology, anthropology and political ideology, have changed the outlook of the modern man. Modern Poetry too had to cope with these new themes of knowledge and science.

I will like to begin this discussion with a quote from **A.C. Ward**. **A.C. Ward** in his book *Twentieth Century Literature* opines "When the Twentieth century opened Tennyson had been dead nine years and there was a wide spread impression that English poetry had

died with him... The poetry of the period shows a general decline not in general level of execution but in genius and breath of range." At the same time **Ward** admits "there has been no dearth of great poets or poems that will stand the test of time and become a part of an imperishable literary heritage of England." There is no doubt that the modern poets have responded to the changed social reality. Their poetry reflects a great variety in the choice of themes. There is a thematic revolution- prostitution, war, slum-dwellers and other such unpoetic themes find adequate treatment in their poetry. The poets were not concerned only with creating "beauty". Realism has taken over escapism and romanticism. **Ronald Botrall** in one of his poems says:

Nightingales sunset or the meanest flower  
Were formerly the potentialities of poetry  
But now what have they to do with one another  
With Dionysus or with me?

**T.S. Eliot's** view sums up how the modern poets responded to new reality they had to face. "The essential advantage of a poet is not to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness, to see the boredom and the horror and the glory". **T.S. Eliot's** statement makes it clear that the modern poet is not an escapist. They have responded to the peculiarities of the age itself. Some poems have been written on pretty, uncompromising subjects which are peculiar to the modern age. **Kenneth Ashely's** "*Goods Train at Night*", **Sheila Smiths's** "*The Ballad of Motor Bus*", and **Sir Edmund Goose's** "*The Character Burner*" can be cited as examples.

The two global wars had terrible consequences, socially, politically economically and psychologically. The war poets **Siegfried Sasoon and Wilfred Owen** wrote about the terror, ugliness and brutality of war. **Rupert Brooke** another war poet glorified war as a test of their valiance and patriotism.

The two wars had cast a gloomy shadow on society. Tension, anxiety, disillusionment became an inseparable feature of modern living. The vacuity, hollowness and the feeling of ennui is reflected in the works of many poets. Poets like **Houseman, Hardy, Huxley, Eliot.** have written extensively about the hollowness of the modern society. There is a note of pessimism in their works. **T.S. Eliot's** "*The Hollow Men*" and "*The Waste Land*" sum up the reaction of the poets to the age they were living in.

I am quoting a few lines from **Eliot's** "*The Hollow Men*"

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw, Alas!

Our dried voices when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry glass  
Or rat's feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

The lines are neither melancholic, nor elegiac, nor self-pitying. Reaction is pessimistic though but response is more intellectual and more impersonal.

Some modern poets have voiced indignation against social repression. Some Victorian poets also demanded justice for the marginalised . But some of these modern poets have aligned themselves to radical socialism, even communism. Poets like **Gibson, Galsworthy, Mansfield** have written about grim struggle for existence.

Though modernists were opposed to Romanticism still there are few modern poets who manifest romantic tendencies. Among these **Walter D La Mare, W. B. Yeats, John Mansfield** may be mentioned. Poets like **Robert Bridges, W.E. Davies, Edmond Blunder** are charmed by the beauties of nature.

Another important theme in Modern poetry relates to religion and mysticism. **Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell, Ralph Hodgson** are some poets whose poems pulsate with religious feeling. In the poetry of **Hopkins** we do have echoes of religious themes. In the poetry of **W.B. Yeats** there are mystical strains.

In the works of **T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound**, who are the most representative modern poets, we find a lot of psychological complexity.

### **6.13 MODERN POETRY: TECHNIQUE**

There is lot of experimentation and innovation in modern poetry. It has responded to the changing times. In the early years of the century some poets, like **Robert Bridges, William Watson**, and **Sir Henry Newbolt** followed the traditions set by **Tennyson, Browning** and **Arnold**.

There were others who combined tradition with innovation. **A.E. Houseman** for example, is one such poet. **T. S. Eliot** looked back to the metaphysical poets and he presented the sordidness and ugliness of modern life using metaphors, symbols, imagery, internal monologue, complex diction. Ideas, themes and techniques of his poetry reflect the modernist perspective.

With imagism came a poetic revolution **Moody and Lovett** have appropriately pointed out "Imagism did modern poetry a tremendous service by pointing the way to a renovation of the vocabulary of poetry and the necessity of ridding poetic technique of vague

and empty verbiage and dishonest and windy generalities." A language with the flow and turns of common speech is mostly employed. Free verse is the most usual mode of all serious poetry. The **Dramatic Lyric** became the norm and the longer narrative and reflective poems largely disaffirmed. **W.H Auden** and some other have made use of **verse epistle**.

Before I conclude my discussion of modern poetry I would like to draw your attention to the trends which came to be observed around 1930's. After the twenties, we can see new forces and trends in English poetry. Around 1930's there was an expansion of higher education. One can observe a new outlook and a new interest among those who were writing literature as well as those who were reading it.

Literature should be "intelligent and common-sensical" became an accepted view. The most important of these new forces, trends and movements were the **Oxford Poets, Left Wing intellectuals, Poets of the Apocalypse** or **Movement Poets**.

The Oxford Poets - **W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day-Lewis, Louis Mac Niece** were committed leftists and advocated communist ideology. These poets followed **Pound** and **Eliot** in their satire and terse colloquialism for the most part. They did not continue the symbolist side of their work.

This partial lack of continuity was an indication of the new social and political conditions which preceded the Second World War. **The Political Poets of 1930s** were more concerned about their political beliefs and the relationship they had with their reading public. They were more interested in content and wide readership.

**New Apocalypse** was the most powerful movement of the forties which was started by **Dylan Thomas**. The movement was carried on into the fifties by his disciple **W.S.Graham**. Like the earlier Romantic movement of **Wordsworth** and **Coleridge**, it was both a revolt and revival. It revolted against symbolist poetry as written by **Eliot** and **Pound** as well as the propagandist poetry of **Auden** and **Spender**. The poets of Apocalypse aimed to restore passion and emotion to poetry.

**The Movement Poets:** In 1950s the Movement Poets came to reject the new Romanticism of the new Apocalypse . The Movement poets **Kingsley Amis, D.J. Enright, Roy Fuller, Donald Davie, Philip Larkin**, went back to their Classicist predecessors like Eliot and Pound and even farther back to the English Augustans like **Pope** and **Jonson**.

#### **6.14 MAIN POINTS**

- Poetry written in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century continues in the Victorian tradition.
- It is easy, simple.
- The poets writing at this time write about nature, love, leisure, old age, childhood, animal, sleep, unemotional subjects.
- Their poetry was criticised for lacking in depth and originality.

- Then started the Modernist revolution in poetry. It started as a reaction to the Victorian Poetry.
- New theories of science, psychology, anthropology, had a great influence on modern poetry.
- Two World Wars had set in a mood of disillusionment and despair.
- Most of the poems deal with the theme of anguish, grief, despair and disillusionment.
- There was a search for new modes of expressions.
- There were new experiments in form and style.
- Poetry of thirties is socially and ideologically committed.
- Poetry of forties goes back to the Romantic traditions.
- Poetry of the fifties rejects Romanticism and reverts to Augustans.

### **6.15 MODERN DRAMA**

In the Victorian age many poets had tried their hand at drama but without any success. However, popular forms of drama like melodrama, farces and sentimental comedies did come up. These had no literary qualities, they were poor in dialogue and characterisation. They relied for success upon sensation, rapid action and spectacle. Around middle of the century with **T.W. Robertson's** comedies there came to be seen some seriousness and with that started the **Revival of Modern English Drama**. Other dramatists like **Henry Arthur Jones** and **A.W. Pinero** did make an effort to introduce naturalism into English drama in the tradition of **Comedy of Manners** - a genre which had languished since the days of **Sheridan**.

When we talk of the Twentieth Century modern Drama one name which comes to mind is that of **Henrik Ibsen**. Around nineties the influence of **Ibsen** and **Irish** Playwrights came to be strongly felt. **Bernard Shaw**, **John Galsworthy** and **Granville Barker** wrote serious drama with social, domestic and personal themes. The realistic drama came to be known as **The Theater of Ideas**.

### **6.16 POETIC DRAMA**

The most prominent trend in the development of Modern Drama in the twentieth century is The **Rise of the Poetic Drama**. (**Poetic Drama is composed in Poetic form**)

**The Poetic Drama** owes its revival to **W.B. Yeats**, and some of his contemporaries who aimed at producing national drama. The creation of **Iris National Theatre** and **Abbey Theater** gave impetus to their efforts. **Yeats**, **Synge** and **Lady Gregory** were the Directors at these theaters. They also wrote for these theatres.

**Yeats** and **Synge** were opposed to realism. They chose themes from legends, folklore and peasantry of Ireland The playwrights of this school sought to revive the true essence of poetry, imagination, passion on the stage. Though verse was the natural medium of expression of many of the dramatists who were poets also, there were others who wrote in poetic prose.

It was **T.S. Eliot** who brought in kind of "*Renaissance of Imagination*". His plays represent an attempt to restore ritual to drama. In his essay "*Three Voices of Poetry*" **Eliot** elaborates the nature and function of poetic drama.

"*The Murder in The Cathedral*" is his first full length poetic play. "*The Family Reunion*", "*The Cocktail Party*", "*The Confidential Clerk*" and "*The Elder Statesman*" are his other important plays. Through these plays he evolved a befitting poetic mode of expression for the poetic drama. In these plays **Eliot** explored the dramatic possibility of verse and extended the scope of poetic drama.

**Christopher Isher wood, W.H Auden, Stephen Spender, Christopher Fry**, are some of the other important poetic dramatists.

### **6.17 MAIN POINTS**

- Modern English drama can be studied in three phases.
- First phase is marked by the plays of **Shaw, Galsworthy**. This phase came to be known as **The Theater of Ideas**.
- Second phase comprises the plays of **Irish Movement**. **Yeats** and **Synge** are the most prominent names in this phase.
- **Poetic Drama** characterizes the third phase. **T.S. Eliot, Isher Wood** are the chief contributors.

### **6.18 MODERN NOVEL**

Novel which had a rather late flowering (around 18<sup>th</sup> century) became the most popular literary form. An important feature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century novel was the way the novelist directly addressed the reader. When we read the novels of 18<sup>th</sup> century novelists like **Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson** and **Charles Dickens** we can see how these novelists interrupted the narrative to pass a judgment on a character, or pity or praise another. Sometimes the narrative took a discursive turn to inform or remind the reader of some other relevant issue. Committed to realism, reason, intellect, creativeness and satirical spirit were the other chief characteristic of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century novel.

**E.M Forster, John Galsworthy, H.G Wells** followed the Victorian tradition. **H.G. Wells** fully exploited modern science in his scientific romances. **John Galsworthy** used the novel form as a platform for discussion of serious socio economic problems of the day. **P.G. Woodhouse** continued to entertain people with his novels of humor. They followed their predecessors' technique.

Some other modern novelists continued to write in the Realistic tradition. **Joseph Conrad** made realism the basis of his romantic tales. **E.M. Forster** was unsparing in his attack on Post war Industrialised England. **Aldous Huxley** analysed the consequences of modern civilisation.

Around 1910 there was to be seen a change in direction. **Virginia Woolf** in her Essay “*Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown*” points out “On or about December 1910 human nature changed”. The provocative and ‘hyperbolic’ statement pinpoints the change in thought, behavior and cultural production.

Novels written between 1910-1960 represent a reaction against the well-made novel of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Novelist writing at this time were actually conscious of unstable modern world, diminishing belief in the idea of progress, radical subjectivity of the self. Consequently modernist fiction speaks of not-nature and being, but of inner self and consciousness. Modern novelists were preoccupied with the need to present reality from multiple perspectives. They were concerned with the question of how the world is perceived. They relied on “*Stream of Consciousness*” narrators and even unreliable witnesses to the present and the past.

### **6.19 STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL**

**Stream of Consciousness** is a narrative device that attempts to record and describe the character's thought processes. Philosopher and Psychologist **William James** used this term in his book “*The Principles of Psychology*” published in 1890. To quote William James “Consciousness then does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits... it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream-of-consciousness or subjective life”, Many use the terms stream of consciousness and interior monologue as synonyms. However the two terms are different. The elucidation of these two terms as given in **Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms** is quite illuminating. **The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms** states that stream-of-consciousness “...can also be distinguished psychologically and literally. In a psychological sense stream of consciousness is the subject matter while interior monologue is the technique for presenting it.”

The modern novelists have made consciousness the central subject of their novels. By consciousness they meant the entire area of higher awareness Basic emphasis in such novels is placed on the exploration of the pre-speech levels of consciousness for the purpose of revealing the psychic beings of the characters. This helps the novelists to escape the limitations of the plot, character and time. **James Joyce** and **Virginia Woolf** two chief practitioners of this kind of novel concentrate on the particular psychological incidents of a character rather than telling the whole story of their life. The unity of time and place has no relevance in such writing.

I will give here the example of **Mrs. Dalloway** – a novel written by **Virginia Woolf**. **Mrs. Dalloway** is a stream-of-consciousness novel. **Virginia Woolf** tells the story of one day in the life of the heroine Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway The novelist records her thoughts as Clarissa Dalloway travels around London preparing for a party she is throwing that night. We come to know about Clarissa Dalloway not through the omniscient narration of the novelist but what-Clarissa Dalloway herself thinks, sees and perceives.

I will recommend that you first read *Tom Jones* by **Henry Fielding**, *Pride and Prejudice* by **Jane Austen**, *David Copperfield* by **Dickens**, *Tess of the d'urbervilles* by **Hardy**. Try to analyse how these novelists present the story of the lives of their characters, what role as novelists, as story-tellers they perform. Then read *To the Light House*, *Mrs. Dalloway* by **Virginia Woolf**, *The Sound The Fury* by **William Faulkner**. Now try to see the difference. How these modern novelists differ from their predecessors in presenting the life story of their characters' lives.

### **6.20 MAIN POINTS**

- Novel in the beginning of the twentieth century started in the Romantic and the Victorian Tradition.
- Two World wars and the consequent disillusionment changed the ethos.
- There are new directions in novel writing - writers are in search of great freedom of expression.
- Freud's theory of unconscious helped the novelist to delve deep into their characters' thought and emotions through the stream-of-consciousness technique.
- The focus shifted from portrayal of outer reality to inner reality.

### **6.21 SUMMING UP**

My objective in this section of the lesson has been to familiarise you with the background of the modern twentieth century literature. The period discussed is 1901-1950. In the process I have discussed some major influences which shaped the modern literature. I have also discussed the social context after two wars. Starting in the tradition of Victorians literary practices we see greater innovation and variety after 1910. Unprecedented literary experimentation brought a different flavor to the literature written. I have cited examples from the works of modern poets and novelists. I will suggest that taking clue from what I have discussed, try to read as many poems and novels as you can. This is the only way we can enjoy and appreciate great works of literature.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

- a. Freud's ..... helped the novelist to delve deep into their characters' thought and emotions.
- b. Who was the author of *Mrs. Dalloway* .....
- c. "*The Murder in The Cathedral*" is his first full length.....
- d. Avant Garde writers experimented with .....

### **6.22 QUESTIONS**

1. What are the major influences on the modern Twentieth Century Literature?
2. Write brief notes on the following:
  - Poetic Drama
  - Literary Experimentation



- Stream-of-Consciousness novel
3. How does the Modern Novel differ from the Victorian novel?

### **6.23 SUGGESTED READINGS**

1. The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Literature.
2. Margaret Drabble: The Oxford Companion to English Literature.
3. A.C. Ward: Twentieth Century Literature.

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**Semester-I**

**COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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**UNIT 7:**

**CHAPTER 1- READING STRATEGIES: INZY LETS THINGS FLOW OVER HIM**

**CHAPTER 3- TELLING STORIES: HAROUN AND THE SEA OF STORIES**

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**STRUCTURE:**

**7.0 Objectives**

**7.1 Introduction**

**7.2 Overview: Chapter I- Inzy Lets Things Flow over Him**

**7.3 About the Author**

**7.4 About Inzamam-ul-Haq**

**7.5 Detailed Summary**

**7.6 Questions for Practice**

**7.7 Check your Progress**

**7.8 Introduction**

**7.9 Overview: Chapter 3: Haroun and The Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie**

**7.10 Detailed Summary**

**7.11 Check your Progress**

**7.12 Questions for Practice**

**7.13 Suggested Readings**

**7.0 OBJECTIVES:**

This unit looks at reading strategies through the first chapter of the text book titled, "INZY LETS THINGS FLOW OVER HIM BY KADAMBARI MURALI". It helps us answer certain questions about the very act of reading. Questions like why we read, what we read, and how we read are what come to mind.

The aim of Chapter 3 is to look at things from a story-telling and fairy-tale perspective. It will enable giving in to one's imagination, and not link the fantastical elements with reality.

The overall objective of reading this unit is to gauge and discern different types of reading, and understand various concepts like tone, mood and setting.

## **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Everyday, we consume a variety of content. We read a multitude of things. We read newspapers, magazines, text messages, billboards, and so on and so forth. We read accompanying graphs and captions along with these things. We read for knowledge, for pleasure, for communication, for inspiration, for understanding the world around us, among other things.

There are various ways in which a text can be read, depending on your intention. Linguists have classified reading strategies into four major kinds.

### **Scanning**

This reading mode is aimed only at finding the necessary information in the text. It does not mean a complete immersion in the text and a deep comprehension of the facts, analysis of grammatical constructions. Often in this mode, the text is viewed for the presence of unfamiliar words, so that after their translation it will be more easy to read the text fully. This type of reading is also called diagonal reading.

### **Skimming**

This reading mode is used to get to know and understand if this information is useful to you (you are viewing a book in a store or a magazine on the shelf before buying it). In this case, the text is also viewed quickly, but not as carefully as in the previous case. The goal is not to search for specific facts, but to evaluate the text for complexity, interest and a general storyline.

### **Extensive reading**

The purpose of this type of reading is to get acquainted with new information. In this mode, people read art or scientific literature, without being distracted by new, unfamiliar words, if their meaning can be approximately understood from the context. This type of reading implies the mastering of the general image and the receipt of new, unfamiliar information. It will be necessary to form and express your opinion about what you read or answer the questions.

### **Intensive reading**

Typically, this type of reading is used in the study of English in order to intensively parse the proposed short, teaching text. With this type of reading, grammatical constructions, unfamiliar words and phrases are intensively examined.

(Four types of reading taken from <https://tv-english.club/articles-en/education-en-2/what-are-the-types-of-reading-in-english-2/#:~:text=Those%20are%20scanning%2C%20skimming%20eyes%2C%20extensive%20reading%20and%20intensive%20reading.>)

While reading, we have to look at the tone, the intention, the flow of speech or conversation, and then make our own inferences about the text. We have to understand the finer nuances of both understanding and writing. Chapter 1, which is the written transcript of an interview between a renowned sports journalist Kadambari Murali, and the childhood friend, of one of Pakistan's best known cricketers- Inzamam –Ul-Haq. Ghulam Mujtaba, flows naturally and easily. There is no strain or too much formality. This conversational tone comes across in the text. It also makes for interesting reading, because in a country like India, where cricket is followed religiously, an insight into the

personal life of a famous cricket player will generally be of interest to and appreciated by people of almost all ages.

## **7.2 OVERVIEW:**

### **Chapter 1: Reading Strategies: *Inzy Lets Things Flow Over Him* by Kadambari Murali**

Written by Kadambari Murali, who is a well-known-sports journalist and former editor of Sports Illustrated India, and published in the Hindustan Times on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2004, this unit details a personal account of a life-long friendship between the then Pakistan cricket team captain Inzamam-ul-Haq and Ghulam Mujtaba. Making good use of her extensive sports knowledge, and versatile work experience at places like the Indian express and the wall street Journal, Murali paints a vivid picture of the life of Inzamam Ul Haq in his biography. This unit is an extract from the same biography, and touches upon the friendship between Inzamam and Mujtaba. As opposed to a professional understanding of Inzamam's life, this unit is more personal and revelatory in nature. We see Inzamam not through the reverent eyes of millions of fans, or through the clinical lens of a sports writer, but rather through the fond gaze of his childhood friend, Mujtaba.

## **7.3 ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

**Kadambari Murali** Wade (born 9 August 1975) the former sports journalist and former Editor-in-Chief of Sports Illustrated India, is the only woman to have held that post at the Hindustan Times. She joined SI India in November 2010, to direct the revamp of the monthly magazine beginning with its January 2011 issue. Her articles largely focus on cricket. She is the youngest national editor of a major news outlet, the first ever winner of the Sports Journalists Federation of India's Cricket Writer of the Year award in 2006, in August 2007. She also broke the story of the formation of the Indian cricket board's (BCCI) plans to create what would later be called the Indian Premier League (IPL) for cricket.

## **7.4 ABOUT INZAMAM-UL-HAQ**

**Syed Inzamam-ul-Haq** , born 3 March 1970 also known as **Inzy**, is a Pakistani cricket coach and former Pakistan cricketer.

He was the leading run scorer for Pakistan in one-day internationals, and the third-highest run scorer for Pakistan in Test cricket. He is the only Pakistani batsman to score 20,000 runs in international cricket arena. He was the captain of the Pakistan national cricket team from 2003–07. As well as being a prolific batsman, he also occasionally bowled gentle left-arm spin.

Inzamam rose to fame in the semi-final of the 1992 Cricket World Cup. He remained one of the team's leading batsmen throughout the decade in both Test and ODI cricket. In 2003, he was appointed captain of the team. His tenure as captain ended after Pakistan's early exit from the 2007 Cricket World Cup. Inzamam retired from international cricket in 2007, following the second Test match against South Africa, falling three runs short of Javed Miandad as Pakistan's leading run scorer in Test cricket at the time. Following his retirement, he joined the Indian Cricket League, captaining the Hyderabad Heroes in the inaugural edition of the Twenty20 competition. In the

ICL's second edition, he captained the [Lahore Badshahs](#), a team composed entirely of Pakistani cricketers.

In April 2016, he was appointed the chief selector of the Pakistan national cricket team.

## **7.5 DETAILED SUMMARY:**

“This is not just the story of a man who has risen to be one of Pakistan's icons. It is also a more human tale, one of two friends and a friendship that has stood for nearly 20 years, despite the differences caused by distance, status and money.”

The very first line of the chapter gives us the essence of the story. Kadambari Murali, while interviewing Inzamam Ul Haq's childhood friend Ghulam Mujtaba, makes it abundantly clear at the very outset of the transcript of the interview that this is more than a story detailing the professional rise of Inzamam. It is actually a tale that reinforces our belief in human values and friendships that can withstand anything, ranging from things like distance and status to money and fame.

The interview takes place on a busy Thursday evening, at an upscale hotel in Multan. The primary focus is on the Indian cricket team, and not the Pakistani cricket team, for the organizers are trying to make sure that no questions can be raised about their hospitality and arrangements for the guest Indian cricket team. However, in the midst of all this hustle-bustle and complete focus on the Indian cricket team, Murali paints a vivid picture of a man who is running about excitedly, trying to get everything in order for his friend's visit. This man is Ghulam Mujtaba, childhood friend and confidant of Inzamam-Ul-Haq, the captain of the Pakistani cricket team. In his bid to make everything perfect for his friend, Mujtaba is trying to find the ideal spot to put up a huge picture of Inzamam, while carefully going over a banner written in English, that is welcoming Inzamam home. He turns to Murali and asks if the English written on the banner is correct. From Murali's tone here, ... "More or less," one smiles apologetically. ", we can infer that perhaps the English on the banner is not fully correct, but Murali does not want to dampen Mujtaba's enthusiasm for his friend's visit by correcting it.

Murali then goes on to write that Mujtaba, childhood friend of Inzamam, is almost as much of a legend and tradition in Multan as the cricketing star himself. Another man in the vicinity, who has been watching Mujtaba's efforts says that people never used to talk of one without mentioning the other. Mujtaba, however, brushes this off, and says that those days are long gone now, and that Inzamam has moved far ahead, while he cheers him on from the side, and watches and celebrates his friend's success with pride.

As the conversation between Mujtaba and Murali flows, we learn that Inzamam and Mujtaba met in their childhood, through Inzamam's older brother Intezaar. Intezaar brought Inzamam to Mujtaba's father's barber shop one day, which is where this lifelong friendship started. Mujtaba was about sixteen or seventeen years old, while Inzamam was a bit younger.

Mujtaba recollects that Inzamam was an introvert since childhood itself. They were a group of four friends, Generally speaking, Inzamam was either to be found at his only sister's house, or spending time with Mujtaba at the latter's house. Deep late night

conversations were common between Mujtaba and Inzamam. Inzamam would make the omelettes and Mujtaba would make the rotis, and they would “just talk and talk.”

Mujtaba recalls how they would often not sleep at all, just wash up and go straight for the first namaaz of the day and be there even before Inzamam's father, Pir Intizam-ul-Haq, one of Multan's biggest spiritual leaders, who would ask the two boys how they had reached the mosque so early. They never told him the truth. The difference in their social status is highlighted by the difference in their fathers' professions. While Inzamam's father was a highly revered spiritual leader, Mutaba's father was a humble barber. However, this did not come in the way of the two young boys forming a lifelong bond, and the difference in their social status continued to be of little consequence, as the story ahead will tell us.

Mujtaba recalls that most of Inzamam's time was spent at the old Multan stadium, with a bat in hand. It was there that Imran Khan saw Inzamam's talent, and convinced him to go to Lahore. While Inzamam's leaving caused a lot of heartbreak for him and Mujtaba, it was the best thing for him to do at that point of time, so he went and joined the Lahore Cricket Club.

Next, Mujtaba remembers when Inzamam was selected for the 1992 World Cup. Here, Mujtaba pays homage to Inzamam's fighting spirit. The latter had suffered a bad bout of food poisoning during the series, and went on to play the semi-final match against New Zealand, just a few hours after getting off the drip, and getting permission to play the match. This did not deter him in the slightest and he went on to deliver a brilliant match winning performance that ultimately paved the way for Pakistan to bring the World Cup home.

When Pakistan won the World Cup in 1992, all of Multan came out to celebrate the man who was instrumental in bringing the cup home- Inzamam Ul Haq. Mujtaba says that when the entire city went out to hail their hero, he did not go, because he felt out of place in Inzamam's new life. He felt that his humble background did not have a place in Inzamam's superstar life now. However, Inzamam had clearly not let stardom get to his head. When the motorcade carrying the young star was passing the barber shop owned by Mujtaba's father, Inzamam got down, and made Mujtaba come with him the rest of the way. From a side note here, we learn that there are pictures of the two friends from this celebratory convoy. Mujtaba, now overwhelmed by emotions, tearfully tells Murali that, “ He has always been that kind of person.”, while talking about Inzamam.

Pondering over the relationship he shares with his friend, Mujtaba says that fame has not changed Inzamam very much. He does however, say that Inzamam has become slightly more assertive in the last few years. Circumstances like accusations of match fixing levied against him, the responsibility of captaining the Pakistan side, and a few other things, all made Inzamam react a little. Despite this, Mujtaba asserts that Inzamam is still just as laidback as he was before. He says that this both the best and the worst thing about Inzamam- his tendency to “let things flow over him.”

Those days, however, are long gone, when this interview takes place. The time frame when this text was written, had a different sort of excitement and pleasure. The next morning, a Friday, we learn that Inzamam comes down to breakfast, followed shortly by Mujtaba, and the two embrace. A short while later, Inzamam leaves to practice nets

with the Pakistani cricket team, leaving his wife and child in Mujtaba's care. As Mujtaba prepares to take Inzamam's wife and son back home, it is clear that this is not something unusual for Inzamam's family, and they are obviously very familiar and comfortable with Mujtaba.

Mujtaba introduces Inzamam's beautiful wife to Murali and then, beaming with pride, gestures to Inzamam's son Ehtesham, who is wearing a mini Pakistan cricket team uniform. From Mujtaba we learn that Ehtesham wants to grow up and become a cricketer, like his father. Mujtaba says that as a friend, there can be no better dream for him to see that his friend's son wants to grow up and become like his father. After this conversation, Mujtaba bids farewell to Murali, and walks off in a hurry. Here, we learn that Mujtaba runs the barber's shop at the upscale hotel where the interview took place. This concluding interaction shows us that Mujtaba and Inzamam, while coming from very different backgrounds, have not let factors like distance, time, social status, or money come in the way of true, genuine, lifelong friendship.

## **7.6 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **Reading Comprehension**

Q1. Is this article easy to understand or difficult? Why?

Ans This article is easy to understand because it is written in a simple, straightforward style. The article on Inzamam-ul-Haq is written by Kadambari Murali, well known sports journalist. She is currently the sports editor of the 'Hindustan Times.'

As the first paragraph ends we know that this article is based on a conversation between the journalist Kadambari Murali and Ghulam Mujtaba, close friend of Inzamam-ul-Haq or Inzy, as he is known by his friends. The conversation takes place in the lobby of a hotel in Multan where Mujtaba is busy preparing for Inzy's return home. Mujtaba and Inzy have been close friends for twenty years and Mujtaba narrates old incidents to Kadambari, telling her how Inzy and he would spend whole nights chatting with each other. He also tells Kadambari about Inzamam's early cricketing career, his rise to become a cricket sports star, his success and his problems. We get to know that Inzamam has never been assertive and only recently started to assert himself.

Q2. Who does the article tell us more about Inzamam or Mujtaba? Who are you more interested in? Why?

Ans. This article tells us more about Inzamam, though it is based on a conversation between the journalist and Mujtaba. The reader would naturally be more interested in learning about Inzamam as he is a sports icon. Inzamam was captain of the Pakistan cricket team from 2003-7. In the Indian subcontinent cricket is a religion and fans love to read about their favourite players.

Q3. On reading a passage, it is important to be able to tell about its style. From the following words decided which word/s describe this passage best:

Ans. The style of the article is *informal* and *conversational* Kadambari Murali does not go into details of Inzamam's career or his achievements as a cricketer. Instead she adopts the

human approach and focuses on Mujtaba’s reflections (*reflective*) on Inzamam’s personality and his narration (*narrative*) of the early days of their friendship.

Q4. Through it is spoken language that is marked by informality, there can be levels of formality in written language too. Some typical features of formal and informal language are given below.

Ans. The main features of formal and informal styles are:

| <b>Formal</b>                                 | <b>Informal</b>                                 |
|---|---|
| complete and grammatically accurate sentences | hesitations, false starts, and interruptions    |
| well organized and well-structured paragraphs | short and often incomplete sentences            |
| precise and accurate use of words             | contractions or short forms                     |
| simple and compound sentences                 | greater frequency of complex sentence structure |
| use of jargon or technical terms              | clichés, repetitive use of words                |

Examples of formal and informal writing

Informal writing:

Silena Beauregard, one of the nicer girls from Aphrodite’s cabin, gave me my first riding lesson on a pegasus. She explained that there was only one immortal winged horse named Pegasus, who still wandered free somewhere in the skies, but over the eons he’d sired a lot of children, none quite so fast or heroic, but all named after the first and greatest.

Being the son of the sea god, I never liked going into the air. My dad had this rivalry with Zeus, so I tried to stay out of the lord of the sky’s domain as much as possible. But riding a winged horse felt different. It didn’t make me nearly as nervous as being in an airplane. Maybe that was because my dad had created horses out of sea foam, so the pegasi were sort of . . . neutral territory. I could understand their thoughts. I wasn’t surprised when my pegasus went galloping over the treetops or chased a flock of seagulls into a cloud.

The problem was that Tyson wanted to ride the “chicken ponies”, too, but the pegasi got skittish whenever he approached. I told them telepathically that Tyson wouldn’t hurt them, but they didn’t seem to believe me. That was what made Tyson cry.

(Taken from *Percy Jackson and the Sea of Monsters* by Rick Riordan)

Formal Writing:

Progress in almost every field of science depends on the contributions made by systematic research; thus research is often viewed as the cornerstone of scientific progress. Broadly defined, the purpose of research is to answer questions and acquire new knowledge. Research is the primary tool used in virtually all areas of science to expand the frontiers of knowledge. For example, research is used in such diverse scientific fields as psychology,



biology, medicine, physics, and botany, to name just a few of the areas in which research makes valuable contributions to what we know and how we think about things. Among other things, by conducting research, researchers attempt to reduce the complexity of problems, discover the relationship between seemingly unrelated events, and ultimately improve the way we live.

Although research studies are conducted in many diverse fields of science, the general goals and defining characteristics of research are typically the same across disciplines. For example, across all types of science, research is frequently used for describing a thing or event, discovering the relationship between phenomena, or making predictions about future events. In short, research can be used for the purposes of description, explanation, and prediction, all of which make important and valuable contributions to the expansion of what we know and how we live our lives. In addition to sharing similar broad goals, scientific research in virtually all fields of study shares certain defining characteristics, including testing hypotheses, careful observation and measurement, systematic evaluation of data, and drawing valid conclusions.

(Taken from *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology* by David De Matteo and David Festinger)

## **7.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Who does the chapter one tell us more about, Inzamam or Mujtaba? Who are you more interested in? Why?
2. Given below are adjectives and adjectival phrases that could be used to describe Inzamam. Decide which of them fit Inzamam and why. Justify your choice on the basis of the information/ suggestions given in the article:

Loyal, hard-working, dedicated, ambitious, religious, shy, reserved, requires little sleep, dependent upon his friends, close to his family, a man who hides things about himself, emotional, assertive, relaxed, reacts easily, responsible, like showy welcomes, not status conscious, big eater, does not make friends easily

3. Now write a short paragraph describing Inzamam in your own words. Make a list of qualities (like the ones given above) that you think could be used to describe Mujtaba, based on information/suggestions given in the article. Do you find some qualities are contradictory? How can you reconcile them? Write a short paragraph describing Mujtaba, as you did for Inzamam.

4. Some of the sentences used in the article are given in column A Match them with their formal versions in Column B.

| Column A : Informal Style                                     | Column B: Formal Style   |
|---|--|
| 1. Now he has <u>gone far ahead</u>                           | 1. He manages the barber's shop in the hotel.                                  |
| 2. We <u>hit it off</u> immediately.                          | 2. I would feel out of place in his new lifestyle.                             |
| 3. He would <i>hang out</i> at my home.                       | 3. He would spend a lot of time with me at my home.                            |
| 4. He played that match <i>coming straight off the drip</i> . | 4. He has greatly improved his position and status in life.                    |
| 5. I wouldn't <i>fit in with</i> his new life now.            | 5. He remains unaffected by criticism or praise.                               |
| 6. He just <i>lets things flow over</i> him                   | 6. We soon developed a warm, friendly relationship.                            |
| 7. He <i>runs</i> the barber's shop in the hotel.             | 7. Immediately after being discharged from the hospital, he played that match. |

Ans:

| Informal Style   | Formal Style  |
|--|---|
| Now he has <i>gone far ahead</i> .                         | He has greatly improved his position and status in life.                    |
| We <i>hit it off</i> immediately.                          | We soon developed a warm, friendly relationship.                            |
| He would <i>hang out</i> at my home.                       | He would spend a lot of time with me at my home.                            |
| He played that match <i>coming straight off the drip</i> . | Immediately after being discharged from the hospital, he played that match. |
| I wouldn't <i>fit in with</i> his new life now.            | I would feel out of place in his new lifestyle.                             |
| He just <i>lets things flow over</i> him                   | He remains unaffected by criticism or praise.                               |
| He <i>runs</i> the barber's shop in the hotel.             | He manages the barber's shop in the hotel.                                  |

### **7.8 INTRODUCTION:**

Chapter 3: Telling Stories : **Haroun and The Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie**

“In several ways, Haroun is close to the heart of Rushdie as man and as writer. He said: 'I began to devise the yarn that eventually became Haroun, and felt strongly that if I could strike the right note it should be possible ... to make it of interest to adults as well as children. The world of books has become a severely categorized and demarcated affair, in which children's fiction is not only a kind of ghetto but one subdivided into writing for a number of different age groups. The cinema, however, has regularly risen above such

categories But of all the movies, the one that helped me most as I tried to find the right voice for Haroun was *The Wizard of Oz*,<sup>6</sup> (my emphasis).

Rushdie's main characters, Rashid Khalifa and Haroun, his son, are introduced in medias res from the beginning. Their very names are signs that it will be a story of wonders and fantastic happenings. The Haroun and the Sea of Stories 109 names are extracted from that of Haroun-al-Rashid, the fifth Abbasid Caliph (or Khalifa), during whose magnificent reign Baghdad reached its cultural peak, and whose court is associated with the tales of *The Arabian Nights*. Their origin suggests that these two characters can be regarded, from one perspective, as two aspects of a single role: the father as the creator of artistic works and the son as the preserver of these works. This reflects Rushdie's own relation to Anis, father and storyteller, underlined by the fact that 'Rashid' alludes to the writer's own name too. Moreover, the connection to *The Arabian Nights* (unmistakable when the reader learns that the houseboat in which Rashid and Haroun are to stay on Lake Dull is called *Arabian Nights Plus One*) intimates another dimension in the story: the context in which Rushdie was placed while writing it, under a death threat. As Foucault has observed, 'the motivation, as well as the theme and the pretext of Arabian narratives - such as *The Thousand and One Nights* . . . was the eluding of death'. The simplicity of Haroun is, then, deceptive. Rather, it is complex and multi-layered. Medieval allegory, as in *Piers Plowman* or Dante, operates on three levels - the literal narrative, the moral and the spiritual or mystic. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* works on the levels of the fairy story, the political and the moral. Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) is a comic religious allegory. *The Lord of the Rings* (1954- 55) by J. R. R. Tolkien, a cult figure in the 1970s, functions as a literal story, on a moral level as the epic confrontation between Good and Evil, and on a political level, as a self-glorifying account of little England defeating Hitler. Rushdie, self-consciously postmodern, appears to hark back to medieval, later and recent allegory, and he substitutes his own levels - children's story, the political, the mystique of art and the personal.

As appropriate in a children's story, the hero is a child, Haroun. Read at this level, the book is an entertaining mix of fantasy and the everyday world, with such characters as the reckless bus driver, politicians, the (harmless) gangsters and the flying bird. The immediate starting-point of the story is a domestic catastrophe. Haroun loses his mother, Soraya. Mr Sengupta who lives upstairs, seduces her. Rashid Khalifa's livelihood and motivation for living was in his gift for storytelling, and Sengupta makes Soraya lose faith in him by undermining his position as storyteller. Sengupta is the first to ask the most important question in the book: 'What's the use of stories that aren't even true?' Rushdie's portrayal of Sengupta and his wife Salman Rushdie is important. 'Mr Sengupta was a clerk at the offices of the City Corporation and he was as sticky-thin and whiny-voiced and mingy as his wife Oneeta was generous and loud and wobbly-fat' Western cartoon presentation is basic to Rushdie's technique in the book and Rushdie's sympathies are suggested clearly. Sengupta hated stories and storytellers, and has no imagination; this in itself is a significant criticism of the man. The key question he puts to Soraya, is italicised soon after and Rushdie adds that Haroun was haunted by what he considered 'the terrible question'. Soraya elopes at eleven a.m. and Rashid smashes all the clocks in the house, which thus remain halted at eleven, an episode recalling James Thurber's story 'The 13 Clocks'. Eleven is an interesting number because it consists of a doubling of the same digit and it is the first of such numbers. It becomes a sort of magic number because Haroun finds that thereafter he cannot concentrate on anything for more than eleven minutes. Faced with the elopement and his father's pathetic response, Haroun angrily asked Rashid

Sengupta's question Haroun is penitent as he recalls this soon after but the damage has been done. Rashid loses his ability to tell stories. (From one perspective, Haroun is about writer's block and the freeing of the imagination.) The shortcomings of his parents compel the son to try to rectify matters. The influence of *The Wizard of Oz* is potent here and a parallel to the film evident. Rushdie wrote: 'The Wizard of Oz is a film whose driving force is the inadequacy of adults, even of good adults, and how the weakness of grown-ups forces children to take control of their own destinies. One of the answers to the central question of the book is given by the politicians. They found that Rashid's stories were useful, not despite their falseness, but because of it. The action of the story takes place near election time and the politicians need Rashid's help to win votes. 'Nobody ever believed anything a politico said, even though they pretended as hard as they could that they were telling the truth. (In fact, this was how everyone knew they were lying.) But everyone had complete faith in Rashid, because he always admitted that everything he told them was completely untrue and made up out of his own head.' The suggestion, then, is that one of the uses of the storyteller is as a propagandist. In the very first sentence of the book, the name of the country in which the story occurs is stated - Alifbay, important because it comes from the Hindustani word for 'alphabet'. It puts the focus on Haroun and the Sea of Stories language and writing. Soon after the reader is told that Haroun often thought of Rashid as a juggler 'because his stories were really lots of different tales juggled together, and Rashid kept them going in a sort of dizzy whirl'. This seems to apply to Rushdie's own technique in *Haroun*; it is not inapposite to compare it to Shakespeare's handling of a multiplicity of characters and plotlines in *King Lear* or Conrad's in *Nostromo*.

**(Introduction by D.C.R.A Goonetilleke, 'Macmillan Modern Novelists- Salman Rushdie.', 2008, Macmillan Press Ltd.)**

### **7.9 OVERVIEW:**

Chapter 3: Telling Stories : ***Haroun and The Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie**

Rushdie wrote this novel after a long gap when his ten year old son Zafar complained to him that he never wrote anything for children. Rushdie wrote 'The Satanic Verses' in 1988, which was considered blasphemous for its ironic vision of Islam and Ayatollah Khomeini, Supreme Leader of Iran, had issued a death warrant or fatwa against him. As a result the British government provided him protection and he remained underground for nearly ten years. 'Haroun and the Sea of Stories', published in 1990, was the first book that he published after going into hiding and it was dedicated to his son.

It is written in the fairy tale tradition but there are autobiographical elements in the troubled relationship between Rashid and Soraya, the love between father and son, and the writer's/ storyteller's predicament when faced with the loss of his freedom to tell stories. The extract is from the beginning of the novel, from the chapter titled 'Shah of Blah'. It is a brilliant illustration of Rushdie's ability to create a magical world and his rich, innovative language

### **7.10 DETAILED SUMMARY:**

The extract starts off in the typical storytelling tradition of "Once Upon a Time" We learn that once upon a time, there existed a very sad city , in the country of Alifbay. The word

‘Alifbay’ is the Hindustani word for ‘alphabet’, which is in consonance with the primary theme of the extract. Through Rushdie’s dexterous use of different adjectives, metaphors, similes, and synonyms to convey sadness, we are convinced that the city is indeed, extremely sad. The descriptions of this terribly sad city include imagery like, a *mournful* sea, full of *glumfish*, which were so *miserable* to eat that they made people belch with *melancholy*, mighty factories in the north of the city where *sadness* was actually manufactured, packaged and sent all over the world, which ironically, never seemed to get enough of it, and black smoke pouring out of the chimneys of the factories, hanging like *bad news*.

In stark contrast to this description of the sad city, we have the description of the Khalifas, their house, and Rashid Khalifa himself, in particular. Rashid Khalifa, a storyteller, was known far and wide for his wonderful and exciting stories. To his admirers, he was the Ocean of Notions. To those who were his rivals and resented him, he was the Shah of Blah. Rashid’s wife Soraya had a cheerful disposition, and was a very good singer. Rashid and Soraya, along with their son, made up the small family unit of the Khalifas.

The Khalifas lived in the poor part of the city, and their house was painted brightly, as opposed to all the other dull, gray houses that were to be found in the city of sadness. The rich lived in skyscrapers and mansions. While the poorest of the poor did not have homes to live in at all and were pavement dwellers, and the other poor people lived in tumbledown shacks made of old cardboard boxes and plastic sheeting, which were glued together by *despair*, the Khalifas lived in the downstairs part of a small concrete house with pink walls, lime-green windows and blue-painted balconies with squiggly metal railings, all of which made it look, in Haroun’s view at least, more like a cake than a building. The emphasis on the storytelling style is evident here too, with the example of Haroun’s childish imagination comparing their brightly painted house to a cake.

In the midst of all the sadness and despair that surrounded them, the Khalifas lived a happy life. Haroun was brought up in a home that was not just bright and cheery on the outside, but also happy and vivacious on the inside. Rashid’s ready laughter and Soraya’s sweet voice were found in abundance at the home of the Khalifas.

However, all good things must come to an end, and the Khalifas’ happiness too, was short-lived. Perhaps the sadness of the city had finally made its way into their formerly happy home. One fine day, Soraya stopped singing and all music left the household of the Khalifas. Haroun deduced that something was wrong, but could not put his finger on what it was exactly that went wrong. Rashid Khalifa, on the other hand, was so busy living in his world of make believe, and telling his jokes and stories, that he failed to see that something was hugely amiss in his own home. While he was out enchanting people with his stories, Soraya stayed home, and became gloomy and miserable, and even very angry (thunderous) at times.

Haroun went with his father whenever he could. To Haroun’s youthful, childish mind, Rashid often seemed like a juggler or magician because so many of the stories he told were different stories juggled and juxtaposed together. The skill with which he juggled and combined all the stories so effortlessly was something that never ceased to amaze Haroun. Haroun often wondered about the source from which all his father’s wonderful stories stemmed. It seemed that all Rashid had to do was part his lips and smile, and the stories would come flowing out. The stories were full of sorcery, romantic tales,

princesses, wicked uncles, fat aunts, heroes, knights in shining armour, and so on and so forth. Whenever Haroun asked his father about where he got his stories from, Rashid would reply that he got them from the Great Sea of Stories. Haroun would insist that there was no such thing. (This claim however is disproved if one reads the full novel, and we read about Haroun going to the great Sea of Kahaani and renewing his father's subscription) Whenever Haroun would ply his father with numerous questions, Rashid would tell him to simply enjoy the fantastic stories and not ask too many questions. This statement by Rashid came as a forewarning of sorts, for one day, Haroun asked one question too many, which caused his life to turn upside down.

At this point in the story, we are introduced to the Khalifas' neighbours, the Senguptas. The Khalifas lived on the lower floor of a two storey house that is described as a cake in the text, while the Senguptas lived upstairs. Mr Sengupta was a clerk at the offices of the city corporation and he is described as "sticky-thin" and whiny-voiced and "mingy" in stark contrast to his wife Oneeta, who is described as "generous", "loud and" "wobbly-fat." The Senguptas were a childless couple and because of this, Oneeta Sengupta paid a lot of attention to Haroun. She brought him sweetmeats, which was fine by Haroun, and ruffled his hair, which Haroun was not too fond of, but tolerated for the sake of the sweetmeats. Whenever she would hug Haroun, he would get alarmed because her flesh seemed to cascade about her when she moved, and completely enveloped him in its folds.

While Haroun was tolerant of Oneeta Sengupta because of the sweets she gave him, he did not much care for or like Mr Sengupta, because the latter did not give Haroun any attention at all, and was always talking to Soraya, filling her ears with nasty, malicious gossip. Mr Sengupta was always particularly critical of Haroun's father and would lecture Soraya that life was not a story-book or joke shop. He would also ask, very condescendingly, that was the point of stories that were not even true.

This question about the point of stories that were not even true lodged itself firmly into Haroun's brain. He could not stop thinking about it. While pondering over it, he came to the conclusion that while Rashid's stories were not true, there were several people who liked and valued Rashid's stories. During election time, politicians would beg Rashid to come and tell stories at their Rallies. It was a universally well-known fact that if a politician could get Rashid on his side, half the battle was won. Rashid had some sort of magic and enchantment. People listened to his stories, because he never claimed that any of them were true, which was in direct contrast to the silver-tongued politicians, who fabricated false tales, and convinced people that these false tales were true. Rashid, because of his disarming honesty, and storytelling expertise, was in great demand. He could pick and choose out of all the politicians who would line up at his door during election time.

One day, however, the Khalifas' fortune changed, and whatever could go wrong, went wrong. everything went wrong. Haroun was on his way back home from school He was caught in the first showers of rain during the rainy season. When it rained, it brought some relief to the sad city. There was better fish available to eat. Haroun liked to get wet in the rain. So when he reached home, he was quite drenched. Mrs Oneeta was standing on her balcony. She was crying, and shaking like a jelly, because of her considerable weight. Initially, Haroun did not realize that she was crying. He thought her tears were the raindrops falling down on her face. However, when went indoors, he found that his father too had wet eyes, although his clothes were dry. The reason that both Mrs Sengupta and

Rashid were crying was that Soraya had run away with Mr. Sengupta. At 11:00 a.m. she had sent Rashid into Haroun's room to search for some missing socks. While he was busy searching for the socks, he heard the front door slam. Rashid rushed to the living room. He found his wife gone. An instant later, he heard the sound of a taxi and saw his wife getting into it. The taxi sped away very fast. In a fit of anger Rashid broke down all the clocks in the house, when the clocks read 11:00 A.M. (If you read the story beyond the extract that is part of the syllabus, you will realize that this affects Haroun profoundly, and he can only retain his concentration for eleven minutes.)

Soraya had left a note for Rashid. It was bitter and caustic, and exemplified all the nasty and vicious things Mr Sengupta had filled her head with. In the note, Soraya had written that Rashid was interested only in stories while a proper man would know that life is a serious business. She had also written that Mr Sengupta had no imagination and so she liked him, because this was in direct contrast to Rashid, who had too much imagination. In the postscript, she addressed Haroun and told him that while she loved him, but could not help doing what she did.

Rashid was a broken man. Helpless and defeated, he told Haroun that story-telling was the only thing he knew. Haroun, already overwhelmed by the circumstances, lost his temper, and shouted at his father, yelling, "What's the point of it? What's the use of stories that aren't even true?" To this question, poor Rashid had no answer, and he hid his face in his hands and wept.

Once he'd asked it, Haroun immediately wished that he could take back and swallow the question, but he knew that was one thing which was not possible. He felt sorry immediately, and wanted to retract his horrible question. Then the unthinkable happened. Rashid Khalifa, the legendary storyteller, stood up before a huge audience. He opened his mouth to tell a story, but he could not say even a single word. He had run out of stories to tell.

## **8 7.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

### **Reading Comprehension**

Q1 : Haroun asks his father three questions. What are the questions?

1. Haroun was curious to know where the fantastic stories his father told came from. When Rashid, his father, told him that the stories came from the Great Story Sea, Haroun wanted to know where his father kept the hot water from the Great Story Sea. Another time Haroun wanted his father to tell him why he didn't have any sisters or brothers but Rashid did not give a straight answer and told him that since Haroun was as good as four or five children they could not have more.  
The third question that Haroun asks his father is when his mother Soraya runs away with Mr. Sengupta, their neighbour. Haroun is upset and angrily asks his father, "What's the use of stories that aren't even true?"

Q2 : From the answers Haroun got from his father, would you say that straight answers were beyond Rashid Khalifa?

2. Rashid Khalifa is a storyteller and he is used to creating imaginary worlds. It is not surprising then that he does not give straight answers to any of Haroun's questions. Rashid is the Shah of Blah.

Q3 : What was so terrible about the third question that Haroun 'wanted to get those words back....into his own mouth'? Does it prove to be a terrible question after all?

3. Haroun feels terrible after asking his father what use it was telling stories that were not true. He realizes that it is precisely what Soraya has written in the note that she has left for Rashid. Soraya has run away with Mr. Sengupta because she wanted to be with a man who was practical, not like Rashid whose head was full of make believe. As soon as he asks this question Haroun regrets hurting his father. After this Rashid loses his powers and cannot tell fantastic tales.

Q4: Why do you think Soraya runs away with Mr. Sengupta?

4. Soraya is tired of her husband who lives in a make-believe world. Maybe she feels that her husband is not practical enough or neglecting her but there is a hint that she feels unhappy. During the early years of her marriage she sings sweetly all-the-time but then one day she stops singing all of a sudden.

Q5: Are stories always lies? What is the difference between the stories that politics tell and those that Rashid tells?

5. Politicians pretend that they are telling the truth but the public could understand that they are lying. Rashid's stories interested people because he would insist that they were his creation and they trusted him.

Q 6: In this lesson you have been given an extract from a long story. Can you guess how the story will continue or end? Which words/sentences can help you predict this?

6. The story comes to an end when Rashid loses his capacity to tell stories. If we read the story further we realise that Haroun goes to the great Sea of Kahani to restore his father's subscription to storytelling.

Q7: Is there a fundamental contradiction between 'stories' and 'truth'? Can stories help us understand the truth? What 'truth' do films like Sholay or Mother India help us understand?

7. There is no fundamental contradiction between stories' truth. In fact, stories are sometimes a means to arrive at the truth. A film like Sholay shows how revenge is a strong feeling. A film like Mother India shows how a woman can fight against odds.

### **7.12 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE:**

Read the following comprehension passages and answer the questions below:

- I. Comprehension passage



There was once in the country of Alifbay a sad city, the saddest of cities, a city so ruinously sad that it had forgotten its name. It stood by a mournful sea full of glumfish, which were so miserable to eat that they made people belch with melancholy even though the skies were blue. In the north of the sad city stood mighty factories in which (So I'm told) sadness was actually manufactured, packaged and sent all over the world, which never seemed to get enough of it. Black smoke poured out of the chimneys of the sadness factories and hung over the city like bad news.

Questions:

1. What was the name of the sad city?
2. Where was the sad city situated?
3. What was the quality of glumfish?
4. What did the factories manufacture?
5. What was the colour of the skies over the sad city?

## II. Comprehension passage

The Khalifas lived in the downstairs part of a small concrete house with pink walls, lime-green windows and blue-painted balconies with squiggly metal railings, all of which made it look (in Haroun's view) more like a cake than a building. It wasn't a grand house, like the skyscrapers where the super-rich folks lived; then it was nothing like the dwellings of the poor, either. The poor lived in tumbledown shacks made of old cardboard boxes and plastic sheeting, and these shacks were glue together by despair. And then there were the super-poor, who had no homes at all. They slept on pavements and in the doorways of shops, and had to pay rent to local gangsters for doing even that. So the truth is that Haroun was lucky; but luck has a way of running out without the slightest warning. One minute you've got a lucky star watching over you and the next instant it's done a bunk.

Questions:

1. Where did the Khalifas live?
2. How did the house look like according to Haroun?
3. Where did the super-rich folks live?
4. Where did the poor live?
5. What were the local gangsters doing?

## III. Comprehension passage

The Senguptas lived upstairs. Mr.Sengupta was a clerk at the offices of the city corporation and he was as sticky-thin and whiny-voiced and mingy as his wife Oneeta was generous and loud and wobbly-fat. They had no children at all, and as a result Oneeta Sengupta paid more attention to Haroun than he really cared for. She brought him sweetmeats (which was fine), and ruffled his hair ( which wasn't), and when she hugged him the great cascades of her flesh seemed to surround him completely, to his considerable alarm.

Questions:

1. What was Mr.Sengupta's profession?
2. Was Mr.Sengupta a generous person?
3. How many children did the Senguptas have?

4. Did Mr.Sengupta pay attention to Haroun?
5. How did Oneeta look after Haroun?

#### IV. Comprehension passage

What's the use of stories that aren't even true? Haroun couldn't get the terrible question out of his head. However, there were people who thought Rashid's stories were useful. In those days it was almost election time, and the grand panjandrums of various political parties all came to Rashid, smiling their fat-cat smiles, to beg him to tell his stories at their rallies and nobody else's. It was well known that if you could get Rashid's magic tongue on your side then your troubles were over. Nobody ever believed anything politico said, even though they pretended as hard as they could that they were telling the truth. (In fact, this was how everyone knew they were lying.) But everyone had complete faith in Rashid, because he always admitted that everything he told them was completely untrue and made up out of his own head. So the politicos needed Rashid to help them win the people's votes. They lined up outside his door with their shiny faces and fake smiles and bags of hard cash. Rashid could pick and choose.

#### Questions:

1. What was the question that troubled Haroun?
2. What was the opinion of the people about Rashid's stories?
3. Who begged Rashid to tell stories?
4. Why did everyone have complete faith in Rashid?
5. How did the politicians approach Rashid?

#### V. Comprehension passage

On the day that everything went wrong, Haroun was on his way home from school when he was caught in the first downpour of the rainy season.

Now, when the rains came to the sad city, life became a little easier to bear. There were delicious pomfret in the sea at that time of year, so people could have a break from the glumfish; and the air was cool and clean, because the rain washed away most of the black smoke billowing out of the sadness factories. Haroun Khalifa loved the feeling of getting soaked to the skin in the first rain of the year, so he skipped about and got a wonderful warm drenching, and opened his mouth to let the raindrops plop on to his tongue. He arrived home looking as wet and shiny as a pomfret in the sea.

Miss Oneeta was standing on her upstairs balcony, shaking like a jelly; and if it hadn't been raining, Haroun might have noticed that she was crying. He went indoors and found Rashid the storyteller looking as if he'd stuck his face out of the window because his eyes and cheeks were soaking wet, even though his cloths were dry.

#### Questions:

1. Name the different kinds of fish mentioned here.
2. Which fish did the people prefer?
3. What did the rain do on the factories?
4. How did Haroun enjoy the rain?
5. How did Haroun look like when he arrived home?

### **7.13 SUGGESTED READING**

1. Das Gupta, *Chidananda*, Jibananda Das, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1972.
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3. Basheer, Vaikom Muhammad, *The Magic Cat*, trans N. Kunju, Trissur: Kerela Sahitya Akademi, 1977.
4. Dwivedi, A. N. ed., *Studies in the Contemporary Indian English Short Story*, New World Literature Series, 37, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1990

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**Semester-I**

**COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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**UNIT 8:**

**CHAPTER 5- UNDERSTANDING POETRY 1: SISTERS**

**CHAPTER 7- UNDERSTANDING VALUES: GO KISS THE WORLD**

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**STRUCTURE**

8.0 Objectives

**8.1 Introduction: Chapter 5-Understanding poetry I- Sisters**

8.2 An Insight into Sibling Rivalry

8.3 About the Poet

8.4 Overview

8.5 Detailed Summary

8.6 Critical Commentary

8.7 Questions for Practice

8.8 Check your Progress-1

**8.9 Introduction: Chapter 7: Understanding Values: Go Kiss the World by Subroto**

**Bagchi**

8.10 About the Author

8.11 Detailed Summary

8.12 Questions for Practice

8.13 Check your Progress-II

8.14 Comparison with Another Famous Speech

8.15 Suggested Readings

**8.0 OBJECTIVES:**

Literature is, and has always been, the sharing of experience, the pooling of human understanding about living, loving, and dying. Successful poems welcome you in, revealing ideas that may not have been foremost in the writer's mind in the moment of composition. The best poetry has a magical quality—a sense of being more than the sum of its parts—and even when it's impossible to articulate this sense, this something more, the power of the poem is left undiminished.

Poems speak to us in many ways. Though their forms may not always be direct or narrative, keep in mind that a real person formed the moment of the poem, and it's wise to seek an understanding of that moment. Sometimes the job of the poem is to come closer to saying

what cannot be said in other forms of writing, to suggest an experience, idea, or feeling that you can know but not entirely express in any direct or literal way. The techniques of word and line arrangement, sound and rhythm, add to—and in some cases, multiply—the meaning of words to go beyond the literal, giving you an impression of an idea or feeling, an experience that you can't quite put into words but that you know is real.

In this text, we will be able to analyze the differential treatment meted out by parents to children, which causes sibling rivalry. However, this poem will also show us that while parents might treat their kids differently, internally, they are also proud of their children for standing up to injustice.

The second chapter in this unit, 'Go Kiss The World' helps us to identify certain core values and beliefs that will help us on the path to success. What are the foundational values that we need to build on, in order to emerge triumphant? In this text, through the lens off a successful entrepreneur, we analyze certain belief systems that can go a long way in shaping a person.

### **8.1INTRODUCTION: CHAPTER 5-UNDERSTANDING POETRY I- SISTERS**

“Sisters” by Saleem Peeradinai is a persona poem wherein a father speaks fondly of his two daughters. The characteristic and physical differences between them, and his own behavior towards them are being reflected through this poem. Through this text, Saleem Peeradina touches upon the complexities of parenthood, the competition among siblings, the differential impact it can have on children, and the importance of self-assurance in young women.

### **8.2AN INSIGHT INTO SIBLING RIVALRY:**

According to Jeanine Vivona, a professor of psychology at the College of New Jersey who has studied sibling rivalry, “competition with siblings is just a fact of life. And we, as people with siblings and people with children, can just try to manage it as best we can.” Observational studies have shown that sibling conflict may happen up to eight times an hour.

Other research finds that pairs of sisters tend to be the closest, and that sibling dyads that include a brother have the most conflict. “Conflict does decrease into adolescence; it sort of levels off,” said Mark Ethan Feinberg, a research professor of health and human development at Pennsylvania State University. “Early and middle childhood are particularly difficult times for sibling aggression.”

As a study that Feinberg co-authored notes, the book of Genesis, which includes the “founding stories of the Western psyche,” is dripping with tales of murderous and covetous siblings, like Cain and Abel and Jacob and Esau. And these stories unfurl “themes researchers are exploring today: dastardly deeds, conflict over parental love and resources, and triangulation of children into parental conflicts.”

Sibling rivalry is so profound that hundreds of years ago, when child mortality was much higher, children under 5 with close-in-age siblings were more likely to die. These deaths were likely “related to increased prevalence of childhood infectious disease in such households, and lower levels of maternal nutrition, and perhaps more general competition for parental attention,” said Sarah Walters, an associate professor of demography at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the co-author of a study on siblings and mortality

clustering in 19th-century Belgium. This knowledge certainly puts my kids' fights over who got more ice cream into perspective.

While most siblings aren't fighting for actual scraps, psychologically, sibling rivalry serves a developmental purpose: It helps children figure out what is unique and special about themselves, otherwise known as "differentiation." Children want to be seen as the most special by their parents, so they're "always going to push for preferential treatment," over their siblings, Vivona said. But they may also shape their interests and personalities around their siblings' skills and desires.

( Taken from The New York Times, 13/01/2021

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/13/parenting/sibling-rivalry-fights-kids.html>)

### **8.3 ABOUT THE POET:**

Saleem Peeradina was born in Mumbai, India in 1944. He is the author of five collections of poetry, and a prose memoir of growing up in Bombay, *The Ocean in My Yard* (Penguin, 2005). He was editor of *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English* (Macmillan, 1972), one of the earliest and most widely used texts in courses on South Asian literature. He currently lives in Michigan, and is Emeritus Professor of English at Siena Heights University. His fifth poetry collection, *Final Cut*, was published by Valley Press in June 2016.

### **8.4 OVERVIEW:**

The poem is about two sisters described fondly by their father, who is the "I" persona of the poem. The daughters are five years apart. The older one is nearly ten, and the younger one is five. Through his words, the speaker presents a clear picture of the younger daughter. However, a thorough reading will help us see that subtly, we are also being told about the characteristics of the older daughter, who knows that the father is "unfair" and "moralizing." While the father chides the older daughter, he also is secretly proud of his daughter for not accepting injustice. Even when she withdraws into silence, she still believes and knows, deep down, that what is happening, is unfair.

### **8.5 DETAILED SUMMARY :**

"One, not quite ten  
but ahead of the other, younger  
whose five plus will never catch up  
with the big one's lead  
no matter how good she acts.  
or how hard she cheats."

Here, the author, a father to two young girls, talks about the difference in their ages, and how that difference alone shapes their general demeanor. The elder of the two is a notch under ten years of age, and the other, a little over five. The younger sister sees her lack of years as a disadvantage, and knows that it's a gap she cannot close. Meanwhile, the father keenly observes the younger sister make attempts at closing that gap through the pretense of good behavior, or even by resorting to cheating. This unilateral competition, in the form of a sibling-rivalry, between his two daughters seems to amuse the father.

“Like any disadvantaged species  
she has turned the handicap  
in her favour: she’s bolder,  
sneakier, sweeter than honey,  
obeyer of commands, underminer of rules,  
producer of tears, yeller, complete  
turnaround”

Continuing in her attempts to overcome the handicap that she perceives her younger age to be, she has an arsenal of tools at her disposal, continually strategizing to gain an upper hand over her sibling. The father then goes on to admire his younger daughter’s singularly turncoat ability to sweet talk and put on a farcical display of obedience, while sneakily undermining rules and throwing tantrums. In his observations, the father brands this variety of behavior in his younger daughter as being “complete.”

“The older one gets  
the tough end of it. Most times  
blames end up in her sullen face.  
Fighting back, she argues, attacks  
me for taking the wrong side.  
I sweet talk her the way all parents”

In stark contrast to his treatment of the otherwise deceitful younger daughter, the father acknowledges that his elder daughter is most often left to draw the short straw in situations where the two might quarrel with each other. In becoming the sole target of her sister’s manipulative behavior and her father’s reproof, the elder sister has learnt to fend for herself. She admonishes her father for his conspicuous bias and questions his decision to side with her sibling. At the tender age of ten, she has already begun to develop a sense of morality and justice, that her father perhaps lacks, and instead chooses to whisper sweet nothings to pacify her.

“At all times have tried explaining  
to the elder child. Living up  
to her inheritance, she blazes back  
at my moralizing. On bad days  
I shout her down, immediately  
regretting my words.”

The author notes that he too, like all parents, always tries placating his daughter through sweet talk. However, this often tends to miscarry, and he finds himself having to quell yet another rebellion against his own unfair behavior. The father admits to the folly of his ways, especially when in a bad mood, he ends up shouting at her – regretting doing so almost immediately.

“But even as she retreats  
into simmering silence, she stands her ground  
knowing me to be unfair. Secretly,  
I rejoice at the lesson never intended  
but so well learnt: how to overcome

fathers, real and imaginary.”

Upon being rebuked by her father, the elder sister, helpless, recedes into silence as she continues to fume at the unjust treatment meted out to her. The father, while cognizant of his wrongful treatment of the elder daughter, claims to secretly enjoy having been able to teach his daughter something about the authoritarian and arbitrary ways of the world. In doing so, he offers himself reassurance that his methods, though unfair, are enabling his elder daughter to learn to choose between right and wrong. The reference “fathers...imaginary”, alludes to similar people and situations that she must face in the real world, for which he has inadvertently prepared his elder daughter.

### **8.6 CRITICAL COMMENTARY:**

Bijay Kant Dubey: *Sisters* by Saleem Peeradina is one of those poems which deal with family and relationship, more specially brotherly and sisterly relations, growing in a big household with so many family members growing in rivalry and complexes, drawing from sociology, psychology and so on. Peeradina as a poet is one from Bombay, but settled in the States, an Emeritus Professor of English. To read him is to place him in betwixt India and America, an Indo-American writing in English. One among the non-resident Indians, Peeradina is like Vijay Seshadri, Tabish Khair, Vikram Seth, Meena Alexander and so on. But here he has chosen to take up sisters, family rules and regulations and systems to dwell upon personally. Sociologically, it is about the family and sisterly relationship. Psychologically, it is about the mind-set. Tennyson’s ‘The old order changeth yielding place to new’ flashes upon the mind’s eye. There is something of generation gap in the poem. A conflict between conventionalism and modernity can be seen in contrast. In the persona of the eldest sister lies in the voice of his father, but in the younger sibling the tone of modernity. Pretense and hypocrisy cannot be called aristocracy. In want of resources, shortage of food, prestige cannot stake a claim over. There are complexes too to be grappled, the inferiority complex and the superiority complex as the brothers quarrel it not, even the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law quarrel for holding the keys of the house. Saleem has said what it has not been. This happens it in our society of ghettos and taboos inside our house, behind the curtain. The eldest sister appears to be in monitory which is perhaps not acceptable to all. There is something of A.K.Ramanujan’s *The Last of the Princes* in it. A.K.Ramanujan too describes his family in terms of a dead father, left-out sisters as debts and family conditions ironically what the others have left, have not taken sociologically.

Dr. Anil Aneja, Delhi University: The poem ‘Sisters’ deals with sibling rivalry and with the question of one’s response to injustice. The elder daughter is expected to be docile, and submit to authority, and mould herself on the role of a traditional female figure. But even at a young age, she is conscious of her rights as a child, and, by rebelling against the authoritarian stance of her father, the elder daughter breaks out of the image of a meek submissive girl-child. She is capable of combating injustice by assertively taking a stand. This defiance renders a note of celebration to the poem. Parents are often not impartial in their attitude towards their children. It is quite possible that a boy in the place of the elder sister would have behaved more aggressively; and perhaps the father would also have behaved differently towards a boy-child.



## **8.7 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE:**

### **Passage I**

“One, not quite ten  
but ahead of the other, younger  
whose five plus will never catch up  
with the big one’s lead  
no matter how good she acts.  
or how hard she cheats.”

1. What are the ages of the two girls?

Ans: One sister is about ten , and the other is about five years of age.

2. Who will never be able to catch up with the other and why?

Ans: The younger sister will never be able to catch up to the older one, because of the physical difference in ages.

3. What clues do you get about the behaviour of the younger girl?

Ans: She pretends to be good, and cheats a lot.

### **Passage II**

“Like any disadvantaged species  
she has turned the handicap  
in her favour: she’s bolder,  
sneakier, sweeter than honey,  
obeyer of commands, underminer of rules,  
producer of tears, yeller, complete  
turnaround.”

1. 1. What is meant by disadvantaged species? What does such a species do?

Ans: A ‘disadvantaged species’ is one that is vulnerable and faces more issues than an advantaged species.

2. In what way is she ‘disadvantaged’?

Ans: She is disadvantaged because she is younger.

3. How does the younger sister overcome the handicap?

Ans: She is bold, sneaky, sweet as honey, and undermines rules.

4. What is the younger daughter like?

Ans: She is as sweet as honey, obeys commands, and undermines rules.

### **Passage III**

The older one gets  
the tough end of it. Most times  
blames end up in her sullen face.  
Fighting back, she argues, attacks  
me for taking the wrong side.  
I sweet talk her the way all parents  
At all times have tried explaining  
To the younger child.”

1. Who is the “I” of the poem? How is he related to the “older one”?

Ans: The “I” of the poem is the father of the two girls.

2. Who gets the tough end of it? Why?

Ans: The older daughter gets the tough end of it, because she is mostly blamed for everything.

3. How does she react to the blame?

Ans: She fights back, argues, and attacks the father for being unfair.

4. What does the speaker try to do at such and all times?

Ans: He tries to sweet talk her, the way all parents do, and tries to pacify her.

5. In what way is he like other fathers?

Ans: He tries to explain to and sweet talk the older daughter, like all other fathers.

#### **Passage IV**

Living upto her inheritance, she blazes back  
at my moralizing. On bad days  
I shout her down, immediately  
regretting my words.  
But even as she retreats  
into simmering silence, she stands her ground  
knowing me to be unfair. Secretly,  
I rejoice at the lesson never intended  
but so well learnt: how to overcome  
fathers, real and imaginary.”

1. What inheritance is referred to here?

Ans: The inheritance of not standing up for injustice.

2. What does the narrator do on bad days?

Ans: On bad days, he shouts her down, and instantly regrets it.

3. Does he realize what he is doing?

Ans: The realization is immediate, and he regrets it immediately.

4. How does “she” stand her ground even though she retreats into “simmering silence”?

Ans: She stands her ground by making her displeasure known.

5. What does the narrator rejoice at secretly? Why?

Ans: The narrator rejoices at the fact that despite the fact that he is unfair to his daughter, she does not take the injustice quietly.

6. What does the speaker mean by “fathers , real and imaginary”?

Ans: All people and patriarchal structures that will try to impose their will on the older daughter.

#### **8.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

a. Compare and contrast the following poems with ‘Sisters’. Can you identify any similarities/ differences?

#### **Sibling Rivalry**

Do you remember the day that your sister was born?  
And when they brought her home?  
You wished they’d take her back again;  
You were happy on your own.  
She demanded attention all day long,  
And screamed into the night.  
You were forgotten as they pandered to her  
But you’d put up a fight.

You were jealous. She was new.  
She'd stolen half their love.  
You'd find a way to squeeze her out  
If push should come to shove.  
You would put her in her place,  
You hatched your evil schemes,  
Like the time you 'helped' to bathe her  
And washed her hair with Vaseline.

I've seen the photo of you both,  
Sitting on the sofa.  
You look away, your arm outstretched,  
Your sister falling over.  
Concerned mother by her side,  
You hid a spiteful grin.  
You had always been here;  
The youngest would not win.

- **Jazzula**

### **The Jealous Little Princess.**

I am a princess.  
I stand beside the king.  
He pushes my sister,  
In the pram we're forced to bring.  
I do not like my sister.  
She cries far too much.  
Sometimes I wish that I could,  
Give that pram an extra push.  
She isn't really royal-  
an adopted vagabond.  
How can she be our family,  
When all she does is wrong?  
She steals too much attention,  
From the real royal heir.  
The king and queen are fussing,  
But I'm sure they do not care.  
With this little ruffraff  
On her way to steal my crown.  
I'll have to call a fairy,  
Get her turned into a clown.  
Whatever she's turned into  
Will be better for our home.  
Attention back on me,  
Will be better for the throne.

**-Beth van der Pol**

## **8.9 INTRODUCTION: Chapter 7: Understanding Values: Go Kiss the World by**

### **Subroto Bagchi**

This essay was actually delivered as a welcome address by Subroto Bagchi to the graduating class of 2004, at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. Management, Bangalore. In this essay, Mr Bagchi demonstrates how the values instilled in the minds of children during the formative years of their childhood are fundamentally important while shaping their beliefs, morals and values. The writer gives examples from his own family to show how different values, instilled in him by his parents when he was a young boy have become sound management lessons for him

## **8.10 ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Subroto Bagchi (31 May 1959) is an Indian entrepreneur and business leader. He is the co-founder of Mindtree and a business author. Bagchi was born to Makhan Gopal Bagchi and Labonya Prova Bagchi in Patnagarh, Odisha, where his father was a junior government servant. He grew up in Odisha, moving from place to place because of the nature of his father's job. He has narrated the story of his life in his book *Go Kiss the World* published by Penguin Portfolio.

He started his work life as a clerk in the Industries Department of the Government of Odisha in 1976 after giving up his post graduate studies. After a year of working there, he qualified to be a management trainee in DCM in 1977 where he worked for the ensuing 5 years. In 1981, he entered the computer industry and worked for a number of computer companies between 1981 and 1999 in various functions like sales, marketing and operations. His longest stint was at Wipro where he became the Chief Executive of Wipro's Global R&D before working for chairman Azim Premji as corporate Vice-President, Mission Quality. He left Wipro in 1998 to join Lucent Technologies. He left Lucent a year after to co-found Mindtree in 1999 along with 9 other co-founders. Mindtree is a \$1 billion (Fiscal 19), Global IT services company with approximately 20000+ people. It is listed at the National Stock Exchange and the Bombay Stock Exchange in India.

When Mindtree started, Subroto Bagchi began as chief operating officer. Soon after, the company was hit by a global economic slowdown and then the events of 9/11 took place. Many early-stage companies collapsed during this time and Bagchi moved to the US in response and helped the leadership team stay together through the difficult years.

Between 1999 and 2007, he was instrumental in articulating Mindtree's mission, vision and values. He led leadership development, marketing and knowledge management initiatives that differentiated the company from the beginning. Mindtree's distinctive physical locations reflect his thought leadership. He is also the face of the company's outreach beyond business. In 2007, he was part of the apex team that led Mindtree from an idea to IPO. Post-IPO, Bagchi took on the role of Gardener at Mindtree. In this new role, he focused full-time on the Top-100 leaders at Mindtree to expand their leadership capacity beyond the founding team. In 2010, he was appointed vice-chairman to the Board. On 1 April 2012, he assumed the office of chairman. He stepped down as the chairman in January 2016.[3] On May 1, 2016, at the invitation of the Chief Minister of Odisha, he took on the full-time role of Chairman, Odisha Skill Development Authority in the rank and status of a Cabinet Minister at an annual salary of Rupees 1.

Subroto is also on the Board of White Swan Foundation. White Swan Foundation for Mental Health is a not-for-profit organization that offers knowledge services in the area of mental health. The Foundation provide patients, caregivers and others with well-researched content that will help them make informed decisions on how to deal with mental health issues.

### **8.11 DETAILED SUMMARY:**

The writer begins by telling us that he was the last child of a small time government servant in a family of five brothers. The writer's father was a District Employment Officer in Koraput, Orissa, which in those days did not have any electricity, a primary school, or even tap water. The writer was unable to go to school till he was eight years old, and so was homeschooled. His father had a job where he was transferred after every year. The family had to keep moving from place to place. This was no obstacle for the writer's mother, who had been brought up a widow in who came to India from East Bengal at the time of partition. She would have a full-fledged household and domestic establishment up and running in no time. This essay is primarily about the author expressing gratitude to his parents, who shaped the very foundation of his life, and imbibed in him asset of values and principles, that helped him be both a successful as well as good human being.

The writer talks about how his father, being a government servant, had been given a jeep to use by the government. Due to there being no garage at the office, the jeep was parked at the family's government provided accommodation. The jeep stayed parked there, and no member of the family was allowed to use it for personal or family trips. This incident gave the writer the first lesson he learnt from his parents- to use a government vehicle or any other facility provided by the government for official government work only, and never for personal use.

Subroto and his brothers were also not allowed to call the jeep's driver by his name and were always told to add the suffix "Dada" before his name. When Subroto grew up, he taught the same lesson to his daughters and they were supposed to call their driver "uncle", and Subroto recalls that they would always call the driver "Raju uncle." Whenever he would hear other people, especially school going and college going age people disrespecting drivers or other staff by calling them by their names, Subroto would find himself cringing. Here, we are acquainted with the second lesson that the writer picked up from his father- to treat one's juniors and subordinates with even more respect with which one would treat one's seniors.

The author's father instilled in all his five children the habit of reading the newspaper daily. When he was younger, the author and his brothers did not understand much of what was written in the newspaper, but the purpose of this everyday newspaper reading was to give the children a sense that the world was not merely limited to the Koraput district, but was in fact, much larger. After they had read the newspaper, the children were told to fold and keep the newspaper neatly. Their father's advice to them was " You should leave your newspaper and toilet the way you expect to find it." This advice implies that the father taught his children to be considerate of others, and respect others.

As children, Subroto and his brothers were always enamoured of transistor radios. They did not have a transistor radio, and the children would often crowd round their father, asking him when they would get a transistor radio of their own. To this, the father would reply that he already had five radios, referring to his five sons. The Bagchi family also did not have a house of their own. When the children would ask their father when they would get their own

house, he would once again refer to his five sons as the five houses he already owned. Here, the children learnt to value family and human relationships more over material possessions. This made up another lesson, “not to measure personal success and sense of wellbeing through material possessions.”

From his mother too, Subroto learnt many valuable lessons. The Bagchi family would move houses every year because of the father’s transferable government job. The houses which the government gave to the Bagchi family rarely had fences. Subroto along with his mother used to make the fences with twigs and decorate the house with little plant seedlings. When other people asked Subroto’s mother that what was the need to beautify a government house that they would leave in a year, she replied them that she had to create bloom in a desert and fo keeping that in mind, she wanted to leave any place more beautiful while leaving, as compared to when she first inherited it. Subroto calls this his first lesson in success, “It is not what you create for yourself, it is what you leave behind that defines success..”

Subroto’s mother started developing cataract in her eyes when he was very small. At the same time, his eldest brother got a teaching job in Bhubaneswar University and was also preparing for civil services examination, alongside his job. So that his focus would not be detracted from his job and preparation, it was decided that Subroto’s mother and Subroto himself, for he was the youngest, and still dependent on his mother, would move to Bhubaneswar to help keep house and cook for the oldest brother. . This was the first time that Subroto saw electricity in houses and water coming from taps. Subroto’s daily job there was to read the Oriya script newspaper from head-to-toe for his mother, because she only knew the Bengali script. While reading the newspaper, Subroto used to feel a sense of larger connectedness with the world. This sense of connectedness with a larger world out there made up Subroto’s next lesson.

During the time that Subroto and his mother were at Bhubaneswar with his brother, India was in the midst of a raging war with Pakistan. Lal Bahadur Shastri’s famous slogan “Jai Jawan Jai Kissan“ sparked the country into unity, and became a rallying call for all Indians. Like most children, Subroto fancied himself a superhero, and dreamt of catching a terrorist, and then reading the news of his own heroism and bravery in the newspaper’s front page the next day. He used to spend hours guarding and play- defending the university’s water tank, imagining that a terrorist would come to poison it and he would be the one to catch him. Though he did not catch a single terrorist or spy, Subroto’s imagination became another lesson for him. He says, “If we can imagine a future, we can create it; if we can create that future, others will live in it. That is the essence of success.”

In the next few years, Subroto’s mother’s eyesight deteriorated even further . She underwent surgery for cataract, and when she saw Subroto’s face clearly for the first time in many years, after the operation, she exclaimed that she did not know that he was so fair. This adulation from his mother gave Subroto pleasure ,even many years after his mother had said it to him. Subroto’s mother’s literal vision was short lived, but she gave her son a larger vision of life. Within few weeks of getting her vision back after the cataract operation, she developed acorneal ulcer and became blind in both eyes. Subroto’s mother lived with her blindness for thirty two long years, but he never saw or heard her complaining When Subroto asked her what did she saw with those blind eyes, his mother replied that she did not see darkness , but only saw the light. Till eighty years of age, Subroto’s mother performed her morning yoga every day, cleaned her room and washed her clothes on her own too, despite

the fact that she was completely blind. This way Subroto's mother taught him another lesson – success is not to see the word but it is about seeing the light.

Subroto began his professional life as a clerk in a government office, went on to become a management trainee with the DCM group, and later joined the IT industry when fourth-generation computers came to India in 1981. While Subroto was taking up challenging assignments and travelling all over the world, his father suffered third degree burns in 1992, and was admitted to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. Subroto, who was in the United States of America at that point of time, flew back immediately to be with his father. One day, while attending to his father, he realized that the bottle of blood was empty. Fearing that the air would enter his father's veins, he talked to the nurse on duty, and asked her to change it. In the understaffed and dirty atmosphere, the nurse who was already overworked, snapped at Subroto that he should change the bottle himself. When he finally managed to persuade the nurse finally agreed to change it, Subroto's father, a man on his deathbed, woke up, and murmuring, asked the nurse why she was still there and why she had not gone home yet. Subroto was left dumbstruck by his father's compassion for others, even while on his own deathbed. Here, Subroto realized that there are no limits to the compassion that we can have for others. His father died the next day, but left his sound principles and morals behind.

Subroto's parents were poles apart in their beliefs. His father was a firm believer in the British Raj and doubted the capability of post-Independence political parties to govern the country whereas Subroto's mother believed in the exact opposite. When she was young, she has garlanded Subhash Chandra Bose and had learned how to spin khadi, and use swords and daggers. Although Subroto's parents had different ideologies but still they lived harmoniously together. This taught Subroto another important lesson - that success is not the ability to create a dogmatic end state, but is a process of continuous thinking.

Subroto's mother died due to a paralytic stroke at the age of eighty two, in Bhubaneswar hospital. Subroto had flown down from the United States to be with her. He stayed with her for two weeks, during which time, she did not get any better or any worse. Eventually, Subroto had to return to work and when he was reluctantly leaving, he lowered his head to kiss his mother's face before leaving, and in her paralytic state, in garbled and confused speech, his mother told him to not to kiss her but to kiss the world. Subroto was overwhelmed that on her deathbed, his mother, who had come to India as a refugee and was raised by a widow, her husband's salary was just rupees three hundred, and had been blind for the majority of her adult life, was telling him to go kiss the world.

In conclusion, the author says that success to him is about vision. It is the ability to rise above the immediacy of pain. It is about imagination. It is about sensitivity to small people. It is about bringing about inclusion and a larger sense of connectedness to a bigger world. It is giving life more than what one takes out of it. It is about creating extraordinary success within ordinary lives.

Subroto Bagchi thanks the audience, wishes them luck, tells them, "Go, Kiss the World" and leaves.

### **8.12 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

Q.1. Why do you think that the children in the Bagchi household were not allowed to call the driver the driver'?

Ans. The writer's father believed in the importance of all people, especially those who were juniors and subordinates. So he did not allow his children to call the driver by his name or simply "the driver." They were asked to call him 'dada' meaning , which meant elder brother.

Q. 2. Describe, in your own words, Koraput as remembered by Bagchi.

Ans. Koraput is a district in Orissa. When the writer was a small child living there with his father, Koraput had no electricity, no tap water, and no primary school. It was obviously a backward area at that time.

Q.3. Bagchi learnt a number of things from his parents. List the three lessons that he associates with his father and the three that he associates with his mother.

Ans. The three lessons Subroto Bagchi learnt from his father were standing for principles, respecting all human beings and building relationships and a sense of connectedness with a larger universe. His mother taught him to leave behind things better than when they were found, independence, and never complaining about fate.

Q4. Go, kiss the world are the last words of Bagchi's mother to him. What do you think she means:

- i) Be inclusive
- ii) Stay connected to a larger world existence
- iii) Give back to life more than you take from it.

Ans. The writer's mother meant that one should be connected to a universe larger than oneself and that one should always leave something better than what one found it in the first place.

### **8.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

#### **Passage I**

As District Employment Officer, my father was given a jeep by the government. There was no garage in the office, so the jeep was parked in our house. My father refused to use it to commute to the office. He told us that jeep is an expensive resource given by the government- he retreated to us that it was not 'his jeep' but the government's jeep. Insisting that he would use it only to tour the interiors, he would walk to his office on normal days. He also made sure that we never sat in the government jeep- we could sit in it only when it was stationary. That was our early childhood lesson in governance- a lesson that corporate managers learn the hard way, some never do. The driver of the jeep was treated with respect due to any other member of my father's office. As small children, we were taught not to call him by his name. We had to use the suffix 'dada' whenever we were to refer to him in public or private. When I grew up to own a car and a driver by the name of Raju was appointed, I repeated the lesson to my two small daughters. They have, as a result, grown up to call Raju 'Raju Uncle' – very different from many of their friends who refer to their family driver, as 'my driver'. When I hear that term from a school-or college going person, I cringe.

Read the above passage and answer the following questions. .



1. What did the writer's father say about the jeep given to him?
2. When could the writer and his brothers sit in the jeep?
3. How was the driver of the jeep treated?
4. What lesson did the writer pass on to his two small daughters?
5. How do the friends of his daughters treat their drivers?

### **Passage II**

My father was a fervent believer in the British Raj. He sincerely doubted the capability of the post-independence Indian political parties to govern the country. To him, the lowering of the Union Jack was a sad event. My mother was the exact opposite. When Subhash Bose quit the Indian National Congress and came to Dacca, my mother, then a schoolgirl, garlanded him. She learnt to spin khadi and joined an underground movement that trained her in using daggers and swords. Consequently, our household saw diversity in the political outlook of the two. On major issues concerning the world, the Old Man and the Old Lady had differing opinions. In them, we learnt the power of disagreements, of dialogue and the essence of living with diversity in thinking. Success is not about the ability to create a definitive dogmatic end state; it is about the unfolding of thought process, of dialogue and continuum.

1. What did the narrator's father think of the British Raj? What did he think of Indian political parties?
2. What were the political views of the narrator's mother?
3. What had the narrator's mother done in the past to show her faith in her political views?
4. What were the consequences of the difference of opinion between the narrator's mother and father?
5. What lesson did the narrator learn about success from the differing political views of his parents?

### **Passage III**

In 1992, while I was posted in the US, I learnt that my father, living a retired life with my eldest brother, had suffered a third degree burn injury and was admitted in the Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. I flew back to attend to him-her remained for a few days in critical stage, bandaged from neck to toe. The Safdarjung Hospital is a cockroach infested, dirty, and inhuman place. The overworked, under-resourced sisters in the burn ward are both victims and perpetrators of dehumanized life at its worst. One morning, while attending to my father, I realized that the blood bottle was empty and fearing that air would go into his vein, I asked the attending nurse to change it. She bluntly told me to do it myself. In that horrible theatre of death, I was in pain and frustration and anger. Finally when she relented and came, my father opened his eyes and murmured to her, 'why have you not gone home yet?' Here was a man on his deathbed but more concerned about the overworked nurse than his own state. I was stunned at his stoic self. There I learnt that there is no limit to how concerned you can be for another human being and what the limit of inclusion is you can create. My father died the next day. He was a man whose success was defined by his principles, his frugality, his universalism and his sense of inclusion. Above all, he taught me that success is your ability to rise above your discomfort, whatever may be your current state. You can, if you want, raise your consciousness above your immediate surroundings. Success is not about building material comforts- the transistor that he never could buy or the house that he never owned. His success was about the legacy he left, the memetic continuity of his ideals that grew beyond the smallness of an ill-paid, unrecognized government servant's world

1. What does the writer say about the conditions in the burns ward of the Safdarjung Hospital?
2. What does he mean when he says that the sisters there are both the victims and perpetrators of the dehumanized life at its worst?
3. What did the nurse tell the writer when he asked her to change the blood bottle of his father?
4. What did his father ask the nurse? What did it show about him?
5. What stunned the writer?
6. What lesson did the writer's father leave behind even after his death?

#### **8.14. COMPARISON WITH ANOTHER FAMOUS SPEECH**

Read the following speech given by Steve Jobs to the graduating class of Stanford University, in 2017. Can you identify certain similarities and some clear differences between his ideas and Bagchi's? Analyse.

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: "We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said: "Of course." My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned Coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles

across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But 10 years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backward 10 years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4,000 employees. We had just released our finest creation — the Macintosh — a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down — that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me — I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the

lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it. Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle. My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called *The Whole Earth Catalog*, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors and Polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: It was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.  
Thank you all very much.

(<https://news.stanford.edu/2005/06/14/jobs-061505/>)

### **8.15 SUGGESTED READING**

1. Das Gupta, *Chidananda*, Jibananda Das, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1972.
2. Dharwadekar, Vinay, 'Modern Indian Poetry and its Contexts', in A.K. Ramanujan and Vinay Dharwadekar eds, *The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.
3. Basheer, Vaikom Muhammad, *The Magic Cat*, trans N. Kunju, Trissur: Kerela Sahitya Akademi, 1977.
4. Dwivedi, A. N. ed., *Studies in the Contemporary Indian English Short Story*, New World Literature Series, 37, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1990

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**Semester-I**

**COURSE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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**UNIT 9:**

**CHAPTER 8- UNDERSTANDING POETRY II: AMALKANTI**

**CHAPTER 10-UNDERSTANDING HUMOUR: CHOCOLATE**

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**STRUCTURE**

**9.0 Objectives**

**9.1 Introduction to Understanding Poetry II - Amalkanti by Nirendranath Chakrabarti**

**9.2 About the poet**

**9.3 About the poem**

**9.4 Text with Paraphrase and Summary**

**9.5 Reading between the Lines**

**9.6 Questions for Practice: Comprehension Questions**

**9.7 Vocabulary**

**9.8 Reading Exercise**

**9.9 Writing Exercise**

**9.10 Check Your Progress**

**9.11 Introduction to Understanding Humour - Chocolate by Manju Kapur**

**9.12 About the writer**

**9.13 Text**

**9.14 Critical Commentary**

**9.15 Word Meanings**

**9.16 Comprehension Questions**

**9.17 Vocabulary**

**9.18 Reading and Writing Exercises**

**9.19 Check your Progress**

**9.20 Suggested Reading**

**9.0 OBJECTIVES:**

**After a careful reading of this Unit, you will be able to:**

- **Write explanation of selected passages**

- Analyze different ways of reading a poem and a story
- Appreciate the writing style of the poet/ author
- Employ new and better words for similar situations
- Identify the devices used by the poet/author to create Irony/humour

### **9.1 INTRODUCTION:**

Daydreaming is often considered an unproductive habit but can you think of a day when you did not do that as a child. Dreams made most of our world as children and those dreams were definitely different from professional ambitions and goals. Those dreams were made of better fabric; threads of joy and creativity, layers of colours and characters, laces of ecstasy and rainbows. We so wished to stay in that utopian land forever but we soon grew up and those dreams were replaced with real-life and materialistic ambitions. Some of you still visit those dreams sometimes and like to connect to them. Well, that is a good habit and helps us retain our innocence and our faith in the goodness of life. Some of us also wove it into creative lines.

Dear Readers, Poetry is one of the finest ways to convey the most difficult feelings and the given poem in our syllabus- ‘Amalkanti’ -tries to bring a plethora of themes like existential crisis, dreams, aspirations and real-life goals. All of us have some aims and objectives in life, and while in school we share them with our friends who either help us achieve the same or laugh about some far-fetched ideas. As children, we have all experienced a phase where we explored improbable ambitions and had a good laugh about it. ‘Amalkanti’ however does not amuse its readers with any humour rather, leaves them with profound thoughts. Let us find out about the writer who charts our journey into the land of imagination and also brings us back.

### **9.2 ABOUT THE POET:**

Born in 1924 at Faridpur in undivided Bengal, Nirendranath Chakraborty was a dominant figure in the modern Bengali literary field. His first book of poems *Nil Nirjone* was published in 1954 when he was 30 years old. He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 1974 for his poem ‘Ulanga Raja’ (naked king) which mocked the social set up. His ‘Amalkanti Roddur Hote Cheyechhilo’ (Ammalkanto wanted to be the sunshine), ‘Kolkatar Jishu’ (Christ of Kolkata) and ‘Pahari Bichhe’ (Mountain scorpion) are considered his two other cult poems. Chakraborty had been associated with leading Bengali magazine *Desh* and *Anandamela* for children, whose editor he had been for years, and some well known other magazines. Chakraborty had penned more than 47 books, many of them for children, apart from 12 novels and numerous essays on different issues. He was also a recipient of ‘Ananda Purashkar’ and was the president of Paschimbango Bangla Akademi. He remained active in literary activities till he became seriously ill. He breathed his last on December 25, 2017.

### **9.3 ABOUT THE POEM:**

The poem is originally written in Bengali language by Nirendranath Charkabarti and has been translated in English by Sujit Mukherjee and Meenakshi Mukherjee. The poem is a reminder of internal conflict between life’s finest aspirations and the harsh realities of our existential crisis. ‘Amalkanti’ means pure radiance and in the poem, it is

**the name of the poet's friend. The name matches his character as he wants to become the sunlight. Narendranath Chakrabarti has used the literary device of Irony to express whether Amalkanti has turned successful in becoming the sunlight or not. 'Amalkanti' will grip you, quietly but completely. From a pale shadow of no significance he becomes a living being, walking slowly into his class, diffident, timid yet self-conscious.**

#### **9.4 HERE IS THE POEM FOR YOU (IN PARTS).**

**Please read it aloud to appreciate it more.**

**1. Amalkanti is a friend of mine,  
we were together at school  
He often came late to class  
and never knew his lessons.  
When asked to conjugate a verb,  
he looked out of the window  
in such puzzlement  
that we all felt sorry for him.**

**Paraphrase: The speaker/poet is sharing about a friend of his named Amalkanti. They were classmates in school. The poet goes on to describe how he always came late to the class and never knew any of the lessons. Whenever he was asked to conjugate a verb, he was unable to do the same and looked out of the window. He appeared puzzled and confused and all the classmates felt sorry for him.**

**Summary: In the introductory paragraph, the poet is describing the traits of his classmate Amalkanti. Here the speaker mentions that Amalkanti is his childhood friend and was with him in the same school. Amalkanti was apparently a weak student in academics for whenever he was asked to conjugate a verb; he could not complete the task and stood speechlessly. This was maybe because he did not pay attention to any of the class lessons as he was always gazing out of the window. The poet mentions that the whole class felt sorry for him.**

**2. Some of us wanted to be teachers,  
some doctors, some lawyers.  
Amalkanti didn't want to be any of these.  
He wanted to be sunlight-  
the timid sunlight of late afternoon,  
when it stops raining  
and the crows call again,  
the sunlight that clings like a smile  
to the leaves of the jaam and the jaamrul.**

**Paraphrase: Some of the classmates wanted to be teachers, some others wanted to be doctors while others wanted to become lawyers. However, Amalkanti did not want to be any of the given professions. He was so impressed by the sunlight that he wanted to be the same. The faint sunlight of the late afternoon, one that touched the earth after the rain, when the cows called again, attracted him so deeply that he wanted to be one. The sunlight that fell on the leaves of jaam and jaamrul trees (berry bearing trees) inspired him.**



**Summary:** In this paragraph, the poet is explaining the varied ambitions of the classmates and how focused they were to achieve them. Some of them wanted to be teachers, some doctors, some lawyers and much more but Amalkanti did not want to be any of those. His goal was to become the sunlight that lights up the sky and is responsible for the fresh beginning of summer. He wanted to be that sunlight that brings a smile on the faces of jaamrul leaves after heavy rain, he wanted to be the sunlight which will act as the source of inspiration for others.

3.     **Some of us have become teachers,  
Some doctors, some lawyers.  
Amalkanti couldn't become sunlight.  
He works in a poorly-lit room  
for a printer.  
He drops in now and then to see me,  
chats about this and that  
Over a cup of tea, then gets up to go.  
I see him off at the door.**

**Paraphrase:** The poet mentions that some of the classmates grew up to become teachers, while some others became doctors and lawyers. However, Amakanti could not become the sunlight, for it was an impractical ambition. The poet informs the readers that quite ironically, Amalkanti works in a dimly lit room at a printer's office. Amalkanti often visits the poet's house to see him and talks about a number of things in life, over a cup of tea. He leaves after that and the poet sees him off at the door.

**Summary:** The paragraph defines the failure of Amalkanti in achieving his ambition. All of them are grown up and have become doctors, teachers and lawyers but Amalkanti is the only one who couldn't become the sunlight that he always wanted to be since childhood. He works in a dark room for a printing press and according to the speaker, could not even light up his own life. The speaker further says that sometimes Amalkanti visits him and they both drink tea and chat. The speaker himself couldn't help him and just sees him off the door as he leaves.

4.     **The one among us who's a teacher  
could have easily become a doctor.  
If the one who'd wanted to be a doctor  
had become a lawyer,  
It wouldn't have much difference to him.  
All of us got more or less what we wanted,  
All except Amalkanti-  
Who used to think so much about sunlight  
That he wanted to become sunlight.**

**Paraphrase:** The classmate who was a teacher could have easily been a doctor. The one who was a doctor could have become a lawyer. All this did not make a difference in Amalkanti's life. Majority of the classmates were able to achieve their professional goals but Amalkanti could not achieve his dream of becoming the sunlight.

**Summary:** The poet says that the people who wanted to become teachers could have easily become doctors, doctors could have become lawyers and if they had then it really wouldn't have mattered them much. They all got what they wanted, some more and some less but Amalkanti is the only who couldn't become the sunlight that he always wanted to be.

### **9.5 READING BETWEEN THE LINES:**

**Dear readers, as students of literature you have always been asked to read between the lines which means to comprehend newer and different meanings that the one stated. This poem too can be read in different ways.** On reading the poem more than once, we gain different perspectives regarding the same. The dream of becoming sunlight is hard to explain. If we relate it with the features of real sunlight, the dream can be considered different. Sunlight had always received great significance in world mythologies, parables and folk tales. So when Amalkanti's dreams to become the sunlight, it must be to do something different; something that will keep the humanity kindled with hope, strength and light. His dream appears almost impossible to achieve. So Amalkanti should have worked hard enough to fulfill it. However looking into how his friend (poet) describes him, he seems to have never worked on it. Therefore in the last stanza, the poet says they (except Amalkanti) have more or less achieved the dreams. He also says that the one who is a teacher could have easily become a doctor or a lawyer. But Amalkanti who wanted to become sunlight didn't become sunlight. Instead he landed in a poorly lit room to work with a printer. So Amalkanti was portrayed as a lazy man who crazily set a high ambition but did not work hard to achieve the same. The first reading might bring him as a loser. It indeed teaches us to have reasonable and realistic dreams and then to work accordingly to have them achieved.

This poem could give us another perspective. Amalkanti doesn't appear destined to be a teacher, a doctor or a lawyer. He has more on his mind. When asked to conjugate a verb (must be from the lesson he missed), Amalkanti neither asked his classmates nor looked into his book for help. Instead he looked far out of window for the answers. This could probably mean that Amalkanti thought out of box. He wanted so much to be different – take the road less travelled by.

When all his friends got more or less what they wanted, Amalkanti was with a printer. He must have become a writer or publisher. This means he has indeed achieved the dream. His friends have failed to look at his success. We can relate the real sunlight to a writer or publisher who enlightens public on various subjects. The room he works in may be poorly-lit, yet it does not affect him. Amalkanti does not want to be judged by the social parameters of success and behaved differently. He was more social than any of the other classmates, as he visits the poet often to talk on various topics over a cup of tea. The classmates/friends who have become teachers or doctors or lawyers are nowhere to be seen. This shows the social strength of writers, philanthropists and socially-connected people. Amalkanti shouldn't be looked at as a person who illogically dreamt high and never worked well for it. He is indeed a person who had dared to go beyond socially conventional professional choices that offer money and regard. Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that Amalkanti is not a flourishing person. He is successful in his own ways and that can be appreciated as well.

### **9.6 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE :COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:**

**Q 1. Do you think Amalkanti's desire to 'become sunlight' is unrealistic or foolish?**

In Nirendranath Chakrobarty's poem "Amalkanti", Amalkanti is the main protagonist and wants to become sunlight. The idea of becoming sunlight is not foolish but is a little unrealistic. Our real world is driven by ambitions and dreams but greed is the power that has overcome them. The idea of becoming sunlight is unrealistic in real world but as becoming the source of inspiration, it is not foolish. Everyone in the world is inspired by someone, some from a singer, writer, doctor so some from their parents. Although, most of the people do not intentionally want to become that inspiration but end up becoming one, for example, a singer does not want to become inspiration for someone but still he unknowingly inspires many people. In this way, the idea of becoming sunlight is not foolish and up to some point is also not unrealistic.

**Q 2. How is Amalkanti's dream different from that of the other boys in the class? What does it tell about him?**

**All the boys in Amalkanti's class wanted to be doctors, lawyers and teachers but, Amalkanti wanted to be the sunlight. And the sunlight too was specific, not the usual one that scorches everyone with its heat but the one that brings a kind smile on the face after the rain, the one that lights up the trees around. This tells us that all the boys in the class were selfish, goal oriented and realistic but Amalkanti was more thoughtful, philanthropic and naturalist.**

**Q 3: "If the one who'd wanted to be a doctor had become a lawyer, it wouldn't have made much difference to him." What does these lines mean and tells us about Amalkanti's classmates?**

A: The lines given above have been taken from Nirendranath Chakrobarty's poem "Amalkanti". These lines show that unlike Amalkanti, whose ambitions were driven by his creativity, his classmates' ambitions were driven by realism and greed. All of Amalkanti's classmates were better than him in studies and were focused on achieving their goals but these lines mean that even if the one who wanted to become a doctor had become a lawyer, it would have been fine for him because of the equal income that is provided in both these professions.

Q 4: The tone of the speaker in the first three stanzas of the poem is confident and amused but the tone in lines 12-17 and the last stanza of the poem changes. Does it become: Surprised/ wonder, Appreciation or Lyrical? What effect do phrases like 'now and then', 'this and that', 'more or less' have on our attitude towards the speaker?

A: The tone of the speaker is neither surprised nor appreciative. He is rather sympathetic for he feels sorry for his friend who was unable to achieve his goal. The phrases 'now and then', 'this and that', 'more or less' make us more connected to the speaker and the readers feel apologetic for Amalkanti.

Q 5: In the first stanza we feel sorry for Amalkanti because he comes late to the class, doesn't know his lessons and can't conjugate his verbs. Clearly, Amalkanti is a poor student. Do you think Amalkanti is a failure not only because he could not 'become sunlight' but also because he is confined to a low paying job in a printing house where he has to work 'in a poorly lit room' (in fact far from sunlight)? In 'Go Kiss the World' we looked at different definitions of success. Do you think that in this poem the poet is trying to give us yet another perspective on success and failure?

A: The poet makes us feel sorry for Amalkanti for he is poor at academics and other life skills. He brings us to the facts that he was always late for school and could not answer simple questions asked by his teachers. We cannot consider Amalkanti a failure only because he could not achieve his childhood dream of becoming the sunlight. The measure of success cannot be material benefit or professional space, it can also be counted in terms of how much a person is giving back to the society and Amalkanti is a success at that. He is kind enough to meet his friends and not complain about his dark and dingy work conditions. Yes, the poem is trying to give us yet another perspective on success and failure.

Q 6. What in the poem makes us feel that far from being a failure, Amalkanti is special and that the work he does is creative and fulfilling, though low paid? (After all, books are commonly associated with light- a diya or a candle- and are regularly seen as another means of creating light.)

A: Amalkanti should not be seen as a failure. The parameters of success in our world are more based on materialism than real happiness. Amakanti wanted to the sunlight and he works in a printing press that is dimly-lit; this information makes the readers pity the boy who had unrealistic dreams and could not do much for himself as an adult. However, as readers of literature we understand motifs more closely than others and can build a correlation between books and sunlight; both are mediums of hope and brightness.

Q 7. Irony is a device through which the speaker or writer gives two meanings, one literal (what the words mean) and one hidden and at variance with the literal one, which we have to guess at. The most common way of signaling that one is being ironic is by a change of tone, when there appears to be something odd or wrong with the words. The tone is also at odds with the literal meaning of the words. The contrast between getting ‘more or less what we wanted’ and wanting something so badly that you willingly become a failure, is the difference between Amalkanti and others in the class, who may be more successful in conventional terms. The irony in the poet’s tone may have been more apparent to a Bangla or Hindi reader, to whom the connotations of the name ‘Amalkanti’ may have been at once clear. Find out what ‘amalkanti’ means in Bangla and Hindi and discuss if it affects your understanding of the poem.

A: ‘Amalkanti’ is Bangla means pure radiance and learning the meaning surely adds to the reader’s perspective. The fact that his name means ‘Glow’ gives the readers additional connotations to his characteristics. He may not have the willingness to achieve his dream at any cost but he did accomplish his ambition of being the sunlight, the sunlight that brings some smile and warmth after the rain. He was a warm person who cared about his friends and met them often to spend time with them. In the world where everyone is busy accumulating wealth, Amalkanti behaved a selfless manner and cared for everyone.

## **9.7 VOCABULARY:**

1. Poets choose words and structures with great care and after much thought, for they can affect our response with their sounds, connotations and subtle nuances of meaning. Here are some examples from the given context
  - (a) The poet says, ‘Amalkanti is a friend of mine’. The possible meanings could be:
    - (i) My best friend is Amakanti.
    - (ii) I have a classmate named Amalkanti.
    - (iii) Amalkanti is my friend.

- (iv) Amalkanti is an acquaintance.

The poet's choice of words is the best because it combines intimacy with distance; neither too close nor too indifferent. This helps to define exactly the relationship between the speaker and the subject.

- (b) 'he looked out the window/ in such puzzlement.

The possible meanings could be:

- (i) He was confused and was looking for answers outside.
- (ii) He was too embarrassed to look at his classmates.
- (iii) He felt ashamed and looked away.
- (iv) He was not interested in giving a reply.

The poet's choice of words seems the best because it leaves the reader with a lot of choice. Each reader can interpret their own meaning based on their experiences of childhood and also saves the protagonist from the embarrassment of not knowing an answer.

After doing the exercise, you will realize that not all synonyms are replaceable. Let us do one more exercise to establish the same. Rewrite the sentences using words that mean the same as the italicized ones. For eg:

Sakshi is a *friendly* person.

Sakshi is an amiable person.

- (a) I am afraid I don't *remember* your name.
- (b) You have to be more *careful* in future.
- (c) The industry laborers are *hard-working*.
- (d) The teacher is *meticulous*.
- (e) Amit goes to an *elementary* school.

### **9.8 READING EXERCISES:**

1. Read the poem through, first quietly and then loudly. Does reading the poem aloud make you appreciate the poem better?
2. Read the poem during the day, looking at the sunlight outside. Does it get more appreciable?
3. Read aloud to notice the predominant sounds in the poem like the ones with 'aa', 'ai' and 'oo'. Read again to notice if these sounds make a difference in the sonorous quality of the poem?
4. Read more poems on similar themes. Here is one by Arden Davidson for you:

**Mike wanted to take ballet, Jane wanted to run track.**

**Bobby wanted to knit pretty sweaters, Pam wanted to play quarterback.**

**But Mike grew up to be a runner and Jane grew up to dance.**

**Bill became a football star and Pamela mends pants.**

**It's such a shame that none of them do what they want to do.**

**Don't follow in their footsteps; carve a path that's right for you.**

### **9.9 WRITING EXERCISES:**

1. Suppose you are Amalkanti's teacher of English and you see his inability to express himself in class. You feel concerned for the child and want to help him. Write a letter to his parents suggesting them some techniques that could help him build his concentration levels and make him make accountable in class. Complete the letter by choosing words and phrases from the box.

Creative, articulate, yoga, sensitive, exercises, flair of writing, dreamer, affectionate, thinker, visionary, perceptive, soft spoken, visionary, responsive, slow, asset, aesthetic sense, imaginative, artistic, different from the others,

2. Write a small poem about the things that you dreamt of as a child.
3. Imagine you are Amalkanti and you would want to prove to the world that you have finally become the sunlight. Write a small speech to be delivered at the school reunion.

### **9.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Answer the following questions in 50 to 100 words:**

1. Describe Amalkanti's life in your own words.
2. Do you think Amalkanti is a failure for he could not 'become sunlight' ?
3. What in the poem makes us feel that far from being a failure, Amalkanti is special and that the work he does is creative and fulfilling, though low paid?
4. How does the poet use irony as a measure to illustrate Amalkanti's existence?

### **9.11 INTRODUCTION: CHOCOLATE BY MANJU KAPUR**

Dear Readers, food has always been integral to human existence and with time it has played an equally significant role in literature as well. The divine elixir has featured greatly in world mythology. Nectar has been the drink of Gods and cupcakes have featured in all the stories for children that came from the western world. Chocolate has been an enticing substance since its discovery and its properties are often debated about. The European world offered it as a magical element and has now become a favourite stuff with eastern countries as well. Here is a story that features Chocolate in another instrumental role. Chocolate is a short story by Manju Kapur that centre stages the life of a young woman named Tara. The style of the writer is humorous but the subject matter at hand is very serious. The story raises concerns on some serious social conventions and the modalities of Indian marriages in general. The issues of self respect and spousal behaviour are also dealt with quite seriously. As the writer has done a fine job in intertwining these delicate issues together; let us find more about her.

### **9.12 ABOUT THE WRITER:**

Manju Kapur is an Indian novelist who won 1999 Commonwealth Writer's Prize for her first novel *Difficult Daughters*. Her themes are based on women in Indian modern society and their struggles. She also writes about alienation and isolation in her works. She gives more

importance to marriage, family relationships between men and women and their bonding with the traces of culture and tradition. Kapur, the winner of the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize taught English at Delhi University's Miranda House for years. She is the author of books such as "The Immigrant", "Home" and "Brothers" and is currently working on her seventh novel. She said she wants her books to reflect what she sees in society. The theme of a woman rebelling against the traditional setup in some way or the other is something that Kapur often returns to in her books. Manju Kapur's 2011 novel *Custody* was adapted into Indian shows across languages, including Ekta Kapoor's *Ye Hai Mohabbatein* in Hindi. 'A Married Woman' was shortlisted for the Encore Award; *Home* was shortlisted for the Hutch- Crossword prize; *The Immigrant* was shortlisted for the India Plaza Golden Quill Award; and the DSC Prize of South Asian Literature in 2010. Her most recent novel is *Brothers*. Manju Kapur tries to represent Indian conventions about women in general and how their education, marriage, family and children are considered in the society.

### **9.13 TEXT**

TARA WAS FAT. Her husband made it clear that it didn't do his image any good to have her waddling around, jiggling rolls of flesh. 'I don't waddle', she said, hurt. 'You do,' said Abhay, and was the end of the matter. So far the words were concerned it was an established pattern that he had the last one. Later she cried. She wiped away the tears that rolled down her soft, slightly flabby cheeks with a handkerchief clutched in a smooth, plump hand. She would like to be slim and svelte, a credit to her husband, but it was no use. Life without food, especially chocolate, was not worth living.

Her husband couldn't be too serious about her losing weight, after all, he was her main supplier. She thought of his latest offering from Europe. Twenty bars of Swiss chocolate, seductively wrapped in green, orange, blue, and red, with gleaming pictures of fruit, nuts, and glasses of wine, rolls of marzipan, with a grainy paste of almonds covered with chocolate so smooth, it dissolved on the tip of her tongue, and the *piece de resistance*, two big boxes of cherries in *liquor* set in cups of dark chocolate. Even when she wasn't eating them, she could feel in her mouth the sharpness of the *liqueur*, the bitter sweetness of the *liquefying* chocolate, the tanginess and gentle crunch of the cherry. He was always assiduous in catering to her tastes. And he handed the chocolate to her he would tell her how busy he had been and how much he wished it were possible for her to accompany him. Then he would lightly rub the roll of fat around her belly to prove his love. At times the rub would get a little hard, but marks of physical affection between them were rare, and she took what she got.

When did it happen that first got to know about her husband's affair? Something that the readers of this text will find obvious to the point of banality? A man who is stuffing his wife with chocolate in such quantities has to have an ulterior motive. A short history of her life will place her stupidity in perspective.

School: Ages 3-17 Convent, all girls. Strict emphasis on studies and nothing else. Tara's free time is taken with going to dance and music classes. Her mother says these things are important. Give grace to a girl.

College: Ages 17-20. An all girls' college. Her parents don't think it wise to send Tara anywhere else. She chooses English Honours, considered a soft option. She isn't very clear what to do with her life, and English seems a good no-purpose subject. Besides she has always been fond of reading. English Honours turns out to be not such a soft option after all. She had never thought reading could be so strenuous. Literature didn't seem to be about

stories. All the emphasis was on ideas, history, context, Marxist-feminist interpretations, and a pursuit of meaning that went beyond the obvious into the totally obscure. Tara spends her time in college going to films with her friends, bunking classes. She complains to her mother about how hard her teachers expect her to work. Her mother consoles her, she has to somehow graduate, then she will get married.

The wedding preparations coincide with the preparation leave for the exams. ‘What to do, beti?’ her mother says as Tara protests. ‘I know it is a bad time for you but then these are auspicious dates. “But Amma, how will I study?’ complains Tara. ‘Well the boy is good. And the family is very keen. Some things cannot be put off.’ By the time Tara’s results are out, she has come back from her honeymoon. She has got a third division, and is mildly surprised that she has passed at all. Her husband thinks that she is upset.’ Never mind, darling, ‘he says clutching her in her strong, manly arms, You have me.’ Tara’s heart beats fast, as she feels herself squeezed in that marital embrace. ‘Yes, it’s true, she whispers, I have you.’

The family then waits for the children to come. In time it becomes evident that if they come at all it would have to be through divine or medical intervention. Tara started with the medical intervention front first. ‘Maybe we should go and see a doctor?’ she suggested to her husband. ‘You go if you want to,’ replied Abhay. ‘There is nothing wrong with me.’ After the doctor had examined Tara, she said there was nothing wrong with her either, and maybe a look at her husband was in order. ‘But he doesn’t think so, said Tara mournfully. ‘What rubbish!’ exclaimed the doctor, who was sick and tired of encountering such attitudes in her practice. ‘You tell him it is not only the woman who is responsible for bearing a child. The sperm has to be healthy. It maybe that he is infertile, it may be that his sperm count is low; it may be that he has been drinking too much, or that he has some kind of latent infection. It may be any number of things.’ Tara blushed. How was she supposed to convey all this to her husband?

Abhay agreed to see the doctor after a somewhat acrimonious discussion, in which he pointed out to Tara how completely wrong she was. ‘Shouldn’t I come too?’ asked Tara, as Abhay was going. ‘No,’ he said briefly. ‘I’ll deal with it on my own’. So Tara never knew what happened at the doctor’s, Abhay came home tight-lipped and cross, and refused to comment. ‘But what happened. What did she say? She asked several times. She’s a fool. Huh! No point in your going to her either. Medical consultations were not possible after this.

On the divine confrontation front, Tara was told she should take a trip to Vaishno Devi crawling on her hands and knees. After she had crawled up Vaishno Devi on her hands and knees, she decided to do the hands and knees stuff at other shrines. She had thought she would feel embarrassed, but she didn’t. This was routine at these places. Her husband thought all this was a great idea. So did her mother-in law. “Poor Tara!” she heard her say once, She is trying so hard, ‘and then lowered her voice, ‘but she is unhealthy from the inside.’ When there were no signs of conception after all this, Tara took to wearing certain stones around her neck and fingers, and her husband took to feeding her chocolates.

It was chocolate that drew her attention to a certain lack of something on the part of Abhay. He became casual in getting her what she wanted. After an excess of peppermint she hinted that she would look forward to more variety. He had complained. ‘I don’t get the time,’ he said. ‘All I can do is pick up these things from the airport, and peppermint is what airports happen to have.’ But so much?’ She turned the green and white boxes over in her hands. Edwardian Mints, Crème de Menthe Mints, Bitter Chocolate Mints, Wafer mints, After Eight Mints, After Dinner Mints, Mints in White Chocolate. She felt sick at the idea of this much



mint. But her craving for chocolate was so strong that she ate them all anyway. And then he did it again. ‘Didn’t you remember?’ She asked. ‘What?’ He looked preoccupied. ‘What I said last time about the mints’ Last time? Oh, oh, yes, of course. But you see the airports. . .’ ‘Well you know these airports. Not very imaginative.’ That’s not what Tara would have thought as she remembered the brochures that Abhay frequently got advertising this airline, that airport. They seemed to contain virtually everything under the sun.

After Abhay left, Tara remained lost in thought. It was odd that he had forgotten her request- her reasonable request- about the mint chocolate. Abhay had a good memory. But then he was always so preoccupied. And hardly ever at home. And in between these two thoughts, sequences in a chain, suspicion pounced and bent the links in another direction. Within a matter of seconds, Tara was convinced she had found the clue to much of Abhay’s behaviour. Could it be, could it be that what she had read about in her college days, could it be that the Other Woman had appeared in her life as well? She had made up her mind to spy on him. The results were predictable. After she had gone through the gamut of emotions ranging from shock, confusion, despair, anger and resentment, she toyed with the idea of knocking her brains out. To help reach a conclusion she automatically went to the fridge to take out her chocolates. She needed consolation. Absent-mindedly she bit into one. It tasted like sawdust. She bit into it again and gagged. This was the only pleasure she had in her life. What was happening to it?

She felt a burning sensation at the back of her throat, and the sour ugly taste of bile. She quickly put the chocolate back into the fridge and closed the door. Nausea overcame her, and she barely made it to the bathroom. She never ate another piece of chocolate again. Every time she looked at the dark shining pieces glistening invitingly at her, she saw Abhay’s eyes sunk in them, tempting her to bite into a piece and get fat.

She lost weight. The feeling of nausea she had about chocolate helped put her off eating. She grew thinner, thinner than she had been in years. She took the rings off her fingers. There seemed a little point in wearing them now. . From *sarees* she moved to *salwar-kameez*. She looked younger. She felt more alert and alive than she had for a long time. She began to think about strategies. She must win him back she thought. She decided to join cooking classes. The way to a man’s heart was through his stomach. Abhay hardly ate at home. But now. . . She must cook. She would be source of all things delectable.

Tara joined Mrs. Singhal’s Cooking Classes, which guaranteed mastery of Cordon Bleu, Continental Chinese and Italian Cuisines in just a year. Tara discovered in herself a light hand, and a flair for improvisation. Her teacher praised her too, and that helped. No one had ever praised her learning anything in life, academics was out of question, and even her dancing and singing teachers had felt that she needed to apply herself more. For Mrs Singhal a meal was not just eating. It was an Aesthetic Experience. The table, the colours, the setting, the flowers, everything had to be perfect. Tara dived into the experience like a duck into water. Cooking was endlessly creative, she discovered. The taste which she had exhibited in doing up her home, had scope that was infinitely various on the site of the dining table. She experienced the joy of putting before her husband-however errant-things he count not resist. He became quite greedy and demanding, entertaining small numbers of friends more often at home.

Imperceptibly Abhay began to put on weight. Tara could see for herself the fruit of her labours, and her sense of power grew. Newer thoughts began to enter her head. She increased

the cream in her desserts and began putting more cheese in her Italian dishes. Abhay's clothes did not fit him anymore. He began to talk seriously of dieting. At this point Tara looked him over speculatively. In her mind's eye she saw him as she herself had been once. 'You waddle, ' He has said at the beginning of the story and she, predictably female, had replied in pain, I do not.' Now she wanted him to waddle, though her position might not allow her to rub his nose in the fact as he had done hers. When Abhay's affair broke up, certain moroseness tinged and deepened the yellow of his already saturnine complexion. For consolation he turned to serious eating. He listened to music. He drank and he demanded hot and spicy tit-bits from Tara's ever fertile kitchen. When he began to waddle, she, trained to find her husband beautiful in manifold aspects, stared to find him ugly.

Given the circumstances of her revenge, she needed an affair to give it a finished ending. She chose a friend of his, the most convenient male to hand. The friend had dropped certain hints; Tara decided to pick them up. She indulged herself with him without taking precautions. She had long given up the possibility of conceiving, and when she found herself pregnant, she was exhilarated. The first thing to do was to get rid of the friend. 'Abhay suspects, 'she told him. Then she told her husband. 'I think perhaps it has been your improved health, she said, 'You look so much better now. Before you were too thin. That is why I have been blessed with this baby.' A puzzled look crossed Abhay's face as he took in the air of quiet triumph in her wife's manner. He started spying on her, but her affair had been so brief and circumspect that he found no traces of it.

When Tara's daughter was born, she crooned her lullabies of brave women warriors, and made sure that all her education was oriented towards a career that would make her independent.

#### **9.14 CRITICAL COMMENTARY:**

Tara goes through school and college, but it is evident that her education is not rooted for a career. Her parents' only ambition is to get her married in a good household. Education is only added to her profile to brighten up her chances of finding a good husband. She takes up English honours at the behest of her parents as they think of it as a 'good no-purpose subject'. Tara tries very hard to concentrate on her subject but she shows poor results. That does not alarm her parents for they clearly are not expecting her to build a career. Tara fails poorly at the examination and passes in third division but she is embalmed by her husband's embraces and gives no importance to her economic independence that a career could provide. She learns the lesson but much too late.

Abhay offered her no encouragement and behaved in an unreasonable manner otherwise as well. The couple remains childless for a long time and Abhay refuses to get medical help. He seems to believe that the inadequacy rests, only with the woman. It reflects a certain mindset, which is reflected by the society at large that the cause of infertility is always the female and never the male. Tara never challenges the situation as her position is dependent. She quietly submits to her husband's stubborn behaviour and seeks divine intervention. It is also possible that men in general do not wish to acknowledge their infertility in the mistaken belief that their virility may be questioned. As it is the term barren is usually associated only with women. Abhay's mother too blames Tara as she says 'she is unhealthy inside'. No one in the family suggests any marital counselling or brings it to a rational solution.

The solution is found in chocolates. That could mean a number of things; it would avert any suspicion in Tara's mind as the chocolates would be seen as a token of his love. She would engage her mind towards a digression and Abhay's affair would remain hidden and finally she will gain more weight and would appear unattractive. She digs into chocolate to overcome the unhappy state of her marriage. She intakes a copious amount and gains a lot of weight. Her increased weight gains her taunts and a mere dependence on even more chocolates for her mood swings. Abhay stays away from home most of the time and never misses a moment to humiliate Tara. The readers are given an indication that Tara discovers about her husband's affair and it comes as no surprise to them.

Tara's plan of revenge however comes as a shock for the readers for they had not expected her to do the same. She makes a blueprint of her vengeance. She took the pains of learning a new skill, something that she had never done before in her life. Learning that she was a natural at it, she put to her benefit. She labored in the kitchen to make new and newer recipes for her husband and he fell more and more into the rattrap. She kept adding more sweet and cheese and he soon grew out of shape. Her devilish plan did not end at making him unshapely and unappealing. She indulged in a short and well-timed affair with her husband's friend and got herself pregnant. All this was done smoothly that no traces were found of anything. Unlike Abhay, Tara earns herself the gift of a beautiful baby girl. Abhay accepts the child may be because he does not wish to be humiliated and laughed at in the society for marriage is a social institution that has to be preserved at all costs.

The readers are left with a number of questions; what is social acceptability and sanction, why are not all women trained to be financially independent, why do parents force their choices upon their children, why is mothering a singular act, why walking out of a marriage is still not considered a feasible option and much more. The story ends on a note of hope where a mother promises to correct her errs by investing into the future of her child.

### **9.15 WORD MEANINGS**

1. Waddle: sway, wobble
2. *Piece de resistance*: most important or remarkable feature
3. Assiduous: hardworking, diligent
4. Banality: dullness
5. Ulterior motive: a secret, often bad reason for doing something
6. Auspicious: fortunate, favorable
7. Infertile: sterile, barren
8. Latent: dormant, hidden
9. Acrimonious: bitter and angry
10. Revolting: disgusting, awful
11. Gagged: muffled, choked
12. Cuisines: different styles of cooking
13. Delectable: delicious, mouth watering
14. Imperceptible: that which can hardly be noticed because it is so slight
15. Aesthetic : artistic, visually appealing
16. Moroseness : grumpiness
17. Saturnine : dark complexioned
18. Exhilarated : joyful
19. Circumspect : careful and attentive
20. Errant: sinful, naughty

## **9.16 COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Q 1. Did you find the story: amusing, shocking or thought-provoking, why?

The story is an amalgam of all emotions, amusing shocking and thought provoking. The narrative is amusing because the narrator's style is humorous. She talks about 'good no purpose subject', digging into chocolates as love, wearing stones and visiting shrines without faith, and a wife trying to settle scores with a husband. Rather than making it a sad situation, which it actually is, the story focuses on creating humour out of it. It is shocking because the readers had not expected a revenge strategy out of a woman. It is definitely thought-provoking because not only does it represent various conventional modes of Indian gender-roles, it also challenges them in its own ways.

Q 2. Do you think the story is about; revenge, infidelity (disloyalty or esp. unfaithfulness to a sexual partner) or learning and growth?

The story is about all, a revenge, infidelity and definitely, learning and growth, at least for Tara. The wife plans a full bodied revenge; she makes her husband put on weights, laughs at him for waddling the same way as he did before. He fed her with chocolates and she purposely fed him cheese and cream back. The husband had an affair and so did the wife, so the story is definitely about infidelity which cannot be justified in either case, for whatever reason. The learning and growth part happened only for Tara, for she gained to have a daughter out of the revenge and was determined to give her a strong and independent future.

Q.3 Say which of the following statements are true and which false. Refer back to the relevant lines in the story, whenever possible, to support your answer.

(i) Abhay gives chocolates to Tara to cover up his guilt over his affair with other women. The statement is true. This can be supported by the fact that Tara kept requesting Abhay to not to get chocolates for her, especially not the mint ones, but he deliberately kept forgetting the same, despite having a good memory. He wanted to distract his wife's mind from his own affair and therefore loaded her with a variety of mint chocolates. He also rubbed it into her that she waddled and that hurt her deeply.

(ii) Abhay gives chocolates to Tara to tempt her to become fat. This statement could also be true. Abhay wanted to justify his affair in a certain way and by giving her more and more to eat; he wanted her to turn fat and ugly. She repeatedly asked him to avoid mint chocolates but he refused to register and follow. This could be seen as a part of the larger plan.

(iii) Abhay uses Tara's cooking to drown his disappointment when his affair breaks up. This statement is probably false because Abhay's affair could have ended after the fact that he gained a lot of weight and had lost his colour. That was also probably the reason why Abhay had started to spend more time at home and also invited his friends over, apart from the fact that he was being treated to Tara's new and wonderful cooking.

Q 4. Tara's parents take most of the important decisions with regards to her life: where to study, what to study; when to get married; who to get married to etc. Looking back, do you think that they made the right decisions?

Tara, the protagonist is comprehensively studied revealing a colossal mass of imposed desires on herself. From her childhood, she has been prepared with a sole career of matrimony. She received education in a girl's school and later studied in a girls' college. Her free time is meant only for dance and music classes, as two essential components in a girl's education for they would add grace to her. She is neither encouraged to pursue a career nor does she take it any seriously for there is no impetus on the same. Her childhood is spent in shade of peculiarly prescribed roles for females. Later in college she is asked to take up a no-good subject that is English Honours which however turns out to be a difficult one and she fails terribly at it. Being an obedient child, she does not exercise her choice in matters of career and matrimony. She is married right in the middle of her examination leave and therefore manages to get a third division. So looking back, these do not seem the right decisions for her for they did not prepare her for her future.

Q 5 Do you think Tara is a good wife? Do you think she will make good mother?

Tara seems to be a good wife for she was trained to be one. She gives in to the emotional advances of her husband and does not feel sorry for not having a career. She even agrees to the idea of seeking medical and divine intervention to a problem that should have been sorted through a proper medical help to her husband. She spares her husband all the trouble and takes it all on herself. She discovers about her husband's affair but does not confront the same. The readers doubt the idea of her being a good wife when she plans revenge and goes rather too far with it. Yes, we do think that she will make a great mother for she has all intentions of training her child for the challenges lying in front of her. She promises to give her an education that would make her child socially and financially independent.

Q 6 Do you think that Abhay is adequately punished by the end of the story and he has also learnt a lesson?

Yes, Abhay is adequately punished by the end of the story and hopefully he has also learnt a lesson. He could have raised an alarm regarding the slightest thing that he had found out of place but remorse took over him. He agreed to stay in the relationship even though the marriage was a farce for them. The marriage was not emotionally sustaining for any of them but each learnt a lesson to make peace with it. The readers feel sorry for both of them.

### **9.17 VOCABULARY**

1. Words are like relatives, the more you visit them, the more they visit you. So let's practice some words by making sentences out of them.

- (a) strenuous
- (b) marital
- (c) acrimonious
- (d) assiduous
- (e) improvisation
- (f) flabby
- (g) perspective
- (h) emphasis

- (i) bunking
- (j) shrine

2. Use the word meanings given before in the sentences given below to see if you can determine their meanings:

- 1. The baby elephant was..... through the jungle.
- 2. The blueberries on the cake were the.....
- 3. Amit was praised by his teacher for he is an.....boy.
- 4. The painter was discussing the .....of the canvas.
- 5. The police could discover the .....of the convicts.
- 6. The decorated the house on the..... occasion of Diwali.
- 7. The farmers were ruined for the land had turned.....
- 8. His mother was .....at his rude behaviour.
- 9. The idea of a late night party came as quite..... to his father.
- 10. The old man. ....on a piece of bread.
- 11. Meera learnt a number of ..... at her cooking classes.
- 12. She prepared a number of ..... dishes to please her family.
- 13. Arjun decorated his house in an..... manner.
- 14. They were all..... at the idea of a picnic.
- 15. His sister forgave his..... ways.

### **9.18 READING AND WRITING EXERCISES**

a. As food is an instrumental element in this story, please read more stories based around food. A famous one for you would be Katherine Mansfield's *A Cup of Tea*.

b. Chocolate has always been at the centre of many research studies due to its medicinal and seductive properties. Please read *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris, a novella where the life of a town turns upside down by the arrival of a chocolate confectioner.

c. *The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Devkaruni Banerjee is a magical tale of an Indian Woman in California who heals her customers with spices. Read the novel during your holidays to gain another perspective on food related literature.

d. Suppose you are Tara, and your daughter is all grown up and studying in a hostel. Write a letter to your daughter explaining her significance of education in life.

### **9.19 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

Answer the following questions in 80 to 120 words:

- 1. Briefly describe the story in your own words?
- 2. Draw a character sketch of Tara.
- 3. The story is more about individual growth than revenge. Discuss.
- 4. *Chocolat* is a description of many social conventions. Explain.
- 5. Carefully illustrate Tara's plan of revenge, step by step.

### **9.20 SUGGESTED READING**

- 1. Das Gupta, *Chidananda*, Jibananda Das, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1972.

2. Dharwadekar, Vinay , 'Modern Indian Poetry and its Contexts', in A.K. Ramanujan and Vinay Dharwadekar eds, *The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* , New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.
3. Basheer, Vaikom Muhammad, *The Magic Cat*, trans N. Kunju, Trissur: Kerela Sahitya Akademi, 1977.
4. Dwivedi, A. N. ed., *Studies in the Contemporary Indian English Short Story*, New World Literature Series, 37, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1990

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**SEMESTER-I**

**COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURES**

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**UNIT-10:**

**CHAPTER 14- UNDERSTANDING NARRATIVE: SOAPNUT LEAVES**

**CHAPTER 16-READING BETWEEN THE LINES: LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER**

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**STRUCTURE:**

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction: Chapter 14: Understanding Narrative: *Soapnut Leaves* by Chaso

10.2 About the Author

10.3 Overview

10.4 Detailed Summary

10.5 Detailed Analysis by P.K. Satpathy

10.6 Questions for Practice

10.7 Introduction: Chapter 16-Reading between the Lines: *Lamb to the Slaughter*

10.8 Overview

10.9 Detailed Summary

10.10 Check your Progress

10.11 Questions for Practice

10.12 Suggested Readings

**10.0 OBJECTIVES:**

In this text, ‘*Soapnut Leaves*’, by Chaso, we look at the narrative both in terms of a short story, as well as analyzing themes, points of view, and the difference in treatment that comes with belonging to different castes.

‘*Lamb To The Slaughter*’ is a Roald Dahl short story published in Harper’s Magazine in 1953. It tells the story of a woman who coldly commits a murder, and calmly comes up with a solution to not get caught. We can interpret the title in many ways, be it as evidence, be it as inversion of gender roles, be it as food imagery, and so on and so forth. In this lesson, we will be literally reading “between the lines”, to understand the deeper meaning and finer nuances of the text.



## **10.1: CHAPTER 14: INTRODUCTION: Understanding Narrative : Soapnut Leaves by Chaso**

### **Narrative , as described by M.H.Abrams:**

“A **narrative** is a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do. Some literary forms such as the novel and short story in prose, and the epic and romance in verse, are explicit narratives that are told by a *narrator*. In drama, the narrative is not told, but evolves by means of the direct presentation on stage of the actions and speeches of the characters. It should be noted that there is an implicit narrative element even in many *lyric* poems. In William Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper,” for example, we infer from what the lyric speaker says that, coming unexpectedly in the Scottish Highlands upon a girl reaping and singing, he stops, attends, meditates, and then resumes his climb up the hill.”

This story is a pertinent example of the social stigma and caste segregation that is prevalent in our country. Even young children, born into privilege, are conditioned at an early age itself, to look down upon and with contempt, at the children belonging to lower castes. Themes like privilege, oppression, equal opportunities, and access to education are touched upon in this short story.

### **10.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Chaganti Somayajulu (17 January 1915 – 2 January 1994) popularly known as Chaso was one of the all time great short-story writers of the 20th century Telugu literature. He is famous as 'Chaso', combining the syllables from his name ('CHA' from Chaganati and 'SO' from Somayajulu). Chaso is a Legendary writer and a Master Artist.

His first story Chinnaji was published in Bharathi in 1942. Subsequently he wrote many short stories and poetry. Many of his short stories have been translated into other languages. Compilation of his short stories were published in 1968, he compiled short stories of some important writers as Kalinga Kadhanikalu during his 70th birth anniversary. He was longtime member and president of the Progressive Writers' Association of Andhra Pradesh. His stories dealt with the problems faced by the marginalia and underprivileged members of society. Marxist in his approach towards life as well as his writing, Chaso upheld the right to basic dignity for all classes of people.

Chaso advocated the cause of the meek and the weak in society and penned what all he did with socialistic commitment.

He was a Marxist to the core who had not just preached it in his writings but practiced it in life. He never compromised on principles in life and lived what he believed in. He propagated the ideals of Gurajada and was rightly called a literary heir to Gurajada.

A keen observer of the life as he was, he picked up his themes from the real life scenario and lent them an eternity in his works.

He died of throat cancer on 2 January 1994 at the age of 79 in Madras; as per his wish, his family members donated his eyes and body to Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute for research purpose.

### **10.3 OVERVIEW:**

‘Soapnut Leaves’ is a story about the ill-treatment meted out to the poorer and socially lower sections of society by the rich and upper-caste people. Though on paper, everyone is guaranteed equal rights and opportunities, the condition of the poor and backward people remains bleak. This story deals with how caste and class demarcations affect the lives of people, especially those living in rural India.

### **10.4 DETAILED SUMMARY:**

Two little girls, Paamma and Gaviri were going to the fields together. Paamma’s father was a respected farmer and Gaviri’s father was a labourer. They were dressed as per their family status. Paamma in an old tattered long skirt and a towel on her shoulder while Gaviri in a clout piece, carrying a basket and a broom. Gaviri wore a copper wire in her nose and Paamma had a gold wire in her nose and few other ornaments as well.

Paamma was eating a pickle. Gaviri asked how she got it. Paamma told her that she got it from the Prime Landlord. Because of her father's status, they got pickles and even curry sometimes from the landlord. Gaviri said she had prawns last night, which was a lie. She lied to show off. She was also envious of Paamma's dress.

Paamma criticised Gaviri for lying to her as she knew that they did not have anything to eat last night. Her father told her about Gaviri's family, how they could not even have water boiled with rice to drink. She even mocks her for lying about having prawns.

An offended Gaviri said that even Paamma did not have anything to eat, though even she knew that was not true. Paamma gets angry and abuses her. She started to tell Gaviri about her meal last night. Paamma's father was among the most prominent and big farmers of the village. He brought fish and pomfret for them.

Gaviri got annoyed and moved towards the threshing field and Paamma followed, swinging her arms. Meanwhile, the village school children started singing their prayer, reciting after the teacher. Paamma and Gaviri went into a narrow little gorge and moved along carefully.

Paamma told Gaviri that she will be going to school from next Tuesday. The teacher had asked her father to send her to school and he agreed.

Gaviri called schooling useless and asked her why she would go. Paamma pointed out at the singing children. Gaviri said that even her father felt the same that it was of no use. Paamma agreed with her, giving her caste as a reason for it. Grief took over Gaviri and her eyes were filled with tears.

The two girls tucked Oleander flowers that had fallen in the gorge into their hair. Gaviri commented that she had a big bun of hair and Paamma had no hair at all. Paamma reverted that she had put a lot of oil on her head, while there was no oil on Gaviri's head.

The schoolchildren chanted the Sanskrit prayer loudly. Paamma joined them but mispronounced the words. Gaviri moved into the fields to pick up twigs and Paamma followed her.

Eight-year-old Gaviri carried out family responsibilities regularly. She'd go to fetch water for her family with a pot on her head. She'd also carry a basket along and collect dry leaves, twigs, sticks, or thorn bush for firewood.

In the fields nearby, there were some greengram pods hung from their stems that Paamma plucked and started to munch. Gaviri was very hungry. Since last night she had nothing to even swallow.

Little Gaviri wailed out of hunger. Her mother had told her then that there was nothing to eat. She felt numb due to hunger and exhaustion.

Gaviri's father was a labourer. She did not have the courage to steal and eat from the fields as it would be considered a major crime. Her friend Paamma fearlessly pulled out plants and ate seeds, claiming that no one could do anything to her.

Gaviri's stomach growled. She envisioned rice porridge being made at home. However, that could be possible only if her father got his wage for the day, else they would starve that night too. This made Gaviri teary-eyed.

When she saw the path adorned with soapnut leaves, Gaviri stopped thinking about her hunger. She collected, cleaned, and placed the thick soapnut leaves in her basket and was done for the day. The heaviness of the basket made her feel light. Paamma yelled happily as the two girls went towards home. They had just reached the edge of the Prime Landlord's field when something fell before them with a loud sound.

Paamma cried out thinking it was a scorpion but Gaviri realised that it was a crab. When she looked up at the tamarind tree, she saw many paddy birds on it. It seemed as if they were white lotuses growing on a tamarind tree.

Gaviri was very happy to see so many tamarind fruits. As Paamma lifted her head and looked, her mouth watered. She threw a few rocks on the fruit and managed to get three. While she starting eating one, the other two she tucked in her frock. Gaviri requested her to give her one but she told her to get them herself. She requested again, but in vain. Paamma showed her the rocks to throw and moved ahead.

Gaviri looked up and saw a tamarind fruit hung like a curved sickle. She mustered some courage and threw a stone but failed to get the fruit. The sound of the rock falling down terrified her and she looked around. While Paamma went into the greengram fields again, Gaviri threw a stone one more time. Again she could not get any fruit but a big broken and dry twig fell on the ground.

Gaviri was extremely happy and jumped with joy. She broke the twig into small pieces and put them in her basket. Suddenly a loud voice came from the field. When she looked towards the field she saw the Prime Landlord of the field. The landlord was staring at her angrily. With a low and shaky voice she said that she needs it for the kitchen fire.

The Landlord came forward and saw Gaviri's basket filled with soapnut leaves and the tamarind twig on top. He kicked her basket hard. Gaviri was shaking with fear while she picked up the basket and started to gather the scattered leaves again.

The landlord screamed at her for picking them again. He had no idea how valuable those leaves were for Gaviri. For Chinnademudu's house, the leaves were a day's fuel for their cooking fire. Though Gaviri is just eight, she was well aware of her family's situation and also knew her responsibility.

She pleaded to the landlord and ensured that she will not come again. He looked around and saw a bush. He suspected that Gaviri had hidden something under it but she told him that she did not hide anything.

The landlord lifted the bush with his stick and found a basketful of cattle dung. He hit Gaviri at her back with his stick and questioned her about it. She started crying with pain and insisted that she did not do it but the landlord did not believe her. He abused her and hit her again.

No matter how much she insisted, he did not listen and kept punishing her. She then stopped crying and firmly told the landlord that she did not do it. She asked him to see her basket and her hands. There was no trace of cattle dung on her hands and her basket and the fieldhands were the real thieves. The landlord could not register this explanation too and hit her again.

Gaviri could not understand why the landlord punished her even after she gave him an explanation. She abused him and declared her innocence repeatedly. The Prime Landlord, who had killed several fearless and loyal men, became a victim of Gaviri's curses.

The landlord removed his wooden sandal and flung it aiming at Gaviri. It hit her shinbone. She fell down on her face and writhed in pain. The landlord went away satisfied.

Gaviri cried bitterly and after some time opened her eyes.

It was getting late and the children at school were reciting their tables like a song. Gaviri looked inside the threshing field and went to gather the soapnut leaves. If she will leave them behind, there will not be anything to light the cooking fire. Her parents will arrange food but she must provide the fuel to cook.

She abused the landlord again and left the tamarind sticks behind. As she lifted the basket on her head, she bent down to have a look at her shinbone that got hurt. There was a scar that had split and looked red.

She began sobbing again and walked into the gorge. The school children continued reciting the multiplication tables.

### **10.5 DETAILED ANALYSIS BY P.K. SATPATHY:**

The plot of this story is very simple. It revolves around two small girls. But the theme is not so simple. The narrator begins by describing the dress of the two girls as they move out of the village. This description clearly marks a very sharp distinction between the social classes of both the girls. Paamma is a rich farmer's daughter and Gaviri is the daughter of a labourer. The fact that Paamma, being the daughter of a rich farmer, is wearing a ragged (old and worn out) dress is ironic. It seems that the word 'rich' is used here to highlight the extent of rural poverty. Paamma can only be considered rich when compared with Gaviri's family who are practically starving.

The other thing that we notice is that Paamma is a Naidu which is a forward caste. But Gaviri's caste is not mentioned. The author only says that Gaviri belonged to the 'loin-cloth class' (labourers). The difference of class is, as is very usual, reflected in the way they are dressed, the food that they eat and also in their attitude towards life and fellow human beings. It is interesting to note that the issue of class has a primacy over the issue of caste in the story. We all know that caste is the dominant determinant in our social interactions, especially in rural India. On the other hand class is more of an urban issue. But does it suggest that the narrator, by adopting the point of view of class, is rejecting caste as the defining characteristic of social organization? It might be that the author is trying to demonstrate the overlapping nature of caste and class in Indian society.

But at the same time the author is trying to reveal the nature of this overlap. Our social interactions and attitudes are shaped more by the class rather than the caste that we belong to. For instance Paamma's attitude towards Gaviri, school, and other things are shaped by the fact that she is Appala Naidu's (a big and moneyed farmer) daughter. Though they are friends Paamma behaves in a very insensitive way towards Gaviri. She does not hesitate to make fun of the fact that Gaviri had nothing to eat in almost two days. She even makes fun of the fact that Gaviri has no oil to apply on her hair. On the other hand Gaviri is defensive all the time. She pretends to have had some food because she does not want Paamma to pity her. She wants to be treated as an equal. Paamma declares that she will be attending school soon. But Gaviri's social condition does not allow her to go to school because unlike Paamma, Gaviri has a lot of responsibilities on her small head.

In part 2 of the story we see the girls going into the fields. While Gaviri gets busy with the task of collecting dry twigs to be used as fuel for the cooking fire, Paamma roams around with a carefree attitude. She starts picking green gram from other people's fields and eats them. Though Gaviri is starving from the night before, she dare not do the same. Being poor she had learnt a few lessons from life itself. This bitter lesson in life is that the poor cannot expect just treatment from the rich. Both Gaviri and Paamma know that if they are caught eating green grams from other people's fields they won't be treated in the same way. If caught, Paamma will go scot free but Gaviri will get a severe beating. The difference between Paamma and Gaviri's social situation becomes very stark in this part and this is reflected in their behaviour as well.

Though Gaviri is only eight years old she had the responsibility of fetching water, collecting dry twigs, leaves or anything that can be used as fuel at home. Without Gaviri's efforts it will be difficult for the family to cook anything at all. Thus she has no time for any of the normal things that other children of her age do. Gaviri's sense of responsibility is such that she forgets her hunger and her sadness at being so poor the moment she lays her eyes on the soapnut leaves. Soapnut leaves are especially good for cooking fire. On their way back, they see a fruit laden tamarind tree. Paamma, being the daughter of a Naidu, is not afraid of taking down a few for. But she refuses to share it with Gaviri. This seems heartless. Though Paamma is supposed to be a friend, she tries at every opportunity to put down Gaviri. She is a proud and arrogant girl. She shows off her privileges to Gaviri and lacks decency and sympathy. Her attitude, typifies the upper class attitude towards their less privileged counterparts.

The village school serves as a backdrop in this story. Paamma is going to attend school very soon. Most people believe that education can bring in great social changes and can help in establishing a just and equitable society. However, in this story, it seems to have failed in

its mission. The school hasn't actually changed the attitude of the people. The village remains trapped in its unjust practices. Consequently the attitude of people towards education is nothing short of sceptical. Gaviri's father believes that the school will not help Gaviri in her life because the life skills that Gaviri needs to learn are not to be found in books or the multiplication tables taught in the school. For Gaviri and people of her class the prime concern is to keep the cooking fires burning in their huts. It is a daily struggle for survival. And these skills are best learnt from life. And you can see for yourself, in this story, that life's lessons are bitter. Gaviri must learn to curb her hunger, must suppress her desires and must submit herself to the unjust social system in order to survive.

The Prime Landlord, hearing the noise of the broken big dry twig falling on the ground, appears on the scene. This is a crucial moment in the story. Gaviri's worst fears come true in this part. We also get to see the actual nature of justice in our society. This is also a section where we discover something more about both the girls. The Prime Landlord spells trouble for both Paamma and Gaviri. Paamma runs away but Gaviri stays there to face the consequences of her being there.

Two questions come to our mind here: (1) Why did Paamma run away leaving her friend there? (2) Why did Gaviri, knowing the attitude of the rich people, not run away?

The answer to these questions tells us a lot about the girls. Though Paamma is supposed to be a friend, she tries at every opportunity to put down Gaviri. This incident shows apart from being insensitive she is a coward as well. She knows that she has done something wrong but she is unwilling to face the consequences of her action. On the other hand instead of helping her friend prove her innocence in front of the Prime Landlord, she runs away deserting her friend Gaviri to her fate. Consequently Gaviri suffers, not just the beating, but also the indignity of being called a thief. Gaviri has done no wrong and she has the courage to face the Prime landlord though she is scared of him inside.

Despite not being at fault, Gaviri is beaten and punished by the Prime Landlord only on the basis of mere suspicion. Gaviri fails to understand this injustice. It seems that the Prime landlord (by implication the moneyed class) takes it as a matter of right to punish the children or people of the lower classes. Thus the system of justice here seems to be the preserve of the higher classes. In fact in an instance of supreme irony the Prime Landlord becomes the accuser as well as the judge, thereby effectively shutting out the possibility of justice for the lower classes. Gaviri suffers twice. First she is abandoned by her friend and then punished unfairly for a crime she did not commit. But the most striking thing in this part is not the punishment or the suffering that Gaviri is subjected to. It is the response of Gaviri to this adverse situation that holds our attention. We do not often see anyone from the lower classes stand up to the injustice dished out by the higher castes/class. The people from the lower classes accept this as their fate. But Gaviri is made of sterner stuff. She stops weeping and starts asserting herself. She fights hard to protect herself respect. She will not tolerate the unfair accusations of the prime Landlord. It is amazing to see that that this small girl not only has the courage to stand up and fight this injustice but also has the courage to abuse the Prime Landlord.

The story ends, once again, with the school coming into focus where the children are still learning the multiplication table. Gaviri gathers the soapnut leaves once again and as a mark of her final defiance she throws away the tamarind sticks saying, "You-son-of-bitch! No one needs your tamarind twigs". The contrast between the situation of Gaviri in the school of life

and the school where the children are learning the multiplication tables, once again brings the role of education into focus. The irony of the situation is that there seems to be a wide gap between this school and the school of life. What the author is, perhaps, suggesting is that this gap between the village school and the school of life must be bridged for education to become meaningful. Till then the soapnut leaves would remain immensely more valuable to Gaviri and children from her class than the education dished out in the schools.

### **10.6 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

**Q: Why were the Soapnut leaves so important to Gaviri and of no value to Kaambhukta?**

A: The story “Soapnut Leaves” written by Chaaso shows two little girls of different classes moving in the fields. The poorer one is Gaviri whose duty is to daily collect fuel and water for her family. The Soapnut leaves found by Gaviri are very important to her because she collects them to use as fuel to lit the family’s chula. Although the food had to be collected by her parents, she was the one who had to provide the fuel as her duty. On the other hand, Kaambhukta is the Prime Landlord in the village, who is rich and can get anything easily in shares due to the biased rules of the village. That’s why the soapnut leaves collected by Gaviri were of no value for him.

**Q: Why did Kaambhukta think that Gaviri is the one who is the thief even when Gaviri proves him that she is not?**

A: In the story “Soapnut Leaves” written by Chaaso, Gaviri is a little girl of eight who enters into the field of Prime Landlord Kaambhukta but gets suspected of stealing cow dung. She tries to prove her innocence and shows him her hands and basket which had no traces of cow dung but still Kaambhukta didn’t believe her and took her as a thief. This happened maybe because of the mindset of the people in their village which was based negatively towards the poor. What maybe considered right for the rich people was wrong for the poor and Gaviri’s father Chinnademudu was one of them. Therefore, Kaambhukta thinks that Gaviri is the one who stole the cow dung because she is Chinnademudu’s daughter and is poor.

**Q: Why does Paamma disappears as soon as Kaambhukta appears? What does this shows about her character?**

A: In Chaaso’s story “Soapnut Leaves,” Gaviri and Paamma are two girls who enter the Prime Landlord Kaambhukta’s fields and tries to break the Tamarind fruits. Paamma is richer than Gaviri and enjoys several privileges but still she runs away when Kaambhukta appears in the field. Her father was Appala Nadu who was a respected person but Kaambhukta was the Prime Landlord and was more respected, that’s why Paamma felt it better to run away as she was the one who has actually stolen three tamarind fruits after Gaviri’s warning.

This shows that although Gaviri is more intelligent than Paamma, Paamma is more clever than her and knows when to run away. This maybe due to the fact that she is richer than her and is exposed to a wider world. Paamma is a boastful person and misuses the privileges given to her due to the fact that her father is a respected person.

### **10.7 INTRODUCTION: Chapter-7: Reading Between the Lines- Lamb to the Slaughter by Roald Dahl**

Dr. Seema Suri, Delhi University:

“The short-story is a relatively young literary genre whose rise and popularity arise out of people’s being busy and having little time on their hands for leisure reading. A short, compact piece is a refreshing source of entertainment. However, there are inputs in a short story which add to its quality as a literary composition.

The intensity of impact in a short story is what is valued most highly. Like a fine lyric poem, the short story requires the reader’s utmost attention, a focussing of the mind on each detail in order to realise the final fullness of effect. The short story depends on concreteness, on sensual impressions that deliver their meaning without waste. The action of a conventional short story is compressed within a short time and space. The characters, few in number are revealed not developed. The background and setting are implied; not rendered. The story gets going as quickly as possible. A question we ask is, “How does a story manage to tell so much in such a brief space? The answer is that every word, gesture description, stands for so much. Sometimes a single detail will stand for a wealth of meaning—for a whole social class or a character’s background. In ‘*Lamb to the Slaughter*’, a middle-class family, an organised household are described well enough. But the beauty of the irony arising out of food imagery is amazing. Right from the title where the word “lamb” occurs there are many ways of interpreting the word lamb—a victim, a sacrifice, literally an item of food, a murder weapon, evidence destroyed etc.”

Dr Suri succinctly sums up the requisites of a short story. The Merriam –Webster dictionary defines the phrase ‘like a lamb to slaughter - **in a very innocent way : without knowing that something bad will happen e.g.:** He walked into the meeting *like a lamb to the slaughter*.

### **10.8 OVERVIEW:**

‘Lamb to The Slaughter’ is a story of infidelity, and consequences of that infidelity. The title can be interpreted in many ways. The story is about how a young housewife, happily married , acts on impulse, kills her cheating husband, and manages to get away with it.

### **10.9 DETAILED SUMMARY :**

The opening paragraph of the story gives us an insight into both into the middle-class well organized life of the young couple, the Maloneys, as well as the wife in the equation- Mary Maloney. We get the perfect picture of a dutiful wife, sitting and sewing, glancing the clock every few minutes, eagerly awaiting the return of her beloved husband. The room where she is sitting has been described as “warm and cozy.” Two table lamps were lit, one for her, and the other for her husband Patrick. Mary had a slow, peaceful air about her, and glowed beautifully, for she was six months pregnant. At ten minutes to five, Mary began to listen eagerly for Patrick’s arrival. When she heard the sound of a car stopping on the gravel outside, the slamming of the car door, and the opening of the main door of the house, she knew her husband had arrived, and she put away her sewing and went to give him a kiss as he came in.

Mary then takes Patrick’s coat and hangs it in the closet. Then she walks over to the counter , and prepares two drinks- a strong one for her husband, and a weaker, watered down one for herself. We can see clearly that this time is the highlight of the day for Mary. She revelled in his presence, and thoroughly enjoyed soaking in the warm, male glow that enveloped him. Mary’s pleasure in the time the two spend together is also visibly



noticeable. Mary is clearly very much in love with her husband, for she adores even the littlest of things he does, like the way he entered a room, or the way he walked, and the way he looked at her. That particular evening, Mary intuitively notices that her husband is quieter than usual, and asks him if he was tired after his day's work. To this, Patrick just replies with a monosyllabic "Yes", and in an uncharacteristic move, drains his glass of whiskey in one swallow, though there was still half of it left. Mary deduced this by merely hearing the sounds her husband made, without even looking up. When he got up to refill his drink, Mary, eager to please him, quickly jumped up and said that she would get it for him. Her husband told her to sit down, and went and got it himself. When he came back with the drink, Mary, sympathizing with him, said that it was a shame that a senior policeman man like him was kept on his feet the entire day. Trying to gauge his mood, and appease him, she asked if he wanted to eat at home because he was tired, instead of going out like they usually did on Thursdays.

While Mary was excitedly talking about all the things she could make for supper, Patrick interrupted her abruptly, and told her to sit down for a minute. In a very direct manner, Patrick tells Mary that what he is about to tell her will be quite a big shock to her, especially given the fact that she was expecting. The exact conversation is not mentioned in the text, but we can clearly infer that Patrick tells Mary that he is having an affair, and leaving her for the other woman. He says that he will of course provide adequately for her and the baby, but that Mary should not create any fuss about it, for the news of a divorce and consequent drama would affect his job negatively. Like most people, Mary's initial reaction was disbelief and the inability to accept and comprehend what had happened. In her state of utter shock, she turned to what was familiar to her- her daily routine, and whispered that she would get the supper ready. This time, Patrick did not stop her. Mary then walked mechanically across the room, in a state of numbness. She could not feel her feet touching the ground. The shock was too great for her to absorb. Mechanically, she opened the deep freezer, and took out the first object that came to her hand- an enormous leg of lamb. Mary decided that they would have lamb for supper.

Mary carried the rack of lamb upstairs, holding the thin-bone end with both her hands. She saw Patrick standing by the window, with his back to her. When Patrick heard Mary come in, he angrily snapped at her to not make supper for him, as he was going out. At this point, Mary simply walked up behind him, and without even a split second's pause, she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air, and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head as hard as she could. Patrick's body remained standing for at least four or five seconds, before crashing to the carpet. Mary's mind cleared up instantly then, and she said to herself very clearly that she had killed him. As the wife of a police detective, she was well aware of what her punishment would be. While she welcomed the punishment for herself, because it would be an escape, she could not harm the future of her unborn child. So with that in mind, Mary began plotting how to get out of the whole situation.

Carrying the rack of lamb into the kitchen, Mary put it in a pan, shoved the pan into the oven, and then turned the oven on. She then washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom, where she sat before a mirror, tidied herself up, and put on a dab of lipstick, and generally touched up her face. She practiced a smile. It came out rather peculiar at first, but eventually, she managed to get it right. With a smile on her face, she went to the nearby grocery shop. She told Sam, the owner, that she wanted some potatoes. Sam, while making small talk with her, asked if she'd like any meat. Mary replied that she had nice

leg of lamb already in the oven. Sam then asked her if she would like some cheesecake. Mary agreed to take the cheesecake, saying it was Patrick's favourite. Then, she hurried home, conveying to the grocer that her husband was waiting for her, and she, being a dutiful wife, was just trying her best to arrange a good, sumptuous meal for her husband, who was tired after his long day at work. Mary resolved to act perfectly naturally and normally. When she looked at her husband's dead body lying on the floor, all the love and affection she had felt for him came rushing out, and she began to cry her heart out. It was easy, and not much acting was required on her part. A few minutes later, she got up, picked up the phone, and informed the police that Patrick was dead.

The police car arrived quickly and two policemen walked in. Mary was familiar with both of them. She fell into the arms of one of the policemen, Jack Noonan, weeping hysterically. Jack Noonan comforted her and gently put her into a chair, and went to join his partner, a man named O'Malley, who was kneeling by Patrick's body. Mary cried out and asked if Patrick was dead. The policemen asked her what had happened. Mary gave a short summary of how she had gone to the grocer to get some vegetables, and that when she returned home, she found Patrick's dead body lying on the floor.

Soon, a few other policemen also came in. A doctor and two detectives also came by. Mary knew quite a few of the men who had come to investigate. There was a fair amount of whispering and muttering by the men as they knelt around the dead body. From the men asked Mary many questions at frequent intervals, but they were always kind and gentle with her. Mary told her story again, from the beginning, describing from the time that Patrick had come in. She told the men that she was busy sewing. Patrick, who was tired, had not wanted to go out for supper that evening. So then Mary had put the lamb in the oven to cook, and had gone out to the grocer to get some vegetables. She said that the meat was still in the oven, and it was still cooking. The policemen then asked her which grocer she had gone to. When Mary gave them Sam's name, she one of the men went and verified the story. Satisfied by Sam's description of Mary's behaviour, and his verification of her version of events, the policeman then began to write down whatever details Mary told him. The photographer also came in after that, and started clicking pictures of the body, for the sake of evidence. The doctor left, and two other men came and took the dead body away on a stretcher.

The two detectives stayed back. They were very kind and courteous towards Mary. Jack Noonan even asked her if she wanted to go somewhere else, to her sister's house, or to Jack Noonan's wife. Mary replied that she was not going anywhere and that she was not feeling too good. The detectives then searched the whole house from top to bottom, occasionally stopping to ask Mary a question or two. The detectives finally came to a conclusion that Patrick had been killed by a sudden blow on the back of his head, administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. The weapon was what they were looking for, for they believed that if they could find the weapon, they could find the murderer.

Later that night, one of the policemen came up to Mary, sat beside her, and asked her if she could think of anything in the house that could have been used as a weapon. Mary said that they did not have any heavy metal vases. She told the policemen to check the garage. The policemen continued searching, and Mary could hear their footsteps in the garden, and all around the house. It was late by this time, around nine o'clock. The four men who were searching the house seemed tired. Mary then asked Jack Noonan if he could give her a drink,

which he readily did. Mary then asked him to have a drink too. Jack replied that they were not allowed to drink while on duty. However, Mary pleaded with them, and convinced them to have some. Jack Noonan then told Mary that the oven was still on in the kitchen, and asked if he should turn it off. Mary pretended to have forgotten all about the lamb in the oven, and told Jack to turn it off.

After this, Mary said to the policemen that they all must be terribly hungry, and that they should eat the lamb that was in the oven. She convinced them that it was what her husband would have wanted, and that this hospitality was the least she could offer. After some initial hesitation on the part of the policemen, they finally agreed, and started eating the lamb. Mary could overhear them in the kitchen saying that according to the doctor, Patrick must have been hit by a sledge- hammer. One of the men said to Jack that the hammer might be in the premises somewhere, and that the weapon might just be under their noses, that is, in their immediate vicinity. Hearing this, Mary began to giggle, for she knew that the weapon, the frozen lamb, was indeed under their noses.

### **10.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

#### **Reading Comprehension:**

1. At the beginning of the story, Mary Maloney is shown to be the typical, happily married housewife. What details help build up this impression?

Ans: The warm, clean room with curtains drawn, two table lamps alight and the side board ready for a shared evening drink convey an atmosphere of ease and comfort. Mary herself waits as if looking forward to her husband's return. Her finished face, tranquil expression and soft eyes, all convey the impression of a happily married woman.

2. The writer hints at Patrick Maloney's discomfort that particular evening. Mention three details.

Ans: Patrick Maloney's lifting his glass of whisky and draining it in one swallow although there was still half of it left was unusual. Then, his going over and making himself a stiff new drink was an indication of his discomfort. Thirdly, his refusal to let her do anything for him, get his slippers or get him something to eat, indicated a hostile mood.

3. What do you think Patrick Maloney told his wife that prompted her to kill him?

Ans: Patrick probably told Mary that he had fallen in love with another woman and wished to get away from his wife, either by way of separation or divorce.

4. How do you think Mary Maloney would have behaved if she had not been pregnant?

Ans: Mary would probably have behaved in the same way even if she had not been pregnant.

5. Why was she so insistent that the policeman eat the leg of mutton being cooked in the oven?

Ans: This was because the leg of lamb was the weapon of attack which had caused Patrick's death. Eating it would destroy evidence.

6. Why does Mary "giggle" when the policeman says that the murder weapon was probably "right under our noses?"

Ans: She giggles because it is, quite literally under their noses. They are biting into the mutton with their teeth, right below their noses.

7. Food is an important metaphor in the story. Pre-occupation with eating and drinking on the one hand, guarantees Mary's innocence and on the other, provides her with the perfect weapon. Comment.

Ans: Interestingly, the story begins with a sideboard well prepared for an evening of warmth. Even amidst the tension Mary offers to get Patrick food and drink. It is during her efforts at preparing supper that she fetches the leg of lamb which she impulsively uses to fatally hit her estranged husband. Even her strategy to delay calling the police centres around buying potatoes etc for supper from the local greengrocers. And when the policeman get delayed working on the detail of the murder, the murder weapon, the newly cooked leg of lamb, is consumed as food by the cops and crucial evidence is destroyed, letting Mary Maloney escape being discovered.

### Vocabulary

2. Study the idioms below and fill in the blanks in the paragraph with the most appropriate one:

|  |
|--|
| Warm/gladden somebody's heart, a dark horse, heart skips/misses a beat, steel yourself, break your heart, your heart sinks |
|--|

Mary was very much in love with her husband. Her .....every time her detective husband returned home, from work. She waited eagerly for his return each evening. It .....to hear the tyres on the gravel outside. However, Patrick was .....and had been having an affair. He knew the news would ..... of his wife. He decided to ..... to the task though it.....

Ans: Mary was very much in love with her husband. Her **heart missed a beat** every time her detective husband returned home, from work. She waited eagerly for his return each evening. It **gladdened** her heart to hear the tyres on the gravel outside. However, Patrick was **a dark horse** and had been having an affair. He knew the news would **break the heart** of his wife. He decided to **steel himself** to the task though it **made his heart sink**.

## **10.11 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE**

### **Passage I**

She took his coat and hung it in the closer. Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself; and soon she was back again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both 20 hands, rocking it so the ice cubes tinkled against the side. For her, this was always a blissful time of day. She knew he didn't want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house. She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel-almost as a sunbather feels the sun-that warm 25 male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together. She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides. She loved intent, far look in his eyes when they rested in her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whiskey had taken some of it away.

1. What did she do at the beginning of the passage?
2. While she was sewing, what did her husband do?
3. What and why was a blissful time for her?
4. Which details tell us that she loved her husband dearly?
5. Why would he remain silent in the beginning? When would he begin to talk?

### **Passage II**

Her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn't even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn't been listening, then later, when she sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had ever happened. "I'll get the supper," she managed to whisper, and this time he didn't stop her. When she walked across the room she couldn't feel her feet touching the floor. She couldn't feel anything at all- except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit. Everything was automatic now-down the steps to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

1. What was her first instinct?
2. What was her first reaction?
3. What was she feeling while she walked across the room?

### **Passage III**

The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of her shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands. All right, she told herself. So I've killed him. It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden. She began thinking very fast. As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murderers with unborn children? Did they kill then both-mother and child? Or did they wait until the tenth month? What did they do? Mary Maloney didn't know. And she certainly wasn't prepared to take a chance.

1. What caused the shock? What helped her overcome it?
2. What did she tell herself when she had come out of the shock?
3. What was extraordinary?
4. What did she think about her crime and the possible punishment for it?
5. What does the last line mean?

#### **Passage IV**

The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whiskey. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket. Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work. Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come. There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did. The drop of a head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil. Her skin -for this was her sixth month with child-had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger darker than before. When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock. She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.

1. Describe the atmosphere in the room.
2. How do we know that Mary was waiting for her husband to come home?
3. Why would she look at the clock frequently? Why without anxiety?
4. What was her physical appearance like?
5. Which details indicate the arrival of her husband?

#### **Passage V**

Briefly, she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor. While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed blood on the dead man's head. He showed it to O'Malley who got up at once and hurried to the phone. Soon, other men began to come into the house. First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she knew by name. Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who knew about fingerprints. There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn't wanted to go out for supper. She told how she'd put the meat in the oven-"it's there now, cooking"- and how she'd stopped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

1. What did Noonan discover while she was telling her story?
2. Why and with what result did O'Malley hurry to the telephone?
3. Who else came to the house and what did they do?
4. The detectives asked her a lot of questions, but they treated her kindly. What do you think was their real reason for doing so?
5. What story did she tell the detective and the doctor? Why was this a "story", and not "facts"?

### **10.12 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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