Postcolonial Literatures and Cultural Studies

DEENG527

Edited by:
Dr. Ajoy Batta

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Unit 01: Salman Rushdie: Midnight's Children

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Know about Salman Rushdie as a writer
- Discuss *Midnight Children* as aPostcolonial epic
- understanding technique of Magic realism of Rushdie

Introduction

Indian English novelists have had two kinds of predecessors. The first set of novelists were those who began writing in the pre 1930s. They were those who wrote English with stiff correctness, always conscious that it was a foreign language. Their works and their English were imitative of the British novelists of the times. Sir Walter Scott and W.W. Reynolds were very popular with them as models.

The other group comprised novelists such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt who began writing in English but who, influenced by the rising feeling of nationalism, later switched to writing in their mother tongue, Bengali.

However, the novelists who rose in the 1930s, novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao were those who made a conscious decision to write in English as if it were an Indian language. Perhaps, they did not regard it as a foreign language since it had been domiciled in India for over a hundred years. However, where they were different from their predecessors was in their objective of re-making British English very much like American and Irish writers such as, James Baldwin and J.M. Synge had already done before them. Their self-assurance that they were using an Indian and not a foreign language gave them "the confidence to bend the language to their will" (Mukherjee, 167). Perhaps, the use of English by these writers was their way of asserting their right to write in English by giving it a new and distinct identity.

The first major novelist to experiment with English for writing fiction was Mulk Raj Anand with his novel Untouchable, a work that you are studying in this course. Then came G. V. Desani, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan and Bhabani Bhatacharya. Experimentation with the English language has continued without a stop since their days.

What Anand did was to experiment with the diction, dialogue and the syntax of the English spoken by his characters. While he did not alter the English he used for his remarks as a narrator, in the dialogues uttered by his Punjabi characters he literally translated from Hindi and Punjabi words

and idioms even at the cost of disrupting the grammatical conventions of British English. For example, in Untouchable you will have noticed a generous use of expressions and phrases such as "eating the air" (to take a stroll), "breaking the vessel" (to expose a secret) or "black in the pulse"(something fishy) which are very common in Hindi or Punjabi but which when rendered in English appear odd and unusual. While reading the novel, you must have wondered why Anand had done this, what does he achieve with such usage, and does he succeed?

Those of you who have read Untouchable will agree that he succeeds in spite of the oddity of such expressions because he was trying to capture the vigorous speech of Punjabi peasants. He conveys the Punjabi farmer's sensibility without a doubt though you may also feel disturbed at the violence he does to the grammar of English. This brings us to the question whether this approach is recommended. The next section which discusses the problems experienced by writers including Anand, Narayan and Rao who were trying consciously to forge a new English for Indian creative writing will perhaps answer the question for you.

Post colonialism or later study is the academic research of the cultural heritage of colonialism and imperialism, which centers on the human penalties of the control and exploitation of colonists and their lands.

Post colonialism is based on postmodernism, with which it shares some concepts and methods, and it can be treated as a reaction or departure from colonialism similarly as the response of postmodernism is the response to modernism. The obscure word colonialism can either refer to a system of government or the ideology or world view that underlying that system- in general postcolonialism portrays a conceptual reaction to the idea of colonialism, rather than that of postcolonialism.

Published in 1980, Midnight's Children follows the tumultuous transition into India's and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan's independence after the partition of British India. The story itself is allegorical with the main events being about the life of Saleem Sinai, a boy who was born at the stroke of midnight on the same day that India gained its freedom from England.

Salman Rushdie, the novel's author, created the book to be a fictional biography of the country from the point of view of someone who grew up alongside the nation. Rushdie himself was born in 1947, just two months before the country's liberation in August. As such, he had a unique perspective on the country's adolescent years as they coincided with his own. These same ideas are injected into Saleem's story; the changes that befall Saleem in terms of wealth and identity are indicative of India's growth.

Like Rushdie's other novels, Midnight's Children uses magical realism as a device to combine history with Rushdie's fictional twist on history. Rushdie also employs postcolonial theory to show how imperialism handicapped countries like India trying to reestablish their culture and identity. Also subject to Rushdie's critique is how social class and religion contributed to India's uncertain beginnings.

Midnight's Children won the 1981 Book Prize. Then in both 1993 and 2008, it won the Best of the Book prize on the prize's respective 25th and 40th anniversary. It also won the English Speaking Union Literary Award as well as the James Tait Prize. The story was adapted to the stage in 2003 by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Later in 2012, a film version premiered at the Toronto Film Festival.

1.1 Salman Rushdie as a Writer

Anglo-Indian author Salman Rushdie is one of the leading novelists of the twentieth century. His style is often likened to magic realism, which mixes religion, fantasy, and mythology into one composite reality. He has been compared to authors such as Peter Carey, Emma Tennant, and Angela Carter. His somewhat flippant and familiar way of treating religion has provoked criticism, however, peaking in the Ayatollah of Iran's issue of a fatwa (a death order) in response to The Satanic Verses, his fourth novel.

Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947 in Bombay, India, to a middle class Muslim family. His father was a businessman, educated in Cambridge, and his grandfather was an Urdu poet. At fourteen, he was sent to England for schooling, attending the Rugby School in Warwickshire. In 1964, his family, responding to the growing hostilities between India and Pakistan, joined many emigrating Muslims by moving to Karachi, Pakistan.

These religious and political conflicts deeply affected Rushdie, although he stayed in England to attend the King's College in Cambridge, where he studied history. While in school, he also joined

the Cambridge Footlights theatre company. Following his graduation in 1968, he began working in Pakistani television. Later, he also acted with the Oval House theatre group in Kennington, England, and until 1981, he wrote freelance copy for advertisers Ofilvy and Mather and Charles Barker.

In 1975, Rushdie published his first novel. Grimus, a science fiction story inspired by the twelfth century Sufi poem "The Conference of the Birds," was largely ignored by both critics and the public. Rushdie's literary fortunes changed in 1981, when the publication of his second novel, Midnight's Children, brought him international fame and acclaim. The story is a comic allegory of Indian history, and tells of the 1001 children born after India's Declaration of Independence, each of whom possesses a magical power. It won the Booker Prize for Fiction, the English-Speaking Union Award, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (fiction), and an Arts Council Writers' Award. In 1993 and 2008, it was named the "Booker of Bookers," acknowledging it as the best recipient of the Booker Prize for Fiction in the award's history.

His third novel, Shame (1983), was commonly regarded as a political allegory of Pakistani politics. It used a wealthy family as a metaphor for the country, and included characters based on former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. It won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger, and made the short list for the Booker Prize. In 1987, Rushdie published a short travel narrative titled The Jaguar's Smile.

In 1988, Rushdie became the center of a controversy surrounding the publication of his fourth novel, The Satanic Verses, which revolves around two Indian actors who struggle with religion, spirituality, and nationality. Although the book won the Whitbread Award, Rushdie's free adaptation of Islamic history and theology caused the orthodox Muslim Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran to issue a fatwa, a call for all obedient Muslims to assassinate him. The book was banned and burned in many countries, and several people involved with its publication were injured and killed. After the death threat, Rushdie shunned publicity and went into hiding for many years, although he continued to write.

He published a children's book in 1990, titled Haroun and the Sea of Stories. It won the Writers' Guild Award (Best Children's Book). He next published a collection of essays, Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991 (1991), and a collection of short stories, East, West (1994). Then came another novel, The Moor's Last Sigh (1995), which used a family's history to explore the activities of right-wing Hindu terrorists, and the cultural connections between India and the Iberian Peninsula. The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999) was Rushdie's sixth novel, re-imagining the birth of modern rock music. He also published the novel Fury in 2001, and Step Across This Line: Collected Non-fiction 1992-2002 in 2002. His latest novel Shalimar the Clown, published in 2005; it was a finalist for the Whitbread Book Awards. In 2012, he published a memoir of his days in hiding, Joseph Anton.

While many of Rushdie's texts center on the interpretation and role of religion in society, Rushdie himself is an atheist. This upset many Muslims who previously regarded Rushdie as a strong figure in the Muslim community. Combined with the unpopularity and assassination attempts that followed the publication of The Satanic Verses, Rushdie issued a statement in 1990 claiming that he had renewed his Muslim faith. He denounced the blasphemous ideas that he wrote in The Satanic Verses and said that he was committed to better understanding the religion and how it fit into the larger world narrative. He also issued a request for the publisher to never again produce new copies of The Satanic Verses. However, in 1995, he admitted the tactic was only a survival mechanism and that he still does not subscribe to any religious beliefs. He considers the statement the biggest mistake of his life.

Rushdie ended his fourth marriage, which was to the American television star Padma Lakshmi, in 2007. He is an Honorary Professor in the Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Distinguished Supporter of the British Humanist Association, a Distinguished Fellow in Literature at the University of Anglia, a recipient of the 1993 Austrian State Prize for European Literature, a recipient of the 1996 Aristeion Literary Prize, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Commandeur de Arts et des Lettres. He was also President of PEN American Center from 2003-2005. In 2000, he moved from London to New York. In 2006, he became the Distinguished Writer in Residence at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

1.2 Midnight's Children as a Post-Colonial Epic

The glimpses of the creative world of the great masters of Indian English novel would reveal thatthe novelists constitute a cosmopolitan group, representing various religions, communities,

professions and views. They come from East, West, South and North. They belong to almost every community in India- the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian, and the Parsi and they represent every shade of opinion- orthodox, liberal, progressive, Gandhian, communistic and socialistic. They interpret every segment and strata of human society- the luxurious life of Maharaja's, Nawabs, industrialists and landlords; and the problems of untouchables, labourers, women and peasants. The conflict between the old and the new, the East and the West also finds powerful expression in it. The theme of national awakening under the paragon of our country: Mahatma Gandhi, has been treated in epic dimensions by many Indian English novelists.

The 1980s saw the emergence of some great Novelists-Allan Sealy, Upmanyu Chatterjee, AmitavGhosh, Shashi Tharoor, Ranga Rao, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, and Salman Rushdie.Their thematic and technical experiments and innovations have been accepted and admired in literary and critical circles all over the globe.

Awarded the Booker prize in 1981, Midnight's Children is acclaimed Salman Rushdie's most highly regarded work of fiction. As postcolonial fiction the novel deals with postcolonial India afterits liberation from the British colonial rule for long. Further, the novel breaks down the national and geographical barriers and its scope extends beyond the borders of India into Pakistan.Moreover, it spells out the postcolonial hybrids very clearly. Aadam Aziz, a typical Indian Muslim becomes westernized after his medical education in Germany and becomes an atheist.Saleem Sinai is the biological son of Hindu women,Vanita and an Englishman, William Methwold. It shows the racial hybridity in it. Even after the British leave India, inmates of Methwold imitates the Western traditions of cocktail in the evening.Though, Saleem is brought up in an orthodox Muslim family and nurtured by a Christian ayah, Mary Pereira, he also imbibes something of her faith. It showed the best example of postcolonial element of racial hybridity.As a result, he compares himself to the legends and myths of all these religions. Alienation is one of the features of postcolonial fiction. Saleem Sinai suffers from alienation and deprivation towards the end of the novel as all the members of his family are wiped in Indo- Pakistan war for liberating Bangladesh.

While there are many complex aspects to Midnight's Children, it is clear that Rushdie offers a Postcolonial narrative. Rushdie appropriates many elements of Post colonialism in his work. The first is the lack of a reliable narrator. Building off the idea of a lack of totality that is a part of Post colonialism, Saleem is far from a totalizing narrator. His dates are wrong. Some of his facts are not accurate. He is a participant in his own narrative, leading to issues of bias. These are all deliberate, as Rushdie seeks to make a statement that there can be no definitive notion of history. Any such construction is going to silence voice and that the best we can do is collect as many narratives as possible. This is a Post colonialism response to the condition of imposition that sought to present itself as "the truth."

Rushdie's Midnight's Children, published in 1980, was perhaps the seminal text in conceiving opinions as to interplay of post-modern and post-colonial theory. The title of the novel refers to the birth of Saleem Sinai, the novel's principal narrator, who is born at midnight August 15th 1947, the precise date of Indian independence. From this remarkable coincidence we are immediately drawn to the conclusion that the novel's concerns are of the new India, and how someone born into this new state of the 'Midnight's child', if you will, interacts with this post-colonial state. To characterize the novel as one merely concerned with post-colonial India, and its various machinations, is however a reductive practice. While the novel does at various times deal with what it is to be Indian, both pre and post 1947, it is a much more layered and interesting piece of work. Midnight's Children's popularity is such that it was to be voted 25th in a poll conducted by the Guardian, listing the 100 best books of the last century, and was also to receive the Booker Prize in 1981 and the coveted 'Booker of Bookers' in 1993.

Another element of Post colonialism in Midnight's Children is how it is told from the indigenous point of view. The presence of the British is felt, but the story, itself, is one of Partition and division. Rushdie's use of All India Radio, Bollywood songs, as well appropriating Muslim and Hindu notions of reality help to enhance the Postcolonial understanding of the work. Being able to relay the basis of Partition as well as the Emergency from an indigenous point of view is also reflective of the Postcolonial elements of Midnight's Children. From a theoretical point of view, Rushdie wishes to deposit another vision of the narrative into the discourse, one that hopes to achieve voice and enhance dialogue. This becomes an element of the Post colonialism in the novel.

Why Midnight's Children is much more than of interest to the reader interested in post-colonialism, is possibly due to its strong elements of magic realism, a literary device. That goes hand in hand with post modernism. Perhaps the most notable exponent of magic realism in literature is the Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who's One Hundred Years of Solitude written in 1967, came to be seen as the standard bearer for the genre.

Many postcolonial writers have resorted to magic realism as a way of promoting national identity since it embodies practical reality of bygone and contemporary events while simultaneously creating desires to upturn the flow of occurrences. Realism renders nations' appearances astoundingly the same, whereas the unrealistic features of magic realism can render them unique by manifesting yearnings in distinctive ways. With magic realism, postcolonial authors get to challenge what otherwise appears like realistic narrative by experimenting with a non-mainstream literary technique—fantasy—purposed at presenting an alternative reality in longing subversion of western (read: colonial) ways of constructing reality. To paraphrase Linda Hutch eon in "Circling the Downspout of Empire," the postmodern technique of magic realism is linked to post colonialism in that they both deal with the similar oppressive force of colonial history in relation to the past.

One such postcolonial writer is Salman Rushdie, who used magic realism in Midnight's Children extensively. His fusion of fantasy and reality looks typically Indian because the characters strewn in present social and political disorder likewise own the power of epic heroes. As a novelist from a country with a colonial legacy, Rushdie is also concerned and involved with the concept of nation in his magic realist writing, which was motivated by (1) the necessity to cast away what Coleridge called the film of recent past' familiarity through the use of tabulation and (2) the dilemma of presenting impossible events.

The desire to reclaim the India of his past was the driving force behind Rushdie's decision to write Midnight's Children – the novel was born when Rushdie realized how much he wanted to restore his past identity to himself. Midnight's Children was his first literary attempt to recapture India. The novel explores the ways in which history is given meaning through the retelling of individual experience. History is seen subjectively through the eyes of the protagonist Saleem Sinai, therefore the retelling of history is fragmented and, at times, erroneous. Rushdie is relating Saleem's generation of „midnight's children" to the generation of Indians with whom he was born and raised. As a product of postcolonial India, Saleem pieces together the multifarious fragments of his identity, just as India begins anew in rebuilding her identity in the wake of colonialism. Saleem's story represents the plural identities of India and the fragmented search for self through memory.

Magic realism as inherent part of the novel, from the grandfather's tears of diamond and ruby nosebleed through Ahmed's vanishing skin to Narlikar's luminous ashes, shows the significance with which the ordinary context gets blurred by miraculous events. First, it permits the plausibility in which characters like Saleem portray epic roles in Indian history. Second, it metaphorizes the cultural amalgam in everyday Indian society. Third, the fantastic events in Indian history actually happened, notwithstanding if Saleem himself admits that these occurrences are too marvelous to be believed. Necessarily, the fantasy becomes a tool with which to relate and remark on Indian history, politics and culture. Finally, magic realism helps define the identity of the Indian people with its offering of an alternative history: a counter-memory.

The magic realism in Midnight's Children stresses the sustained struggle to come at peace with identity within the postcolonial scheme. Not only are the midnight's children magical beings, but also are they the children of the times—"the last throw of everything…the true hope of freedom…"—in acknowledgment of their midnight nativity. While Saleem's generation did not succeed in realizing the possibilities built within the dynamics of independence, a possibility is present in every generation of midnight children to construct a complete identity despite the increasing difficulty of formulating so in the contemporary context. In the ambiguous final sentence of the novel which says, "it is the privilege of midnight's children to be both master and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and be unable to live or die in peace," a similar thread weaves not only the marvelous with the real, but also the colonial with the self-asserting postcolonial individual. The reflection of political and historical problem in magic realism renders it as a legitimate critique of colonialism and its attendant ideologies. In upholding the identity of the Other in the novel, the postcolonial challenges the imperialistic movement that champions centrality despite the simultaneous recognition of the power of the center in the privileging of the margin. Through this, a rising society's necessity to renew its self-description and to erode constructed Orientalism by the West may be responded. The reinscription of the marginalized magic realism and the celebration of identity in post colonialism are means through which said centrality and, by extension, universality, may be questioned.

Midnight's Children is a typical example of a postcolonial novel that integrates the elements of magic realism into it. The author's intentional use of magic realism helps in bringing out the surreal and unreal dimensions of the Indian subcontinent and thereby making it a postcolonial work. By synchronizing the national history and the personal history, Rushdie narrates India's colonial past and postcolonial present. His narration of the nation is subjective and therefore history in the text is fragmented and, at times, erroneous.

Rushdie assumes magic realism as an effective tool to solve the problems of post colonialism. So, by connecting and combining historical events, mythological stories and fictional narratives, Rushdie tries to create and convey a true picture of Indian post colonialism. While the colonizers categorized India and Indians as a monolithic place and people, the novel illustrates India's multiplicity and diversity, in an attempt to overturn the colonial image of India. Midnight's Children is therefore an attempt to recapture India. All these attempts would have been impossible without the inclusion of magic realism.

To conclude, we can mark that like Indo-Anglian fiction, which is called "twice-born fiction" by Meenakshi Mukherjee, Midnight's Children reflects the postcolonial hybridism through the clash of cultures and political offshoots. Free India herself is "twice-born" out of indigenous India and British Colonial rule.

1.3 Technique of Magic Realism of Rushdie

For promoting the national identity, most post-colonial writers use Magic Realism as a key device because it symbolizes the pragmatic realities of the past and the present events and simultaneously creates a desire to improve on them. The unrealistic features of Magic Realism can render them unique by manifesting longings in distinctive ways. It is one of the most powerful devices in the hands of Salman Rushdie to deconstruct the reality left by the colonizers.

Rushdie has extensively used Magic Realism in Midnight's Children. He fuses fantasy and fiction in Indian background. Saleem has the magical powers of smell and telepathy and these special powers are characteristics of all midnight's children. This gives the readers an insight into the psychological and mental states of the people in the post-colonial era.

In Midnight's Children, Rushdie mixes and juxtaposes the realistic and the fantastic, attempting to comprehend and analyze the layered and complex reality of the socio-political life of the Indian sub-continent. He also attempts to associate the reality of individual life to an all-embracing reality.

Rushdie gives us a glimpse of this colonial political system and postcolonial agony by giving Saleem Sinai the magical powers of reading people's minds. Saleem Sinai tells the story of his grandfather Aadam Aziz by entering into his grandpa's mind. Thus, the experiences of Aadam Aziz, become that of Saleem, and through Saleem, we get to experience the same.

The double consciousness of the people during the colonial and postcolonial era is brought to us through Aadam when he attempts to pray when he returns after a span of five years in Germany:

"One morning when the valley, gloved in a prayer-mat, punched him on the nose, he had been trying, absurdly, to pretend that nothing had changed."

Aadam's pretence here is a reference to his divided self and a feeling of alienation in his homeland. It also reflects on the quest for identity of the people who had to migrate during the colonial era and had lived - for a significant time - a European lifestyle.

Rushdie uses Saleem to put forward the hopelessness of Aadam and break it with realism. Throughout his meaningless existence, Aadam had constrained relationships with his wife and children. Just like his fragmented self, they also separate from him like fragments. Towards the end of his life, he is left in a state of utter confusion where his capacity to comprehend facts starts to decline naturally.

This non-believer of God starts mistaking his old servant Musa as Jesus Christ and this is where the readers are given a slight tinge of bitter realism. Musa's feet which are distorted by leprosy is assumed to be the feet of God, surrounded by snakes. Aadam passes away and unifies with the beauty and glory of Kashmir and finally realizes that - 'God has his reasons, old man; life's like that, right?'

In the book, Rushdie stresses on the division of India into fourteen states and six centrally administered territories by talking about the bitter realities of the time with fantasy and humor. The states were divided based on language. The political parties, as usual, took advantage of this situation. In one instance, the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti clashes with Maha Gujrat Parishad in a fierce demonstration in Bombay:

"S.M.S. voices chanted 'Soo che? Saru che!' and M.G.P. throats were opened in fury; under the posters of the Air-India rajah and of the Kolynos Kid, the two parties fell upon one another with no little zeal, and to the tune of my little rhyme the first of the language riots got under way, fifteen killed, over three hundred wounded."

Saleem Sinai almost accidentally creates a slogan for the S.M.S as he bumps into the protesters while trying to impress an American girl on his new bike. He is asked to speak Marathi and then Gujarati by the protesters of S.M.S and upon insisting he recites the only Gujarati rhyme he had picked up in school, "Soo che? Saru che! Danda le ke maru che!" (How are you? – I am well – I'll take a stick and thrash you to hell!). The effect was almost fantastical:

"A nonsense; a nothing; nine words of emptiness ... but when I'd recited them, the smiles began to laugh; and the voices near me and then further and further away began to take up my chant, HOW ARE YOU? I AM WELL! And they lost interest in me, "Go go with your bicycle, masterji?" ...I fled away up the hillock as my chant rushed forward and back, up to the front and down to the back of two-day-long procession, becoming as it went, a song of war."

Here, this intervention from Evie Burns in pushing Saleem into the march hints at the atrocious post-independence intervention of the developed countries in the internal affairs of the developing counties. This linguistic kerfuffle between Gujarat and Maharashtra which led to its partition and Bombay became the capital of the latter takes on a comical note as Saleem says, –

"... so at last, I was on the winning side."

Rushdie creates some bold and unique female characters who break the stereotypical barrier of conventions and adapt to the new realities that they face. The first example of this being Aadam's mother who comes out of her traditional purdah to make sure Aadam goes to Germany to study while her husband remains paralyzed: "Who would buy a turquoise from a woman hidden inside a black hood? It is a question of establishing trust ..."

Naseem, Aadam's wife, after losing her son and her husband, makes a bold move by buying a bunk in Pakistan and run her livelihood along with her daughter- in- law, Pia. She lives on to her husband's word by starting to think like "a modern Indian woman". Another character named Amina - with her motto, "What can't be cured must be endured."- enters the gambling business to run her living. Hence, the three A's - adopt, adapt, and adept - which was prevalent in the transitional period from the colonial to the postcolonial era was vividly shown through the female characters of the novel.

The women in Midnight's Children are powerful and dynamic. Rushdie extensively uses Magic Realism while describing these characters. There is Mary Pereira who owned a pickle factory under whom Saleem worked. Durga and Parvathi-the-witch are shown to possess fantastic powers just like Saleem. One of the central characters of the book is the Widow. The Widow is the Prime Minister of the country, Indira Gandhi.

Summary

- Postcolonialism is a historical time period which represents the after effects of western colonial rule over the east. The transition came right after the end of the colonial rule was drastic for all the countries that were under the European empire earlier. Postcolonial period leads to the loss of identity, sense of nationalism and development of a new form of literature which was termed as postcolonial literature. Many writers came up with their stories and life experiences of the time when White rulers exploited them. Postcolonial literature is filled with the subjects like subordination, slave narratives, violence and brutalities done by Occident over Orientals in the name of uplifting the Orients.
- Rushdie's *Midnigh'sChildren* isa postcolonial epic. As this novel is full of post-colonialattributes and based on its theme, narrative technique Rushdie was given Booker of BookerPrize.
- Salman Rushdie uses Magic Realism in a very naturalistic manner to show readers the realities and harsh truths of the world. Rushdie explores the flexibility by expressing the various process and displaying the history, fiction, and tragedy. His mastery in the language just augments our experience. He defines the undefinable, makes us experience something new, gives us the vision to see the unseen, helps us capture the unimaginable, makes us comprehend the incomprehensible.

Keywords

Articulate: to express clearly and effectively

Embed: to fix something firmly and deeply

Forge: shape

Genre: class of works of art or literature

Ideology: a set of ideas

Intriguing: interesting, provoking thought

Irreverence: lack of respect

Pan-Indian: common across the religion and culture of India

Perjorative: word or phrase that suggests that somebody is worthless

Predecessor: person who has come before someone else

Privilege: social right or advantage given to a few

Syntactical: by the rule of grammar used for ordering or connecting words in sentence

Transliteration: to translate literally

Unobstrusive: not seen or noticed easily

Scepticism: doubt

Scoff: to speak or act disrespectfully; ridicule

Sycophant: flatterer

Triology: a group of three related books, plays, paintings etc.

Voracious: eating or desiring large quantities of food.

Appropriate: to set aside for some purpose/suitable

Agendas: subjects to be considered at a meeting

Apprises: to inform

Axiomatic: self-evident

Anachronisms: person or thing that appears to be in the wrong period of time

Allegiances: loyalty

Artifice: clever skill

Bizarre: strange, peculiar

Collide: to meet and strike violently

Complicit: to be a partner in a crime

Culminated: reach the highest point

Constructivism: the view that reality is always constructedartificially

Discrepancies: difference

Disentangle: to free from confusion

Exotic: strange and unusual

Eurocentric: European literary practices

Epitomized:a person or thing who has the essence of a certain quality

Self Assessment

1. Where was Salman Rushdie born?

A. Mumbai

B. Bombay
C. New Delhi
D. Jaipur

2. What event is Saleem, the protagonist of Midnight's Children, born on the eve of?
A. Gandhi's assassination
B. India's independence
C. Indian provincial elections
D. War over Kashmir

3. Where did Rushdie attend university?
A. Oxford
B. Delhi
C. Calicut
D. Harvard

4. What is the title of Rushdie's first novel?
A. Midnight's Children
B. Grimus
C. The Satanic Verses
D. Imaginary Homelands

5. Which of Rushdie's novels was banned in India, and forced him to live in secrecy for nine years?
A. Midnight's Children
B. Grimus
C. The Satanic Verses
D. Imaginary Homelands

6. How old is Saleem Sinai when the novel opens?
A. One
B. Thirteen
C. Twenty-one
D. Thirty-one

7. Who is Saleem's audience for the telling of his life story?
A. Shiva
B. Padma
C. Aadam
D. Emerald

8. Which of the following is not one of Aadam and Naseem's daughters?
A. Alia
B. Hanif
C. Mumtaz
D. Emerald

9. What does Mumtaz change her name to before moving to Delhi?
A. Amina
B. Alia
C. Adah
D. Advika

10. What does Saleem lose after being hit by his grandfather's spittoon?
A. His left arm
B. His eyesight
C. His ability to walk
D. His memory

11. Magical Realism can best be described as
A. an artistic genre in which magical elements or illogical scenarios appear in an otherwise realistic or even normal setting.
B. an artistic genre in which magical elements or illogical scenarios appear in an otherwise fantastical setting.
C. an artistic genre in which realistic scenarios appear in a normal setting.
D. an artistic genre in which realistic scenarios appear in a fantastical setting.

12. Magic Realists tell stories that are
A. fantastic
B. matter-of-fact
C. ridiculous
D. all the above

13. Where is Saleem's family living when they are killed?
A. Delhi
B. Dacca
C. Karachi
D. Bombay

14. What is Saleem's son born with?
A. A head full of hair
B. Enormous ears
C. Huge feet
D. Big hands

15. What saves Saleem's life as a baby?
A. Breast milk
B. Snake venom
C. Magic
D. His grandmother's cooking

Answers for Self Assessment

1. A 2. C 3. D 4. A 5. C

6.	A	7.	C	8	B	9.	C	10.	A
11.	B	12.	A	13.	C	14.	C	15.	B

Review Questions

1. Discuss the postcolonial elements depicted in*Midnight's Children*.
2. Discuss the term Postcolonialism. How will you consider*Midnight's Children* as a postcolonial or a postmodern novel?
3. Do you think Rushdie has set the trend for a new genre of fiction? If so, how?
4. How has Rushdie's novel influenced the novel of the 80s and the 90s?
5. What do mean by Magic realism? Trace the presence of magic realism in*Midnight's Children*.
6. What characteristics of Rushdie as a writer do you find after reading*Midnight's Children?* Comment on use of English by Rushdie.
7. Discuss Salman Rushdie as a postcolonial novelist.

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Unit 01: Salman Rushdie: Midnight's Children

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Know about Shaping of Salman Rushdie as a writer
- Discuss the plot structure and summary of *Midnight's Children*
- Identify the epical features of the novel

Introduction

Published in 1980, Midnight's Children follows the tumultuous transition into India's and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan's independence after the partition of British India. The story itself is allegorical with the main events being about the life of Saleem Sinai, a boy who was born at the stroke of midnight on the same day that India gained its freedom from England.

Salman Rushdie, the novel's author, created the book to be a fictional biography of the country from the point of view of someone who grew up alongside the nation. Rushdie himself was born in 1947, just two months before the country's liberation in August. As such, he had a unique perspective on the country's adolescent years as they coincided with his own. These same ideas are injected into Saleem's story; the changes that befall Saleem in terms of wealth and identity are indicative of India's growth.

Like Rushdie's other novels, Midnight's Children uses magical realism as a device to combine history with Rushdie's fictional twist on history. Rushdie also employs postcolonial theory to show how imperialism handicapped countries like India trying to reestablish their culture and identity. Also subject to Rushdie's critique is how social class and religion contributed to India's uncertain beginnings.

Midnight's Children won the 1981 Book Prize. Then in both 1993 and 2008, it won the Best of the Book prize on the prize's respective 25th and 40th anniversary. It also won the English Speaking Union Literary Award as well as the James Tait Prize. The story was adapted to the stage in 2003 by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Later in 2012, a film version premiered at the Toronto Film Festival.

2.1 Shaping of Rushdie as a Novelist

British Indian Author Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947, a few months before Indian independence, in Bombay, British India—a city now known as Mumbai. His Westernized parents, a successful Indian businessman and a Bombay schoolteacher, were Muslim by birth but casual in their practice. They sent Salman initially to private school in Bombay. He left Bombay at age 14 and attended an English boarding school, where he was exposed to the racism of his classmates. He continued his education at the prestigious King's College at the University of Cambridge, focusing on history, and he eventually received a graduate degree from Cambridge. As an Indian-born British citizen, Rushdie's sense of self was shaped by this hybrid identity, a term that expresses the diversity of influences, both Eastern and Western, that are his inheritance.

After a brief job as a writer of television programs in Pakistan, Rushdie returned to England, worked for an ad agency, and began writing his first novel Grimus (1975). The novel fell flat, but Rushdie recovered well. His second novel, Midnight's Children (1981), was a great success. It garnered many awards, including the Booker Prize for Fiction, the Best of the Bookers, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, and an Arts Council Writers' Award. Rushdie continued writing, publishing Shame in 1983, The Satanic Verses in 1988, and a string of novels, children's stories, essays, and Persian translations of his novels.

Rushdie was sued for libel by Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi (1917–84) three years after the publication of Midnight's Children, in which she figures prominently. In the novel, Indira Gandhi is Saleem's nightmare, "a talon-nailed, green and black devouring Widow with parti-colored hair who rolls little children into balls and hurls them into the darkness." Biographer Katherine Frank reports that Rushdie has acknowledged that this is his own vision of Mrs. Gandhi. In the novel Gandhi is attacked for the imposition of the Emergency, during which she imprisons her opponents, suspends civil rights, and enacts many new laws. Mrs. Gandhi's lawsuit was based, however, on a personal slur, a single sentence in the early editions of Midnight's Children in which the widow is accused by her son of causing the death of her husband through neglect. The sentence was removed by court order from the paperback edition. To Gandhi's credit and that of British law, the political insults and the ugly caricature in the novel were never part of the libel complaint, and there were no attempts to suppress this book in England or elsewhere.

On the other hand, great troubles emerged for Rushdie upon the publication of The Satanic Verses. One of the plot lines of the novel is a retelling of the life of the prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Although the novel was praised by critics in the West and won awards including the Whitbread Book Award, the subject matter enraged Muslim clerics because of its unflattering portrayal of the Muhammad-like character, Mahound. Within five months of its publication, the book was denounced as blasphemous and banned in 13 countries with large Muslim populations.

Rushdie's life was threatened when on February 15, 1989, the Ayatollah Khomeini, the First Supreme Leader of Iran, declared a fatwa, a call for any among the faithful to assassinate Rushdie and any others who aided him in the publication and sales of the offending novel. Attached to the fatwa or death warrant was the promise of a large monetary reward, which quickly climbed in value. Subsequently, Rushdie's Japanese translator was murdered and his Italian translator and Norwegian publisher were attacked and seriously wounded. Bookstores in Berkeley, the Bronx, and London were firebombed. Rushdie remained in hiding for 13 years, protected by the British government. The fatwa was not lifted until 1998.

Rushdie has produced a number of novels, nonfiction works, essays, and children's books. From 2014 to 2019 he published five new works in addition to Persian translations of two of his novels. His work appears in over 40 languages. He holds honorary doctoral degrees from eight institutions while being a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a Distinguished Fellow in Literature at the University of East Anglia. Rushdie is also the recipient of numerous awards: The Austrian State Prize for European Literature (1992), the Aristeion Literary Prize (1996), and the Best of Bookers award for Midnight's Children (2018).

In 2007 Rushdie was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926) for his contributions to literature.

2.2 Plot of the Novel

Midnight's Children Plot Diagram	
Introduction 1Saleem Sinai is born on Independence Day. Rising Action 2Saleem and Shiva are switched at birth. 3Saleem watches Amina Sinai from the laundry. 4The midnight children speak to Saleem. 5Mary Pereira confesses to switching the infants. 6Saleem loses his memory. 7Saleem participates in the Dacca massacre. 8Saleem recovers his memory. 9Parvati-the-witch calls Saleem by name. 10Saleem returns to India in Parvati's basket. Climax 11The magicians' ghetto is destroyed, and Parvati dies. Falling Action 12Saleem is captured and sterilized. 13Having returned to Bombay, he meets Padma. 14Saleem and Padma marry. Resolution 15Saleem dies in the crowd on Independence Day.	

Book 1

In the novel's frame tale, Saleem Sinai, the narrator, lives and works in a pickle factory supervised by Padma, an admiring yet critical witness to his story. Saleem is in a rush to get his story recorded, asserting that his "crumbling, overused body" is giving out. He knows he will die soon. He attributes this physical vulnerability to history: in particular, the turbulent history of India in the period from Independence in 1947 through the Emergency, which ended in 1977. Saleem, born in Bombay at midnight on August 15, 1947, believes he is "mysteriously handcuffed to history," his destiny "chained to those of [his] country."

For Saleem the cracks or fissures in his own body are caused by personal upheavals that occur in tandem with conflicts across the subcontinent. His personal difficulties include questions of legitimacy with respect to his birth, physical problems, conflicts with schoolmates and neighbors, difficulties with intimacy, divided loyalties, and, in general, a life lived as an outsider. The cracks or fissures in the subcontinental body have been created by shifting and redrawn national borders. Pakistan was separated from India in 1947—and peculiarly divided at that, with noncontiguous (not adjoining) borders constituting East and West Pakistan. Bangladesh (East Pakistan) became an independent state in 1971, while the borders of Kashmir (region of northwest India, bordered by Pakistan on the west) were disputed. Saleem's story proceeds in episodes that highlight correspondences between trauma in his life and historical upheaval. The latter include the invasion of India by China, the Indian invasion of Pakistan, the abuses of the Emergency in India, and decades of fighting over Kashmir. The situation is compounded by decades of resistance to modernization.

Saleem's family history begins in 1915 in Kashmir. Saleem's grandfather, Aadam Aziz, returns from Germany, where he studied medicine for the purpose of beginning a medical practice at home. He has given up his faith and vowed never to prostrate himself for "any god or man." This pledge, according to Saleem, "made a hole in him," leaving him "vulnerable to women and history." Dr. Aziz's vulnerabilities are documented in his marriage to Naseem Ghani, the daughter of a wealthy landowner. Dr. Aziz's seduction is orchestrated by Naseem's father, who exposes Naseem to the young doctor bit by bit. During each medical call, the ailing girl is presented but curtained by a perforated sheet. The doctor examines her through a small hole in the sheet as she exposes only her afflicted body part. Dr. Aziz finally sees her face in 1918 on the date of the World War I (1914–18) armistice (end of warfare). This date foreshadows the terrible conflicts of the 20th century that follow the promises of the armistice. This historical allusion also foreshadows personal troubles for the Aziz family and its succeeding generations.

The Aziz marriage is not a peaceful one; nor is world peace to be a feature of 20th-century life. In India, conflict persisted internally and among the new nation-states and their neighbors. Agitation for independence from the British reached a pitch early in the 20th century. Aadam Aziz and Naseem (fictional characters) travel to Amritsar for their honeymoon, and on April 13, 1919, Dr. Aziz witnesses the massacre of Indians by the British at Jallianwala Bagh. The site of the massacre was a closed compound where thousands were pinned, when British general R.E. Dyer (1864–1927), martial law commander of Amritsar, and 50 of his soldiers blocked the entrance and fired upon the crowd. That day, 1,516 Indians died, and Aadam Aziz, who is saved by a sneeze and subsequent tumble, remains to treat the wounded in the crowd.

Naseem is horrified by her husband's bloody appearance when he returns to their hotel and is further disturbed when he encourages her to enjoy her sexuality. Aadam burns Naseem's purdah scarves (used to conceal women from public observation) when she rejects modern dress and behavior. The burning scarves bring firemen rushing into the privacy of her room. This intrusion marks the beginning of Naseem's resistance and dedication to domestic warfare.

By 1942, just as Aadam Aziz is infected by optimism with respect to Indian independence, Naseem, old before her time, retreats into "traditions and certainties." She becomes known as Reverend Mother, a pious woman divorced from the possibilities of change. Optimism for Aziz grows as resistance to the raj (British rule) increases. Aziz, who has kept his pledge to avoid religious practice, allies himself with Mian Abdullah (known as the Hummingbird), chairman of the Free Islam Convocation, a Muslim group that resists partition. Aziz explains his support by noting his own trajectory, first as a Kashmiri who is only nominally Muslim, then as a modern man who vows not to adhere to any religion, and finally a man who vows to be simply "an Indian." Aziz's developmental progression foreshadows Saleem's.

Aziz, the grandfather who is Saleem's model, and Reverend Mother have five children: three daughters, Alia, Emerald, and Mumtaz; and two sons, Mustapha and Hanif. The alliance between Mumtaz and Ahmed Sinai begins during a figurative dance of changing partners. Alia, the eldest, is engaged to Ahmed Sinai; Emerald, the youngest, to Major (later General) Zulfikar—a name that will figure prominently in the history of Pakistan; and Mumtaz to Nadir Khan, a young poet and lieutenant of Mian Abdullah, who takes refuge in the Aziz household after the assassination of his leader. Mumtaz and the poet, who has to remain in hiding, marry and live happily in the Aziz basement until Mumtaz catches the flu. When her father examines her, he finds that after two years, the marriage has not been consummated. Nadir Khan is sent away in disgrace. Alia's beau Ahmed Sinai finds that he prefers Mumtaz to Alia; the two marry, and Mumtaz changes her name to Amina. Alia vows never to marry.

Amina and Ahmed move first to Delhi, where she receives a puzzling prophecy from a fortune-teller named Ramram Seth: something about two heads, knees, and a nose. He also reveals, mysteriously, that the son she is carrying will never be younger or older than India. After a fire set by terrorists in Ahmed's warehouse, the couple moves to Bombay and buys a home from William Methwold, a British descendant of one of the earliest Brits to visit India. Methwold owns an estate of large homes built for British tenants, all of whom are preparing to leave as the raj ends. The sales contracts for Indian buyers stipulate that each new family retain the characteristics of the British lifestyle: household furnishings and habits such as joining the other tenants for cocktails at the proper hour each day. Among those gathered at the Methwold Estate are Wee Willie Winkie, who sings popular songs for the entertainment of the British. In addition to the sales contract with its strange requirement, Methwold leaves a part of himself in India. Winkie's wife, Vanita, is pregnant with Methwold's child, which is due around the same time as the Sinai baby.

The two women give birth at the stroke of midnight on Independence Day, and Amina's son, born first, is celebrated as the child of Independence. His photo is featured in the newspaper, and he receives a note of welcome from the prime minister. The mother of the second boy, Vanita, dies in childbirth. On the night of the births, Mary Pereira, the midwife at the Narlikar Nursing Home, sentimentally recalls her relation to a radical socialist named Joseph D'Costa. Full of political zeal and heartfelt purpose, Mary decides to make socialist amends. (Socialism is a political philosophy that advocates government ownership of the means of production and the resulting goods with no private property.) She switches the two babies, deciding to give the child born with little means an opportunity to enjoy the amenities of a rich family life. The child born to riches goes to the impoverished Wee Willie Winkie, who never learns about Vanita's adultery or the switch.

Equally unsuspecting, the Sinais take their son home. The boy has a huge nose shaped like a cucumber and eyes the color of the Kashmiri sky; in both features, he resembles the man who is presumed to be his grandfather, Aadam Aziz. The Sinais also have a second child, a daughter Jamila, nicknamed the Brass Monkey. In Saleem's telling, the key developmental moments in his

life begin to operate in parallel with the history of the subcontinent when he turns 10. He also discovers he is telepathic—able to hear voices in his head and to know what others are thinking. The voices turn out to be the survivors of the 1,001 children born on Independence Day, a decade ago. He learns that the remaining 581 of his birth mates have magical powers, only varying in intensity by the proximity of their births to midnight.

Book 2

Saleem's coming of age parallels his growing awareness of the competition among India's diverse populations as well as their resistance to modernization and to Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889–1964) Five Year Plans (national economic programs). Saleem comes to see himself as someone who can perform on a larger stage, solving national problems.

Saleem's adolescence is marked by key events in India. In 1956, while Jamila disturbs the peace by setting fire to the family's shoes, Egyptian president Gamal Nasser (1918–70) nationalizes the Suez Canal and incites the rage of a coalition of powers who retaliate with bombing raids. Nehru establishes himself as a force on the world stage as he brings together a coalition of unaffiliated nations as mediators in the conflict. In 1958 bloody riots and warring factions dominate in postelection India. Saleem follows his mother on one of her frequent outings and finds that she is secretly meeting her first husband at the Pioneer Café. Calling himself Qasim Khan, the poet has become an organizer for the Communist Party. The party has some success on the local level in the elections in 1957, the year that Amina Sinai discovers her lost love and her interest in politics.

The family moves to Bombay, where Saleem becomes the victim of pranks by bullying classmates. His sister, Jamila, nicknamed the Brass Monkey, is his best ally. Briefly, he enjoys the protection of Jamila's British girlfriends, but finally, under attack by cruel schoolmates, he loses the tip of his finger while defending himself. At the hospital, in need of a blood transfusion, Saleem learns that his blood type is not shared by either of his parents. Saleem is exiled to the home of his Uncle Hanif, a movie producer, and his Aunt Pia, an actress. His exile ends when Amina arrives with a gift, a pair of long trousers. His lifelong nasal congestion ends when Amina and Ahmed take him to a clinic where his nose is drained. Able to delight in the fragrances of all things, his telepathic abilities cease. He cannot contact the Midnight Children's Conference any longer. After Saleem returns home, Mary Pereira confesses her sin of switching the boys at birth.

Amina, unhappy with Ahmed's drinking and associated bad habits, moves to Pakistan with Saleem and Jamila. General Zulfikar, Emerald's husband, is part of a successful military coup in 1958. Saleem's political awareness grows, and he begins to think of himself as capable of influencing Indian history. He becomes aware of the eruption of riots, the growing influence of the Communist Party, and the emergence of women as political players.

Saleem's sense of smell becomes highly developed, and it informs his knowledge. The family moves to Amina's house in Karachi. Amina, Karachi, and Islam are identified by their objectionable odors: acquiescence and conformity; intelligence and stupidity; sadness and joy. Meanwhile, Saleem and Jamila, his sister, seem to possess complementary talents: he sniffs out ugliness and despair, while her songs produce poignancy and beauty.

In Karachi during the bombing of Pakistan by India, Saleem loses his family. Caught outside in a bombing raid, Saleem sees the family home destroyed. The treasured jeweled spittoon, the last artifact of the union between Amina and her poet, flies out of the open window of the exploding structure and hits Saleem in the head.

Book 3

Saleem becomes a tracker for the Pakistani army. Having suffered a head wound from the silver spittoon, he has amnesia. His name is unknown, and his habits of self-denial earn him the nickname the buddha. The only remnants of his past that he possesses are the silver spittoon and the abilities of his uncanny nose. The army of West Pakistan is doing a clean-up operation in Dacca (capital of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan), identifying and rounding up those who are suspected of designing or supporting partition. In flight from the atrocities committed by the army, Saleem and three soldiers commandeer a small boat and float south toward the Sundarbans, a dense jungle. There, beset by nightmares and the hardship of survival in the jungle, the memories of the three soldiers, who have been functioning in denial of their pasts, are restored.

Only the buddha is left without memory—until he is bitten on his heel by a blind serpent. He recovers and is able to recount his past. Only his name eludes him. A tidal wave sweeps the men out of the jungle and onto dry land, where one of the soldiers is killed by a sniper. Somewhere outside of Dacca, the survivors are distracted by a field of rotting corpses. They learn that the Indian soldiers have not been killed by guns but by an avenging soldier who murders by crushing

his victims with his knees. In the field the buddha finds a pyramid of dying men, easily recognized by characteristics from which their nicknames have been made: Hairoil, Eyeslice, and Cyrus—Saleem's old crew from the Methwold Estate days.

In Dacca, the second of the buddha's group is hit by a hand grenade while the buddha is inside a shop purchasing civilian clothes. The little group plans to pass as civilians while completing their desertion. On Independence Day in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, Parvati-the-witch appears as part of a parade in celebration of secession. She recognizes Saleem and calls him by name. She also convinces him to flee in her magic basket. He disappears inside and is reborn in India.

Saleem leaves Parvati in the magicians' ghetto where she lives. He walks to Delhi (city in India) and spends 461 days mourning all members of his family in the home of Mustapha Aziz, his uncle and an official of the new government. Saleem returns to Parvati, who begs him to marry her. When he refuses, she takes up with Shiva, with whom she becomes pregnant. When Shiva deserts her as he does all his impregnated conquests, Saleem agrees to the marriage. Aadam Sinai is born after a long and difficult delivery. In the meantime, the city erupts in riots, and Parvati dies. Saleem continues his work of communist organizing with Picture Singh, Parvati's close friend who has become Saleem's chief means of support.

The rioting is finally put to an end when Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi (1917–84), whose power has been lost and restored in a matter of weeks, declares an Emergency. The Emergency measures include a roundup of dissidents, clearing of the slums, involuntary sterilization, and regulations to address the issues of a burgeoning population, including strictly enforced curfews and other limits on civil liberties. Saleem is picked up and taken to the Widows' Hostel, a maharaja's (Hindu prince's) decaying palace commissioned as a home for widows and used during the Emergency as a place of detention for troublemakers. Saleem is tortured; included in the abuse is a vasectomy (surgery to produce sterilization). Saleem, under threat, gives up the names of the midnight children. Upon his release he returns to Delhi and finds the magicians' ghetto has been destroyed. He locates his old friend and snake charmer, Picture Singh, "the Most Charming Man In The World." He and Saleem travel to Bombay as a result of a challenge from a young snake charmer. When Picture Singh wins the competition, he and Saleem are treated to dinner. The condiment on the table is one Saleem recognizes. It is a Braganza pickle, the specialty of Mary Pereira. Saleem wanders through his old haunts in Bombay, marveling at the modernization of his city.

There he meets Padma, who is employed by Mary Pereira, the manager of the pickle factory. Thus events come full circle: Saleem and Padma are married on Independence Day. They become separated in the streets filled with celebrating crowds. Saleem, caught by the crushing crowd, falls. Handcuffed to history, he dies. He leaves behind an heir to Aadam Aziz's name and to his father's convictions: a boy, Aadam Sinai, who will endure the chaos and carry the family's convictions into succeeding generations.

2.3 Epical Features of the Novel

There are broadly two views about how Salman Rushdie uses epic structure in Midnight's Children (1981). The first is that he deliberately uses classic elements of the epic form to parody the genre. The second view is that in Midnight's Children Rushdie does not merely parody epic structure as understood in the West but deliberately uses conventions from Asian and Indian epic traditions to challenge and subvert it. According to this viewpoint, Rushdie seems to be clearly establishing that his story is an epic, but an epic that Western epic structure alone cannot describe. This epic requires multiple points of view and digressing stories to be told, elements that are regarded as anti-epic, but not necessarily so in Asian and Indian epic traditions. This last bit cannot be emphasized enough.

I think both of these viewpoints are useful when studying epic structure in Midnight's Children. With regard to the first point of view, a comment from Rushdie's book of essays Imaginary Homelands (1991) gives us a great clue about how epic structure works in Midnight's Children: "What I tried to do was to set up a tension in the book, a paradoxical opposition between the form and content of the novel." Let's take a look at some elements that are common to epic structure as described by Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay "Epic and Novel" (Dialogic Imagination, 1981): an epic requires "a national epic past" or the "absolute past;" a "national tradition" as opposed to mere personal experience; and an "absolute epic distance" that separates it from the present. To these I would also add stylistic elements, such as a lofty, grandiose tone. The form of Midnight's Children deliberately recalls many epic elements, starting from its narrator Saleem Sinai's oracle-like tone as seen in the opening paragraph:

I was born in the city of Bombay ... once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it's important to be more ... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. There were gasps. And, outside the window, fireworks and crowds… Soothsayers had prophesied me, newspapers celebrated my arrival, politicos ratified my authenticity. I was left entirely without a say in the matter. I, Saleem Sinai, later variously called Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even Piece-of-the-Moon, had become heavily embroiled in Fate—at the best of times a dangerous sort of involvement. And I couldn't even wipe my own nose at the time.

But as we can see, the content of the opening paragraph undoes the expectations we have of an epic. The "epic past" has been replaced by a more immediate past, harking back to the birth of the narrator. Instead of important sounding epithets used for heroes in epics and romances—such as "Lion-hearted" for Achilles in Homer's Iliad (compiled 7th century BC)—Saleem Sinai uses self-deprecating epithets such as "Snotnose" and "Baldy." Further, unlike Homer's Odysseus, or Arjuna from the Mahabharata, Saleem is physically imperfect and weak, and he refers to his "monstrous" nose and bald head throughout the book. But why does Rushdie parody epic structure in Midnight's Children in the first place? One explanation is that epics traditionally use an unquestionable and absolute voice for the project of nation and culture building. As examples, think of an epic which establishes beyond doubt that Satan is a villain (John Milton, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, 1667-71) or that Rama represents good and Ravana evil (Valmiki's Ramayana, compiled circa 5th century BC). But Saleem wants to tell us that these projects are flawed: there is no one story and one version of truth which goes into the making of a nation, much less so in a country as diverse and complex as India. Therefore, the best way to tell the story of the country is through re-imagining the epic form through the broken, digressive history of Saleem himself, which keeps branching into other tales and voices.

Returning to the deliberate use of Asian and Indian epic structures, Saleem's frequent references to Scheherazade from A Thousand and One Nights (first published 1839–42) show us she is clearly a narrator whom he emulates. Just like Scheherazade spins stories to prolong her life, Saleem too knows stories are his lifeblood and that of a newly independent India too. Like Scheherazade's, Saleem's stories too are different from each other, digressive and drawn out—all staple elements of Asian epic traditions. In his storytelling style, Saleem echoes the classic "sutradhaar" or narrator (literally "thread-holder" in Sanskrit) of classical Indian epic-drama. Further, Saleem's use of digressions and repetitions recall the cyclical time of Indian epic tradition, while his unreliability as a narrator and the polyphony of voices in the novel are a nod to the tradition of multiple versions of the same Indian epic. For instance, the Ramayana itself may have over a hundred versions sprawling across South and Southeast Asia. The story of India, in all its dizzying contradictions, will require all these elements and versions to be expressed, Saleem seems to be telling us. Through these elements, as well as others from the global South, such as magic realism, Rushdie is also shedding the legacy of colonialism, the "ineluctable superiority of northernness" (Midnight's Children).

Summary

- Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British Indian essayist and novelist born on 19th June 1947. He belonged to a well-educated family. His father was Anis Ahmed Rushdie, who was a lawyer from Cambridge University and had his own business. His mother Negin Bhatt was a teacher. He went to the Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai and Rugby School in England. His college was the King's College and for graduate studies he went to Cambridge University like his father receiving a Master's Degree in History in 1968.The latest novel by Rushdie is called 'Luka and the Fire of Life' was published in 2010. Other books written by him include 'Fury' (2001), 'Shalimar and the Clown' (2005) and 'The Enchantress of Florence' (2008).
- Midnight's Children, allegorical novel by Salman Rushdie, published in 1981. It is a historical chronicle of modern India centering on the inextricably linked fates of two children who were born within the first hour of independence from Great Britain. Exactly at midnight on Aug. 15, 1947, two boys are born in a Bombay (now Mumbai) hospital, where they are switched by a

nurse. Saleem Sinai, who will be raised by a well-to-do Muslim couple, is actually the illegitimate son of a low-caste Hindu woman and a departing British colonist. Shiva, the son of the Muslim couple, is given to a poor Hindu street performer whose unfaithful wife has died. Saleem represents modern India. When he is 30, he writes his memoir, Midnight's Children. Shiva is destined to be Saleem's enemy as well as India's most honoured war hero. This multilayered novel places Saleem at every significant event that occurred on the Indian subcontinent in the 30 years after independence. Midnight's Children was awarded the Booker McConnell Prize for fiction in 1981. In 1993 it was chosen as the best Booker Prize novel in 25 years.

- There are broadly two views about how Salman Rushdie uses epic structure in Midnight's Children (1981). The first is that he deliberately uses classic elements of the epic form to parody the genre. The second view is that in Midnight's Children Rushdie does not merely parody epic structure as understood in the West but deliberately uses conventions from Asian and Indian epic traditions to challenge and subvert it. According to this viewpoint, Rushdie seems to be clearly establishing that his story is an epic, but an epic that Western epic structure alone cannot describe. This epic requires multiple points of view and digressing stories to be told, elements that are regarded as anti-epic, but not necessarily so in Asian and Indian epic traditions. This last bit cannot be emphasized enough.

Keywords

Articulate: to express clearly and effectively

Embed: to fix something firmly and deeply

Forge: shape

Genre: class of works of art or literature

Ideology: a set of ideas

Intriguing: interesting, provoking thought

Irreverence: lack of respect

Pan-Indian: common across the religion and culture of India

Perjorative: word or phrase that suggests that somebody is worthless

Predecessor: person who has come before someone else

Privilege: social right or advantage given to a few

Syntactical: by the rule of grammar used for ordering or connecting words in sentence

Transliteration: to translate literally

Unobstrusive: not seen or noticed easily

Scepticism: doubt

Scoff: to speak or act disrespectfully; ridicule

Sycophant: flatterer

Triology: a group of three related books, plays, paintings etc.

Voracious: eating or desiring large quantities of food.

Appropriate: to set aside for some purpose/suitable

Agendas: subjects to be considered at a meeting

Apprises: to inform

Axiomatic: self-evident

Anachronisms: person or thing that appears to be in the wrong period of time

Allegiances: loyalty

Artifice: clever skill

Bizarre: strange, peculiar

Collide: to meet and strike violently

Complicit: to be a partner in a crime

Culminated: reach the highest point

Constructivism: the view that reality is always constructedartificially

Discrepancies: difference

Disentangle: to free from confusion

Exotic: strange and unusual

Eurocentric: European literary practices

Epitomized:a person or thing who has the essence of a certain quality

Self Assessment

1. Where does Aadam Aziz initially live?

A. Pakistan
B. New York
C. Germany
D. Kashmir

2. What is Aadam's most prominent feature?

A. His hair
B. His weight
C. His teeth
D. His nose

3. Who is Saleem's faithful listener?

A. Padma
B. Mary
C. His son
D. Parvati

4. What is Shiva the god of?

A. Love
B. Destruction
C. Rain
D. Fertility

5. How many midnight's children are there initially?

A. 420
B. 581
C. 1,001
D. 101

6. What religion is Mary Pereira?
A. Catholic
B. Buddhist
C. Muslim
D. Protestant

7. What is Ahmed addicted to?
A. Women
B. Gambling
C. Alcohol
D. Drugs

8. What is the name of the estate Saleem is raised on?
A. Bombay Palace
B. Methwold's
C. Buckingham
D. Jamaica

9. What is the last thing Amina sees before dying?
A. Her father
B. Saleem
C. A washing chest
D. Her mother

10. What happens to Hanif?
A. He commits suicide
B. He is shot
C. He wins the lottery
D. He shoots his wife

11. What does Saleem see in the mind of Evie Burns?
A. A pack of wild cats
B. Himself
C. A knife dripping blood
D. Sonny

12. Who is Tai Bibi?
A. A cab driver
B. Saleem's aunt
C. The prime minister
D. A prostitute

13. On what day does India receive its independence?
A. August 15
B. September 22
C. August 14
D. January 1

14. What is Shiva's special gift?
A. Huge ears
B. Magic
C. Powerful knees
D. The ability to dance

15. Who is Saleem's biological father?
A. Aadam
B. William Methwold
C. Wee Willie Winkie
D. Ahmed

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	D	3.	A	4.	B	5.	C
6.	A	7.	C	8	B	9.	C	10.	A
11.	C	12.	D	13.	A	14.	D	15.	B

Review Questions

1. Comment on the narrative technique of Midnight's Children.
2. What are Saleem Sinai's expectations in Midnight's Children?
3. What is the role of Hindu gods in Midnight's Children?
4. Comment on the language of Midnight's Children.
5. Discuss the contribution of Rushdie's Midnight's Children to the Indian novel in English.
6. Discuss Midnight's Children as a landmark in the history of the Indian novel in English.
7. Where did Aadam Aziz initially live in Midnight's Children?
8. What is the role of the epic structure in Midnight's Children?
9. What is the significance of the title of Salman Rushdie's "Midnight's Children"?
10. What was Salman Rushdie's purpose in writing Midnight's Children?

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Unit 03: Salman Rushdie: Midnight's Children

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Discuss the art of characterization done by Rushdie in the novel *Midnight's Children*
- Identify the use of various themes in the novel

Introduction

SalmanRushdieisoneofthemostimportant diasporic writers. He has given a newturn both to the Indian novel in English and to thelongliteraryrelationshipbetweenIndiaandBritain.Hewasbornon19thJune1947inBombaybutin1967hisparentsmovedtoPakistan, a move which Rushdie never acceptedwhole-heartedly. He had his higher education inBritain. Thus he belonged to three countries andyet to none. So, a sense of displacement hoversovertheworksofhim.LikeRushdie,theprotagonist of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai,journeys through India, Pakistan and Bangladeshand yet there is no certain place for him to settledown. So, the relocation is the root of problem ofevery character.Theyarepartofaneternalquest,thequestforsome„imaginaryhomeland".

The fact that *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie's celebrated second book (1980), fetched its author a Booker Prize in 1981 and again the Booker of Bookers in 1993, speaks volumes in terms of its popularity in the world of literature. The novel has not only been subjected to critical studies but has also inspired serious in-depth studies of its contents, inviting readings of the text as a post-colonial novel; a post-modern novel; a novel that belongs to the genre of magic realism and so on. The novel playfully evades categorization and successfully throws the reader into a fantastic world of historical events, colorful characters and languages – both familiar and unfamiliar. This is perhaps one of the aspects which have helped the novel retain its popularity decades after its publication.

The general reception of *Midnight's Children* in the literary world has been that of a landmark text which served to dismantle the popularly accepted idea of recording and presenting history as it had been recorded and presented prior to its publication in 1980. While critics like Neil Ten Kortenaarhave read the text as an "Allegory of History", RukminiBhaya Nair, has pointed out the presentation of "History as Gossip" in the novel. The aforesaid critics are among the many others who are of the opinion that "Midnight's Children destabilizes received versions of history"(Meenakshi Mukherjee, 16). Assuming the author's possible intention of de-stabilizing the methods of reception of the history of the nation, one may focus on a number of literary tools used

to bring about this de-stabilization. One of the major contributors that help to make such a reading is the art of characterisation in the novel. Kortenaar quotes Timothy Brennan's observation of the novel:"Characterization in any conventional form barely exists – only a collection of brilliantly sketched cartoons woven together by an intellectual argument." (29)

*Midnight'sChildren*waspublishedin1981inLondon.Itwonboththe BookerPrize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in1981.ItwasawardedtheBookerofBookersPrize and the best all-time prize winners in 1993and 2008 to celebrate the Booker Prize 25th and40thanniversary.Itisaliteraryresponse toaseriesofreallifesituationsthathavebeencleverly fictinalized through allusions, disguisedaswellasdirect,tothecountry"srecentaswellasnotsorecentpast.Atthefictionallevel,*Midnight's Children*depictstheeventsandexperiences in thelives of three generations ofthe Sinai family. The account begins with theirdaysinSrinagarandfollowstheirpassagethrough Amritsar, Agra and Bombay to Karachi.At the semantic level, it is far more complex andhas intriguing social and political connotations. Inthis novel, the characters show their identity crisisin a hostile world. Here follows the analysis ofeachcharacteronebyone.

3.1 Characters of the Novel

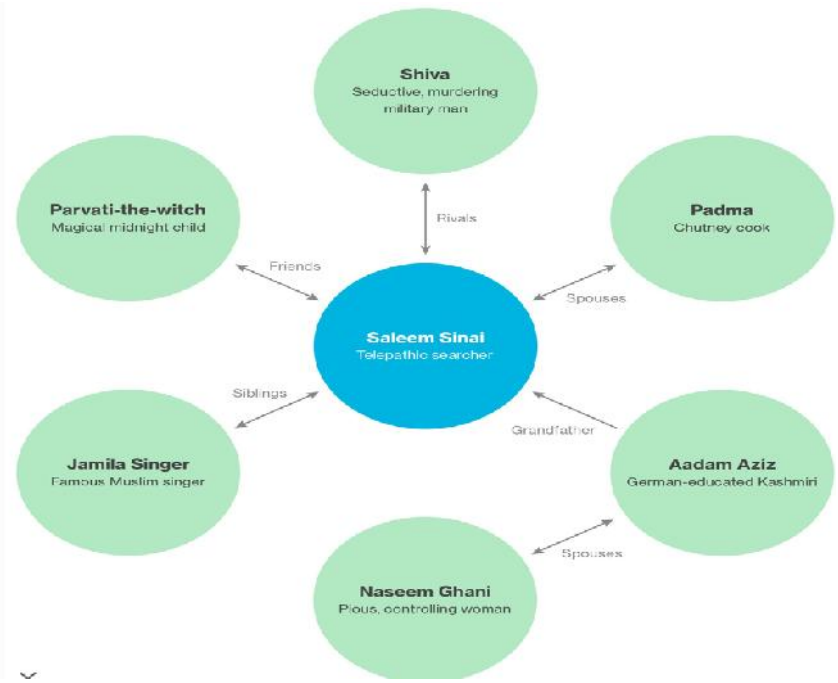

Image- 3.1 (Source: Coursehero.com)

Saleem Sinai: Saleem Sinai, child of Independence, is switched with another child at birth and raised by parents who, for a decade, do not know about the switch. He grows up with a sense of exceptionalism (feeling of being different from the norm) as a result of his doting parents. This sense probably saves him as he struggles with his Indian identification and the strife of his life, which parallels the disastrous birth and early years of the new nation.

Shiva: Named after the Hindu god of creation and destruction, Shiva is the only other baby born exactly at midnight on August 15, 1947, just a few moments after Saleem. He is thus one of the midnight children, with powers almost as strong as Saleem's. Shiva is constantly acting against Saleem, sowing destruction, mayhem, and irresponsibility throughout the young nation.

Padma: Saleem, coming full circle in his adventures, returns to Bombay and to the earthly reward of his favorite condiment prepared by Padma, a voluptuous woman. She is clearly willing to nurture the battered wanderer. In the end, Padma accepts Saleem's impotence (inability to have sex and therefore children), and they marry.

Aadam Aziz: Aadam Aziz returns to Kashmir after medical school, changed by life on the continent. He finds that life is changed at home as well. His mother has become the primary wage earner. The behavior of this early-century branch of the family foreshadows more flexibility in later generations.

Naseem Ghani: Proud to think of herself as a traditional Indian woman, the bride of Aadam Aziz refuses her husband's request to "move" under him during sexual intercourse. Faced with economic disaster after Aadam dies, she is reborn as an entrepreneurial gas station proprietor and lovelorn adviser.

Jamila Singer: Called the Brass Monkey for her hair color and her unruly behavior, Jamila emerges as a girl with a golden voice. She avoids love and marriage and finally moves into the convent that bakes her favorite bread.

Mian Abdullah: Mian Abdullah, also known as the Hummingbird, is an assassinated leader.

Aadam Aziz's father: Aadam Aziz's father suffers a stroke while Aadam is in medical school.

Aadam Aziz's mother: Aadam Aziz's mother leaves her seclusion at home to run a small gemstone business after her husband suffers a stroke.

Alia Aziz: Alia Aziz is the daughter of Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani. She is the bitter sister of Amina (Mumtaz), whom Ahmed chooses instead of her.

Emerald Aziz: Emerald Aziz is the youngest Sinai sister. She marries General Zulfikar.

Hanif Aziz: Hanif Aziz is the moviemaker son of Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani; he marries Pia.

Mustapha Aziz: Mustapha Aziz is the son of Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani. He is Saleem's uncle.

Pia Aziz: Pia Aziz is the film star wife of Hanif Aziz.

Sonia Aziz:Sonia Aziz is Mustapha Aziz's crazy half-Iranian wife.

Ayooba Baloch: Ayooba Baloch is a soldier with Saleem in Pakistan.

Lord Khusro Khusrovani Bhagwan: Lord Khusro Khusrovani Bhagwan is India's richest guru (religious teacher).

Resham Bibi: Resham Bibi is an old woman in the magicians' ghetto in Delhi.

Tai Bibi: Tai Bibi is a 512-year-old prostitute.

Evelyn Lilith Burns: Evelyn Lilith Burns is Saleem's first love and a deranged American girl.

Homi Catrack: Homi Catrack is the lover of Pia Aziz and then of Lila Sabarmati.

Toxy Catrack: Toxy Catrack is the disturbed daughter of Homi Catrack.

Cyrus: Cyrus is a childhood friend of Saleem; he dies in the Pakistan War.

Shaheed Dar: Shaheed Dar is a soldier in the Pakistan War.

Lifafa Das: Lifafa Das is a Hindu street entertainer.

Joseph D'Costa: Joseph D'Costa is the socialist lover of Mary Pereira.

Durga: Durga is a washerwoman and Aadam Sinai's wet nurse.

General R.E. Dyer: General R.E. Dyer (1864–1927) is the British general who leads the massacre at Amritsar.

Eyeslice: Eyeslice is a childhood friend of Saleem; he dies in the Pakistan War.

Indira Gandhi: Indira Gandhi (1917–84) is prime minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and again from 1980 to 1984. She is often referred to in the novel as the Widow.

Hairoil: Hairoil is a childhood friend of Saleem; he dies in the Pakistan War.

Ismail Ibrahim: Ismail Ibrahim is an attorney and adviser to Amina Sinai.

Sonny Ibrahim: Sonny Ibrahim is born shortly after Saleem.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah: Muhammad Ali Jinnah (c. 1876–1948) is the first president of Pakistan.

Glandy Keith: Glandy Keith is a bully classmate and torturer of Saleem.

Nadir Khan: Nadir Khan, also called Qasim Khan, is a communist, poet, and the first husband of Amina, who was then known as Mumtaz.

Alauddin Latif: Alauddin Latif, later known as Uncle Puffs, is Jamila Singer's agent.

Ilse Lubin: Ilse Lubin is a friend of Aadam Aziz from his medical school days.

Oskar Lubin: Oskar Lubin is the husband of Ilse Lubin.

Maharaja of Cooch Naheen:The Maharaja of Cooch Naheen competes against Picture Singh.

William Methwold:William Methwold sells Ahmed and Amina Sinai their home in Bombay; he is a fictional descendant of British merchant William Methwold (1590–1653).

Masha Miovic:Masha Miovic is a friend of Jamila, Saleem's sister, who comes to Saleem's aid.

Musa: Musa is the Sinais' bearer, or housekeeper.

Dr. Narlikar: Dr. Narlikar, a promoter of birth control, owns the nursing home where Saleem and Shiva are born.

Jawaharlal Nehru:Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) is prime minister of India from 1947 to 1964 and the father of Indira Gandhi.

Parvati-the-witch:Parvati-the-witch is one of the midnight children who loves Saleem and manages his return to India after the war between India and Pakistan.

Alice Pereira: Alice Pereira is Mary Pereira's sister and aid to Ahmed Sinai.

Fat Perce: Fat Perce is a bully classmate and torturer of Saleem.

Mary Pereira: Mary Pereira is the midwife who switches Saleem and Shiva at birth.

Rani of CoochNaheen: The Rani of Cooch Naheen presents newlyweds Nadir and Mumtaz Khan with a jeweled spittoon.

Rashid: Rashid is a rickshaw-wallah (driver) who brings Ahmed Sinai to the Aziz house.

Farooq Rashid: Farooq Rashid is a soldier in the Pakistan War.

Commander Sabarmati Commander Sabarmati is the cuckolded husband of Lila.

Lila Sabarmati: Lila Sabarmati is the mother of Eyeslice and Hairoil; she has an affair with Homi Catrack.

Dr. Schaapsteker: Dr. Schaapsteker is a scientist who studies snakes; he creates a venom potion that cures Saleem's typhoid.

Ramram Seth: Ramram Seth is a fortuneteller; he predicts the birth of Amina's son.

Roshanara Shetty: Roshanara Shetty is the child wife of an Indian steel magnate (person of power in a particular field). She takes revenge on Shiva, who seduces her.

Aadam Sinai: Aadam Sinai is the stepson of the narrator, Saleem Sinai. His biological parents are Shiva and Parvati-the-witch.

Ahmed Sinai: Ahmed Sinai is the father of the narrator, Saleem.

Amina Sinai: Amina Sinai, born Mumtaz Aziz, is the daughter of Aadam Aziz and Naseen Ghani. She is married for two years to Nadir Khan and then marries Ahmed Sinai and changes her name to Amina.

Picture Singh: Picture Singh is a snake charmer who returns Saleem to Bombay.

Tai Tai is a ferry boatman who delivers patients to Aadam Aziz.

Vanita: Vanita is the real mother of Saleem; she dies in childbirth and is the wife of Wee Willie Winkie.

Wee Willie Winkie:Wee Willie Winkie is a singer, entertainer of the British, and Vanita's husband. He believes he is Shiva's father.

Zohra: Zohra is Ahmed Sinai's cousin.

General Zulfikar:General Zulfikar is Emerald's husband, one of the seven wealthiest men in Pakistan.

Zafar Zulfikar: Zafar Zulfikar is the son of Emerald Aziz and General Zulfikar.

3.2 Character of Salim and his Importance

Thechiefcharacter,SaleemSinai"spersonality,lifeandcareerillustratetheentireprocess of the novel in its various aspects. He istragically born on the midnight of August 1947 atthe time when

themighty British were leavingandIndia,themyth was wakinguptoreality.Therefore,heismischievouslyhandcuffedtohistory and is forced to accept that his destiny isindissolubly chained to that of his country.Hehimselftellsus,„Newspaperscelebratedme;politiciansratifiedmyposition.JawaharlalNehruwrote:"DearBabySaleem,Mybelatedcongratulationsonthehappyaccidentofyourmoment of birth! You are the newest bearer ofthat ancient face of India which is also eternallyyoung. We shall be watching over your life withthe closest attention; it will be, in a sense, themirrorofourown".(122).

Being amidnightchild, Saleem is bornwith a divided character. Whether he likes it ornot, he will have to play a significant part in thehistory of the nation. His sufferings start from hisbirth by the action of Mary Pereira, who changedhis nametag with that of another midnight childShiva.Thisactioncondemnshimtoalifeofpermanent guilt and loss of identity. Looking atthe facts, the reader can find out that Saleem is aproduct of unholy alliance between a departingcolonialMethwoldandapoorHinduwoman.Here, his identity is not a pure one but a strangemixture of the East and the Westand that toounholy or illegitimate. So, Saleem Sinai remainsin quandary, on the horns of dilemma, right fromthemomenthecomesinto thisworld.Thecomplicatedstoryofhisparentagedoes notend here.Saleem is destined tohavemore two mothers and several fathers as well. Ashe himself observes: „ I have had more mothersthan most mothers have children" (243); „all mylife, consciously or unconsciously, I have soughtoutfathers"(426),and„givingbirthtoparentshasbeen one of my stranger talents" (243). Vanita ishisbiologicalmotherbutAminabecomesthemotherthatbroughthimup.MaryPereirabecomes yet another one who helps Amina in thebaby sitting and it is she to whom he ultimatelygoes and spends his last days in the pickle factoryshe manages. Aunt Pia also becomes one of hismother when he was readily accepted as a son tothe childless couple. „I was promoted to occupythesacredplaceofthesonshenever had"(243).

As regards to fathers, Methwold setstheballrollingbybecomingthefirstoneclosely followed by Ahmed Sinai who brings him up. Schaapsteker, the German snake doctor cures him with his cobra poison and gives him a new lease of life and becomes another father to him. General Zulfikar in Pakistan also prefers him to his son. Saleem states General Zulfikar became the latest in the line of men who has been willing to call me „Sonny" or even simply „my son". Last in the line is Picture Singh, the snake charmer whoalongwithParvatirescueshimfromBangladeshandbringshimtoIndia.

As Saleem grows up, he suffersfrom anumber of personal mutilations. Ahmed Sinai, his father, gives him a mighty blow on his face when he tells that he could hear voices which leaves him permanently deaf in his left year. He has got quite a disfigured body; face as round as moon with bulging temples; a big cucumber of nose and a body susceptible to diseases. In his geography class his teacher pulls his hair so hard that a complete patch of it comes out which leaves „a monkish tonsure, a circle where hair would never grow again"(232). Soon after there is another accident at the school. This time, as a result of a rift with his school mates, Saleem loses the top third of his middle-finger. During the Indo- Pakistan war of 1965 he is hit by the silver spittoon and loses his memory and cannot remember even his name. Six years down the line, he becomes a man dog, a member of the canine unit for tracking and intelligence activities, in short, CUTIA unit. This renders his body fully numb. The only sense that is active ishis sense of smell. He is anestheticized againstfeelingsas wellasmemories.

Saleem is called Buddha i.e. the old onebecause they could feel an air of great antiquityaround him though he was only twenty-four yearsoldatthattime.Duringemergency,heiscastrated which leaves him impotent throughouthis life. However, this is not the end. He is yet tobring up and give his name to Adam Sinai, anillegitimatechildofShiva andParvati.

3.3 Themes of the novel

History and the Individual

Key to the sensory nature of the text is Saleem Sinai's dependence on correspondences to make sense of Indian history within the context of events in his personal life—or more accurately, within the context of his sensory impressions of such events and the emotions he associates with them.

Correspondences between Saleem's experience and politics demonstrate the interrelationships between individual lives and public affairs, the ways in which Saleem, whose body may be construed as an accident in time and place, is handcuffed to history. His experience is specifically Indian and particular to the period from Independence to the Emergency. These coincidences, embodied within his experience, confirm his sense that he has a volume of stories, intriguing and unique, to add to the history of India. His exceptionalism, and moreover, his inflated sense of the

importance of his contribution to history, his fear of failure, and his need to complete his story before he dies are rooted in his infantile experience, which includes two doting parents and a letter from the prime minister.

One correspondence in Saleem's collection of experiences begins with Jamila Singer's (also known as the Brass Monkey) habit of setting leather shoes on fire, which is linked to the Suez Canal crisis. Egyptian president Gamal Nasser's (1918–70) plan to nationalize the Suez Canal was potentially an economic disaster for most of the world. In the year of the Brass Monkey's mischief, Israel, joined on the ground by Britain and France, invaded Egypt. The results were an ensuing conflict and the subsequent decline in British power in the previously colonized territories. The Brass Monkey later burns the shoes of General Zulfikar, the leader of a military coup in Pakistan. Each act by the Brass Monkey exudes the stench of war. The smell of burning leather evokes the terrorist attack on Ahmed Sinai's warehouse. Saleem's explanation for the Brass Monkey's behavior is her wish for and her refusal of love. Certainly, powerful ambivalence (contradictory feelings) operates when postcolonial rulers oppose the behavior of prior colonies. For the colonized, the economic power of the colonist is a source of admiration. Nasser's nationalist move rejects colonial economic success, while at the same time it attempts to copy it. Similarly, economic terrorism is the impulse for the burning of Ahmed's warehouse. Hindu terrorists are intent on extorting money from wealthy Muslim businessmen.

Saleem's bleeding finger, the result of bullying by his classmates, operates in tandem with the bloody riots of 1958. Riots with high numbers of dead and wounded were common in Indian public life after partition and often involved groups with competing ethnicities, languages, or religions. In 1958 preelection and postelection riots resulted in bloodshed in the streets. Red is also a political allusion in this text. The "Reds" had some success in the general election that year, including a communist mayor elected in Bombay. The question of Saleem's background is raised in the episode of his bleeding finger. The originating circumstance, a chase by his bullying classmates and the questions raised about Saleem's background, resonate with the fear of difference and the measure of social status that unified animosities and led to riots. These antagonisms within the community resonate with Saleem's predicament, which poses questions that threaten his primary identity, his emotional stability, and his material survival. The fissures in his skin, especially his face, are signs of the beating his identity has taken from the moment that his finger is cut and his blood tested.

Saleem and Empathy

In Midnight's Children the main male character, Saleem Sinai, is impotent, as is Nadir Khan, the poet-lover of Amina Sinai. Saleem cannot fulfill what is, in the eyes of his culture, his mature, masculine function. Yet he rejects Padma's wish to find a doctor to cure his impotence. His sterilization during the Emergency guarantees his inability to father a child. On the other hand, Saleem, in his impotence, understands that there are other ways of bonding; in his view, "Things—even people—have a way of leaking into each other ... Ilse Lubin's suicide ... leaked into old Aadam and sat there in a puddle until he saw God. Likewise, ... the past has dripped into me." Deep feelings do not demand a physical exchange. They are shared empathetically. Alia Aziz's food, for example, leaks her anger into the lives of the Sinais when they stay with her. Saleem's early telepathic intelligence, a magical and wordless transfer of feelings, begins in sensation. He is struck deaf in one ear by his angry father. Hearing impaired, Saleem turns inward, prepared to organize the energies of the midnight children for the cause of the state. Telepathy, in this case, is a magical explanation for empathy.

Saleem believes women have been most influential in his life, and he operates in an almost amniotic world (watery world of the fetus), where things "leak" into each other: people, ideas, wishes, desires. His is not a fully autonomous body, and the text confirms that in his associations with the political life of his culture. He takes personal responsibility for the war with Pakistan, observing that his thoughts leave through open windows and affect the minds of the military. In a parallel account, India's boundaries were not secure. In 1947 the young nation did not hold a vote to confirm the Kashmiri border. Subsequently, India was not able to resolve internal conflicts by redrawing state lines, which left Kashmir open to claims by China and Pakistan. India, in dealing with internal strife, preferred containment of similar populations and language groups rather than topographical markers. Boundaries in flux in over 41 cases tended to sustain rather than prevent instability caused by communal interests.

Dualism and Dissent

In despair over the growing hesitancy among the members of the Midnight Children's Conference, Saleem makes a last-ditch plea that they fulfill the promise of their birth by rejecting "the endless duality of masses-and-classes, capital-and-labor, them-and-us," and being rather "a third principle ... the force which drives between the horns of the dilemma." Shiva, Saleem's birth mate and alter

ego, calling Saleem "a rich boy," responds: "There is only money-and-poverty, have-and-lack, and right-and-left; there is only me-against-the-world!"

The fissure between "duality" and the "third principle" described by Saleem is demonstrated throughout the novel. Modernization is one pole and religious rivalries and communal identity the other. Modernization fails when Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889–1964) Five Year Plans designed to address industry, agriculture, and education fail. Religion and communal identity are stifled by the abuses designed in the name of Emergency. Population control, curfews, and the abridgment of civil rights are all attempts to restrain the masses.

Saleem Sinai, under the auspices of a storied grandfather, a scientist, influenced by his studies in German and his native political instincts, inherits a curiosity that enables him to change, learn from his encounters, and model the "third principle." His treatment by the American brat, whom he briefly loves, isolate him. His sense of exceptionalism, heightened by his birthday, the congratulatory letter from the prime minister, and later his M.C.C. transmissions, makes him an outsider. Like many outsiders with keen observational powers, he develops a sense of what drives others. His telepathic gifts, his ability to sniff out problems, his incarceration and torture, and his connection with Picture Singh allow him to consider communism at a historical moment when the choice seems practical.

Naming as an Identity

Midnight's Children has strong ties with the idea that naming creates identity. The majority of names in the novel allude to the archetype that the character resembles. Saleem's grandfather Aadam, for example, alludes to the Biblical Adam who was the first man. Saleem's grandmother takes on the name Reverend Mother after she becomes engulfed in her religious identity. The women in the novel change their name after getting married, essentially leaving their unmarried identity behind and becoming a new person in union with their husbands. For a while, Saleem even forgets his own name during a time when he is not particularly proud of his actions. He has lost his moral compass and has therefore lost the name which gives him meaning and direction.

Post-Colonialism

Before becoming an independent nation, India was under the rule of the British Empire. The British used their influence to erase the customs of India and impose their own culture and morality. The Indians, however, found it difficult to recall their own culture. Many cast aside the "old ways" of polytheistic religion and ornate ceremonies, and instead tried to veer the country to follow Western culture. Others tried to return to their customs but were caught identity crisis. The shadow of the British Empire still clouded India's vision, making it difficult to move forward with their own identity. Characters like William Methwold and Evie Lilith Burns served as reminders of how white characters were able to make Indians feel subservient and out-of-place in their own country.

The Unreliability of Oral Storytelling

Midnight's Children is told entirely through the voice of Saleem, who is recalling the mystical events of his life on his deathbed. He expects Padma, who represents the readers, to completely believe the series of events that comprise his life, which is difficult because his story is filled with supernatural occurrences set against a realistic world. Yet at the same time, there are moments in the novel when Saleem admits that he might have forgotten a date or mixed up a series of events due to his failing mental health. This puts the reader in a difficult position: they can either fully believe Saleem's occultish story and forgive his slights of memory, or they can take everything Saleem says with a grain of salt. Either way, Saleem's authority as a reliable narrator is undermined through both magical realism as well as his admission of mixing up dates and events.

Mythology and the Epic Story

Hindu, Christian, Greek, and other religious mythologies are Saleem's props that lend credence to his elaborate tale of India's creation. He sets his grandfather up as a progenitor by comparing him to the first man in Christian mythology, Adam. With respect to his "evil" counterpart, Shiva, he conjures the Hindu god to compare Shiva's position as a major player in the story with the god's own influence on people's lives. The same goes for Parvati, who represents the caring and motherly form who has a strong control over Shiva as well as everyone else in India. Throughout his story, Saleem makes connections between himself and Scheherazade, the storyteller from One Thousand and One Nights. To set up his story as an epic adventure, he uses classic traditions from Homer's The Odyssey as a way to draw further parallels to his own journey to find himself.

Boundaries and Borders

From the moment that England breaks ties with India, India is given autonomy and independence. In theory, this means that India should have finite, indisputable borders. Midnight's Children takes a different approach, saying that boundaries and borders are often more blurred than one might think. This is seen in the character's time and again -- for example, the struggle for presence between Aadam and Reverend Mother. Saleem is able to surpass the boundaries of his body by telepathically shoving himself into someone else's brain. In the national sense, the impermanence of borders is apparent even at the beginning of India's independence when these countries decide to create new borders, separating Pakistan from India. The only problem with this is that these borders were unable to separate Hindus from Muslims as they were intended to do.

Racism and Sexism

Left over from colonialism is the idea that white skin is desirable and pure. While the Western characters exhibit these ideas more prominently, the ideas seep through to the Indian characters. Saleem's father's cousin relays these racist thoughts when she begins harping on other dark-skinned Indians. When Jamila Singer appears in public, she is covered in a white silk chadar to symbolize her purity. Sexism is also prevalent in the novel, with many male characters (even Saleem) ignoring women's autonomy and identity. Both Amina and Parvati accept their new first names after becoming married, and neither Sonny nor Saleem respect Brass Monkey's and Evelyn's insistence that they don't want to be in a relationship with boys who are pursuing them. Instead, the boys doggedly pursue the girls regardless of what the girls want.

Class and Social Structure

It is impossible to overlook Saleem's journey through India's different social structures. Saleem begins his life in an upper-middle class family, enjoying a beautiful home and having enough money to be comfortable. Their wealth is created from their capitalistic lifestyle, left over from British Imperialism. But as soon as Saleem's parents split up, his social standing is significantly lowered to the point where he, his mother, and his sister are recognized as the needy relatives. Once India enters the war, Saleem loses all hopes of ever belonging to "respectable" society and instead lives in the slums, spreading the word about how a communist government would be more inclined to help the poor break free from their squalor. All these different parts in Saleem's life are representative of the vast differences in class and social structures present in India.

Summary

- SalmanRushdie is one of the most important diasporic writers. He has given a new turn both to the Indian novel in English and to the long literary relationship between India and Britain. He was born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay but in 1967 his parents moved to Pakistan, a move which Rushdie never accepted whole-heartedly. He had his higher education in Britain. Thus he belonged to three countries and yet to none. So, a sense of displacement hovers over the works of him. Like Rushdie, the protagonist of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai,journeys through India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and yet there is no certain place for him to settle down.
- Salman Rushdie's *novels* havenumerous shades of the characters in general, and to *Midnight's Children*, in particular, it is difficult for any reading to be exhaustive enough to cover all the aspects of characterization. Rushdie's employment of literary tools, humor, languages etc. all combine to lend shape to his characters, who, by virtue of their exaggerated portrayals serve to reflect, highlight, and even mock the different sides of society and of the individuals who make up the society.
- Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* deals with many themes such as, History and the Individual, Saleem and Empathy, Dualism and Dissent, Naming as an Identity, Post-Colonialism, The Unreliability of Oral Storytelling, Mythology and the Epic Story, Boundaries and Borders, Racism and Sexism and Class and Social Structure etc.

Keywords

Alterego: very close and trusted friend; literally, the other self.

Adversary: opponent or enemy

Aggrandise: power or rank

Cartography: the science or art of making maps

Conflate: to combine

Conceive: to think of, consider

Inextricably: which cannot be united or separated

Mythification: the act of creating an invented person, not a real person.

Pender: to spend time in considering

Parody: a weak and unsuccessful copy of somebody or something

Retort: a quick, rather angry, and often amusing answer

Repuditate: to refuse to accept

Rationalization: to find reasons

Articulate: to express clearly and effectively

Embed: to fix something firmly and deeply

Forge: shape

Genre: class of works of art or literature

Ideology: a set of ideas

Intriguing: interesting, provoking thought

Irreverence: lack of respect

Pan-Indian: common across the religion and culture of India

Perjorative: word or phrase that suggests that somebody is worthless

Predecessor: person who has come before someone else

Privilege: social right or advantage given to a few

Syntactical: by the rule of grammar used for ordering or connecting words in sentence

Transliteration: to translate literally

Unobstrusive: not seen or noticed easily

Scepticism: doubt

Scoff: to speak or act disrespectfully; ridicule

Sycophant: flatterer

Triology: a group of three related books, plays, paintings etc.

Voracious: eating or desiring large quantities of food.

Appropriate: to set aside for some purpose/suitable

Agendas: subjects to be considered at a meeting

Apprises: to inform

Axiomatic: self-evident

Anachronisms: person or thing that appears to be in the wrong period of time

Allegiances: loyalty

Artifice: clever skill

Bizarre: strange, peculiar

Collide: to meet and strike violently

Complicit: to be a partner in a crime

Culminated: reach the highest point

Constructivism: the view that reality is always constructedartificially

Discrepancies: difference

Disentangle: to free from confusion

Exoti

c: strange and unusual

Eurocentric: European literary practices

Epitomized:a person or thing who has the essence of a certain quality

Self Assessment

1. Who was Saleem switched with at birth?

A. Shiva
B. Padma
C. Aadam
D. The Brass Monkey

2. Which character is antithetical to Saleem's freewheeling narration?

A. Shiva
B. The Widow
C. Padma
D. The Brass Monkey

3. What was Indira Gandhi's political position in India?

A. President
B. Prime Minister
C. Minister of External Affairs
D. National Security Adviser

4. Who is responsible for the destruction of the midnight's children?

A. Padma
B. The Widow
C. The Brass Monkey
D. Saleem

5. What does Saleem's younger sister, the Brass Monkey, become famous as?

A. An actress
B. A lawyer
C. A dancer
D. A singer

6. Which of Saleem's senses is unusually heightened?

A. Sight
B. Hearing
C. Smell
D. Touch

7. Which character is Saleem's ayah and surrogate mother?
A. Mary Pereira
B. Parvati-the-witch
C. Naseem Ghani
D. Vanita

8. Who is Saleem's best friend?
A. Joseph D'Costa
B. Sonny Ibrahim
C. Picture Singh
D. Mustapha

9. Which character wears a wig to seduce women?
A. William Methwold
B. Aadam Aziz
C. Ahmed Sinai
D. Nadir Khan

10. Who does Parvati-the-witch have an affair with?
A. Shiva
B. Saleem
C. Ahmed Sinai
D. Hanif

11. According to a seer's prediction, what two body parts represent Shiva and Saleem?
A. Chin and ears
B. Nose and eyes
C. Knees and chin
D. Knees and nose

12. What does the spittoon symbolize?
A. The future
B. The Partition
C. A vanishing era
D. Fragmented love

13. Whose body mirrors the disintegrating narrative?
A. Padma's
B. Saleem's
C. Shiva's
D. The Widow's

14. What is Saleem's favorite childhood game?
A. Hearts
B. Snakes and Ladders
C. Monopoly
D. Balderdash

15. What adjective best describes Saleem's narration?

A. Unreliable

B. Lazy

C. Accurate

D. Enigmatic

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	C	3.	B	4.	B	5.	D
6.	C	7.	A	8.	B	9.	A	10.	A
11.	D	12.	C	13.	B	14.	B	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Discuss the main features of Rushdie's characterization in Midnight's Children.
2. Analyze, with examples, Rushdie's characterization of the Family in Midnight's Children.
3. Discuss the characterization of three commoners other than those examined in this unit.
4. Examine Saleem's role in the novel as autobiographer.
5. What is the significance of the theme of History and the Individual in Midnight's Children?
6. Discuss the theme of postmodernism in the novel *Midnight's Children*.

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Unit 04: Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Know about Chinua Achebe as a writer
- Understand struggle for dominance and identity crisis
- Know about the introduction to the African culture

Introduction

African literature consists of a body of work in different languages and various genres, ranging from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages. Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral histories, myths, and proverbs additionally serve to remind whole communities of their ancestors' heroic deeds, their past, and the precedents for their customs and traditions. Essential to oral literature is a concern for presentation and oratory. Folktale tellers use call-response techniques. Some of the first African writings to gain attention in the West were the poignant slave narratives, such as The Interesting Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African (1789), which described vividly the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. As Africans became literate in their own languages, they often reacted against colonial repression in their writings. Others looked to their own past for subjects. Thomas Mofolo, for example, wrote Chaka (tr. 1931), about the famous Zulu military leader, in Susuto.

Several founded newspapers that served as vehicles for expressing nascent nationalist feelings. French-speaking Africans in France, led by Léopold Senghor, were active in the negritude movement from the 1930s, along with Leon Damas and Aime Cesaire, French speakers from French Guiana and Martinique. Their poetry not only denounced colonialism, it proudly asserted the validity of the cultures that the colonials had tried to crush.

All were writing in European languages, and often they shared the same themes: the clash between indigenous and colonial cultures, condemnation of European subjugation, pride in the African past, and hope for the continent's independent future.

In South Africa, the horrors of apartheid have, until the present, dominated the literature. Es'kia Mphahlele, Nadine Gordimer, Bessie Head, Dennis Brutus, J. M. Coetzee, and Miriam Tlali all reflect in varying degrees in their writings theexperienceoflivinginaraciallysegregatedsociety.

Much of contemporary African literature reveals disillusionment and dissent with current events. For example, V. Y. Mudimbe in Before the Birth of the Moon (1989) explores a doomed love affair played out within a society riddled by deceit and corruption. In Kenya Ngugi wa Thiong'o was jailed shortly after he produced a play, in Kikuyu, which was perceived as highly critical of the country's government. Apparently, what seemed most offensive about the drama was the use of songs to emphasize its messages.

The weaving of music into the Kenyan's play points out another characteristic of African literature. Many writers incorporate other arts into their work and often weave oral conventions into their writing. P'Bitek structured Song of Iowino (1966) as an Acholi poem; Achebe's characters pepper their speech with proverbs in Things Fall Apart (1958). Others, such as Senegalese novelist Ousmane Sembene, have moved into films to take their message to people who cannot read.

ChinuaAchebe,'thefatherofmodernAfricanliterature',talkstoEdPilkingtonaboutinventing a new language, his years in exile from his beloved Nigeria - and why he changed his namefromAlbert.

4.1 Chinua Achebe as a writer

Chinua Achebe was born on the 16 of November, 1930. Achebe's parents, Isaiah Okafo Achebe and Janet Anaenechi Iloegbunam, were converts to the Protestant Church MissionSociety (CMS) in Nigeria. The elder Achebe stopped practicing the religion of his ancestors, but he respected its traditions. Achebe's unabbreviated name, Chinualumogu, was a prayer for divine protection and stability. His first novel was called "Things Fall Apart" (1958), and his last was "Anthills of Savannah"(1987). The Achebe family had five other surviving children, named in a similar fusion of traditional words relating to their new religion: Frank Okwuofu, John Chukwuemeka Ifeanyichukwu, Zinobia Uzoma, Augustine Ndubisi, and Grace Nwanneka.

Things Fall Apart is a novel written by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. Published in 1959, its story chronicles pre-colonial life in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and the arrival of the Europeansduring the late nineteenth century. It is seen as the archetypal modern African novel in English, one of the first to receive global critical acclaim.It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world. Achebe's debut novel, it was first published by William Heinemann Ltd in the UK; in 1962, it was also the first work published in Heinemann's African Writers Series. The title of the novel was borrowed from W. B. Yeats' 1919 poem "The Second Coming". The novel follows the life of Okonkwo, an Igbo ("Ibo" in the novel) man and local wrestling champion in the fictional Nigerian clan of Umuofia. The work is split into three parts, with the first describing his family, personal history, and the customs and society of theIgbo, andthe second and third sections introducing the influence of Britishcolonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community.

Things Fall Apart was followed by a sequel, No Longer at Ease (1960), originally written as the second part of a larger work along with Arrow of God (1964). Achebe states that his two later novels A Man of the People (1966) and Anthills of the Savannah (1987), while not featuring Okonkwo's descendants, are spiritual successors to the previous novels in chronicling African history.

The novel Things Fall Apart (TFA) (1958) is written by the late Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) who was a Nigerian author. The setting of the novel is in the outskirts of Nigeria in a small fictional village, Umuofia just before the arrival of white missionaries into their land. Due to the unexpected arrival of white missionaries in Umuofia, the villagers do not know how to react to the sudden cultural changes that the missionaries threaten to change with their new political structure and institutions. Hence, this essay aims at analyzing the effects of European colonization on Igbo culture. Towards the end of the nineteenth century most European states migrated to Africa and other parts of the world where they established colonies. Nigeria was amongst other African nations that received visitors who were on a colonizing mission; introducing their religion and culture that is later imposed on Igbo. The culture of the people of Umuofia (Igbo culture) is immensely threatened by this change.Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe is a story about personal beliefs,customs, and also a story about an identity confliction. There is struggle between family, culture, and religion of the Ibo tribes. It shows how things fall apart when these beliefs and customs are challenged and how a personal identity changes for a man. The novel concerns the life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion throughout the villages of the Ibo ethnic group of Umuofia in Nigeria, Africa, his three wives, and his children. Throughout the novel, Okonkwo is internally challenged and slowly becomes someone that is no longer recognizable by his friends or his family. When Okonkwo faces change, his identity starts to fade. Okonkwo is one of the most powerful men in the Ibo tribe. In his tribe, he is both feared and honored. This is evident by this quote, "Okonkwo was

well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on the solid personal achievements. He brought honor to his tribe by throwing Amalinze the Cat". This suggests that in Okonkwo's tribe, making a name for yourself in any way possible, even if that means fighting and wrestling to get your fame attains power. Okonkwo wanted to be one of the highest leaders in the tribe, and was willing to do anything in order to achieve that goal. He loved his tribe, and they defined him. Our concern, therefore, is to show how male power, honor, and the sense of duty have led to the decline of Okonkwo's identity.

4.2 Struggle for Dominance:

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apartportrays Igbo society which worships idea of heroism and masculinity. As the consequence, the protagonist Okonkwo is spotted to be directed by the fear of failure and pressure of establishment throughout his life. To get rid of weakness, he sheds any kind of sensivity which might lure him to surrender to soft feeling or affection. As showing any sign of emotion is considered to be feminine, display of sheer strength is the true construction of masculinity. If a male digress from the stereotyped masculine features, he will be labelled as effeminate like Okonkwo's father Unoka. Gloverand Kaplan point out, „the differences between men and women had to besharply emphasized and feminine traits had to be kept firmly in their proper place in men,they were a sign of weakness" (60-61).

The paper studies construction and representation of masculinity in Igbo society. Okonkwo is convinced by the concept of masculinity which is strong, dominant, competitive, egoistic and violent full of „macho personality". Power and authority are associated with masculinity in the novel. Okonkwo's character is the manifestation of this concept where he is on the run for achievements, recognition and control. The wrestling match against Amalinze the Cat has brought all the recognition which he craves for as,"Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan" (3). Celebration of male domination is evident in many occasions in Things Fall Apart. Raymond Williams finds that ruling culture yearn for "an active and continuous selection and reselection" and "a projected reality, with which we have to come to terms on its terms, even though those terms are always and must be the valuations, the selections and omissions" of "men" (16).

Display of male domination is constructed and displayed around Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart which serves as his best defense against any critical situation. To mask his insecurity and fear to be recognized as effeminate he is always on his toe to execute the conventional masculinity. It is his shield in progress and maintenance of clan life where he is always conscious of preserving the prestige which he has achieved. The barren life of his father haunts him restricting him from being gentle and idle. He builds his personality judging against the traits of his father's life and always maintains the check sheet to be a contrast of his effeminate father. Okonkwo's life "depends entirely on its creator [himself] for its configuration" (Olney, 4).Umuofia's culture and Okonkwo's dominance push all the female characters and womanhood to the periphery. The clan's selected conventions hinder other aspects from flourishing and excludes from the whole scenario.

In portrayal of macho personality, Okonkwo's strong physical appearance comes first in sight in the novel. Achebe has drawn image of a man with full of appreciation for his muscle power and ability which is associated with his manliness in the clan. "He was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that, when he slept, his wives and children in their houses could hear him breathe" (4).

The minute detail of big body, eyebrows and big nose are the standout features of Okonkwo's physic. Because of special attraction of wrestling in Igbo culture, he is celebrated with deep respect and recognition all of which come because of his bodily features. Achebe draws comparison with women to illustrate the significance of such feature which vividly portrays importance of bodily strength in masculinity of Igbo culture. The text describes, "He was a very strong man and rarely felt fatigue. But his wives and young children were not as strong, and so they suffered. (P.15)

Bravery is always celebrated as one of the integral parts in the projection of manhood. While describing Okonkwo's character, his intrepid actions are glorified throughout the novel. He is the first person in Umofia who brings a human head from war. In tribal fight he likes to lead from the front and wants everyone to aggressive in winning. Against white people, he stands like the one-man army to initiate assault. Though whole clan stays quiet, he takes it as his sole responsibility to resist the aggression of the white men. He blames the Abame community for not attacking and resisting the white man-

I have also heard that Abame people were weak and foolish. Why did they not fight back? Had they no guns and machetes? We would be cowards to compare ourselves with the men of Abeme.

Their fathers had never dared to stand before our ancestors. We must fight these men and drive them from the land. (182)

Umofia allows violence to be a part of phallocentric world where beating anyone is the expression of manly power. Okonkwo performs domestic violence several times in the novel without receiving much of criticism. He beats his wives and son to channel his masculine anger which is excused as the allowed practice of clan. He keeps his son Nwoye on charge to check him from being effeminate. He feels his son will follow the path of his grandfather. Irelefinds, "Okonkwo's adoption of the manly ideal is excessive and even wrongheaded, as when Obierika emphatically expresses to Okonkwo himself his lack of enthusiasm for the prowess in wrestling demonstrated by his own son, Maduka" (130).Okonkwo has always believed that being able to keep the household under control is a prime feature of manliness. He thinks,"no matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man" (46).

The masculinity of Okonkwo is largely constructed around hiding of emotion. As the part of manhood, he believes that showing emotion is one type of weakness. He likes his daughter Ezinma but he retricts him from expressing it. When Agbala takes her to cave, he checks his emotion too. He takes the idea of man to the extreme and refuses the instinctive expression of human. The fear to be considered as less of man makes a cage from where he lives forever. Jeyifo believes that Okonkwo destroys the structure of gender in culture:

"Okonkwo both loathes the memory of his father and represses the lore of his mother; in the process he distorts both the „„masculine"" and the „„feminine"", by keeping them rigidly apart and by the ferocity of his war on the „„feminine"" (851). To run away from the shadow of his father, he engages in the murder of Ikemefuna. Ikemefuna is like a son to him and Okonkwoalso feels in that way. Though the wise clan person suggests him not to join in killing, he does not refrain. He fears that he will be judged as coward. He uses his own machete to cut him down though he feels depressed for that for a long time. "Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna" (55). His concept of masculinity forces him to join in killing.

Possession of wealth is a major indicator in estimation of manliness in Igbo society. Without enough prosperity, a person is face ridicule from neighbors. Okonkwo's father has faced this embarrassment throughout his life.: "Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbor some money, froma few cowries to quite substantial amounts." (4) Not only wealth but also number of wives, children and barns contribute in construction of masculinity in the society. As a result, males are always driven by the motives to build their material profile according to the requirement of the society. Achebe describes a person's status associating with his acquisition of wealth which is well acknowledged in the Igbo society.

With Igbo society's submission to the concept of maleness and femaleness, journey of each man seems to be pre decided. From the childhood Okonkwo sees what is celebrated around him and he clearly knows what he will have to achieve to acquire recognition from the society. The ideals limit him to a reduced version of human being who is convinced to repress himself in expressing emotion. He hides whatever is regarded as feminine. So he represses his spontaneous flow of feeling and emotion which might portray him as an effeminate person in the society. After achieving prestige in the clan, he becomes hyper sensitive in choice of emotional expression. He is dozed to maintain the format of masculinity by any means.

Failure in any sector in life is another fearsome event for males. The manliness image does not accept any sort of failure in life. In domestic life, he will have to hold sheer control over his wives and children. To express authority, he is allowed to beat his wives as well. In social life, he needs to manage prestigious recognition from the clansmen. Winning the prestige is not enough though. Because he will have to behave in particular way to sustain the recognition. In economic life, not possessing the ability to provide for the family is a serious failure as well.

Okonkwo is so much conditioned by masculinity that he categorizes food item in gender. Submitting to his clansmen, he accepts that the belief that yam is the king of all crops. When his mother and sister were working so hard to provide for the family, he is obsessed with type of yam they are producing. This phallocentric ideal clouds his mind as he considers coco-yams, beans and cassava to be female type of crops. As there are no men to help in the field, the women failed to produce yam, which reflects manliness among food items.

Challenge to masculinity is totally unacceptable to Okonkwo. He does not even know how to handle that without violence. At the time of New Yam Festival, his second wife passes some relax time because that is the day of feasting when everyone celebrates. But Okonkwo finds that a sign of laziness. He brings up the topic of cutting down a banana tree and makes the excuse to beat him.

When his daughter, Ezinma fell sick, he refuses to listen to Ekwefi because that will be listening to a woman. He lets the situation flow without any interruption of oracle.

Okonkwo"s belief in masculinity brings down his own life. When the messengers come, he takes the authority to draw first attack without consulting others. He is so blind with pride and authority that he does not find the necessity to discuss any further with the clansmen. After killing a messenger, he finds that his clansmen have taken no action against other messengers who have escaped. All on a sudden he comes to the understanding how fruitless his actions have been. He is all alone and only waiting for the further downfall when no one will stand beside him. He cannot stand such lonely situation and hangs himself.

The patriarchal dominance in Igbo culture is manifested through the character of Okonkwo who lives his whole life running away from femininity. The atmosphere of Umofia recognizes supremacy of male dominance which dashes all the female characters to the background. Selected rituals and customs are centered on the male characters where the women stand as mere props. Okonkwo's dominance omits the possibility of the representation of any other values. Hyper-masculinity of Okonkwo leaves him in a sea of formats from where he can never find any escape. The idea of masculinity does not compromise with its standards in Igbo culture. As a result, the protagonist leads a pre-decided life from his childhood driven by the macho man concept which he picks up in his early age. Okonkwo takes the standards to extreme of his lifestyle being always conscious of its maintenance which brings downfall of his life eventually.

4.3 Identity Crisis

During the colonial period from the 15th century until the first half of the 20th century, countries like England, Spain, Germany, France, Portugal, Netherland and others annexed different colonies of the world by force or on the name of mercantilism. Eventually, this practice ceased after the Second World War and the colonies got liberation from the colonial clutches. However, the damage done to the colonies was immense in every field and it was difficult for them to overcome the damage in a short period,they were disparaged economically, socially, politically, culturally and psychologically. The colonies were not only drained materially but the inhabitants were looked down upon as creatures and inferior type of people. Colonialism gave birth to the concepts of East and West, Superior and Inferior, Cultured and Un-cultured, Barbaric and civilized etc.

Colonialism could only exist at all by postulating that there existed a binary opposition into which the world was divided. The gradual establishment of an empire depended upon a stable hierarchal relationship in which the colonized existed as the other of the colonizing culture. Thus the idea of the savage could occur only if there was a concept of the civilized to oppose it. In this way a geography of difference was constructed, in which differences were mapped (Cartography) and laid out in a metaphorical landscape that represented not geographical fixity, but the fixity of power. (Ashcroft et al 32)

The European writers through their writings dismantled the original image of the People of Colonies. They created a discourse which became the dominant and master discourse all over the world to scrutinize the Colonized people. The Europeans dominated the people of the colonies not only through coercion and physical power but through their 'intellect' as well. The European writers justified colonialism and questioned the identity of the colonized people. They recorded them in their books on their own without showing a miniscule of respect to their aspirations and feelings.

Post-Colonialism can be defined as the complete departure from Colonialism. In the broader perspective, the succeeding period after Colonialism is called Post-Colonialism. Thus, Post-Colonial writing was an attempt from the writers of the colonies like Chinua Achebe to counter the discourse created by the Colonial writers about the colonies and its people. These types of writings came into existence because of the impact of colonialism on the countries forcibly subjugated and controlled by the Colonizers. The discourse created by the western authors distorted and Denigrated the image of the people living in these countries. In order to strengthen their rule, they created stereotypes about the people of Africa and Asia and many other different countries to justify their rule in the name of civilization, culture and education. They constructed the image of the Colonized the way they liked by pigeonholing them as Barbaric, un-ethical, Un-civilized and what not. The novel Things Fall Apart too is an attempt from Achebe to respond to the colonial discourse and present the image of his homeland and his people and culture as it is. While reading the novel, it becomes clear that Achebe considers it his moral responsibility to reassert and revitalize the glorious past of Africa. In this sense, Post-Colonialism is described as "after Colonialism" (Ashcroft et al. 12). Achebe wants to present the true and clear image of Africa (Igbo

Culture) to let his people know about the true and comprehensible image of his native land rather than seeing it through the prism of western discourse. Things Fall Apart (1958), "re-interprets the European view of African culture and history prevalent since the zenith of imperialism" (Meyers 25). The inter-mingling of two different cultures i; e. the native culture and the culture thrusted upon the native people created a type of an identity crisis among the people. In this way, the novel highlights an impact of Colonialism on the African Culture and Society. In order to implement and inculcate their own beliefs and ideas, Colonizers took the advantage of colonies by abrogating their culture by using different stratagems and to manoeuvre their colonial agendas, they used different institutions to exercise their power in an intelligent way.

Achebe in the novel has used many Igbo names and proverbs, which uncovers Achebe un-ending bond with his culture and people, "Go-di-di-go-di-go.Di-go-go-di-go. It was the ekwe talking to the clan" (Achebe 84). Things Fall Apart tries to re-frame and re-construct that image which has been distorted completely by the so called Colonial masters to suit their own designs to rule over the poor countries like Africa. The novel Things Fall Apart is about "collapse, breaking into pieces, chaos, and confusion" (Alimi 121). The Igbo tradition and culture seemed a threat to Europeans and who were hell bent upon introducing their own culture and a way of living. This was one of the key elements to touch upon to soften and naturalize their rule on the colonies. They found the culture as the soft target to attract the people towards themselves by using Churches, schools as a source of tool to mould the general hoi polloi towards their own culture.

So, "The historical image that the Orientalists created for the Orient was a complex one, overlaying the 'lost glory' of ancient cultures with a negative image of decline Historians, novelists, artists, travelers, administrators and others cooperated in the creation of this image of the East" (Liddle et al 497). It was an ardent and deliberate attempt from the Colonizer to hegemonize them mentally, politically, culturally and economically and make them believe that their culture, way of living, tradition, and civilization is inferior, weak and unfit to survive. While going through the text, we encounter a number of proverbs, which the Europeans couldn't understand. L M Kenalemang says,

Most of the text in Achebe's Things Fall Apart chiefly features in the use and explanations of the complicated Igbo myths and proverbs that the Europeans fail to acknowledge. Throughout the novel Achebe craftily uses his characters to speak in proverbs when they address one another. The use of proverbs is very important in conversations as the Igbo believe them to be a fountain of wisdom and of respect. (Kenalemang 10)

The novel provides a wide range of knowledge about the Igbo culture and society. It predicts the fate and future of the Igbo culture and society and the repercussions of Colonialism Achebe tries to break the Eurocentric view which the Europeans had on the people they considered inferior. They considered themselves superior to all and wanted the colonies to be submissive all the time. The Orient was depicted in such a de-humanized way that he/she may have sometimes reckoned of inequality, repression, inhumanity as all but natural and considered himself as one who has to beat this brunt all the time. In this regard, Edward Said says:

Orient suddenly appeared lamentably under-humanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth. A swing of the pendulum in one direction caused an equal and opposite swing back: the orient was undervalued. Orientalism as a profession grew out of these opposites, of compensations and corrections based on inequality, ideas nourished by and nourishing similar ideas in the culture at large. Indeed, the very project of restriction and restructuring besought scholarly, scientific treatment of the kind to be found in disciplines like philology, biology, history, anthropology, philosophy, or economics (Said 150)

Chinua Achebe is positioned between two different world orders and cultures as well, one is his own and the other totally foreign and westernized which prompts his creativity. These things gave birth to the sense of belonging to Achebe and his people. It is because of the multiple cultures that an identity crisis sprouted among the people and the author intrinsically. Achebe in heart of hearts too wanted to highlight and represent his own culture and not the culture of the Europeans. He through this novel conveys a type of message to the people regarding his own culture and identity and his people's adaptation to it. F. Abiola Irele says, "The culture of Umuofia as depicted by Achebe functions through an immanence of its foundational myth in the collective life and consciousness. The immediate and practical implications of this myth and the system of belief derived from it are experienced at every level of the collective existence" (Irele 6). The question remains why Achebe wrote the novel in English, if he wanted to preserve his culture which includes his native language as well? The fact is that this novel wants to remove the stereotypes created by the Europeans about the native Africans. Being himself educated in west, he wants to counter and respond to the texts produced by the colonial writers about the Africans. Ashcroft says, "non-English writers who have chosen to write in English do so not because their mother tongue is

regarded by them as inadequate, but because the colonial language has become a useful means of expression, and one that reaches the widest possible audience" (Ashcroft et al 16). By using the native Igbo Proverbs, folktales and songs, he shows his affiliation towards his culture. Achebe challenges the writings of "Joyce Cary and Joseph Conrad which to Achebe was an appropriation of ethnographic modes neither of representation to prove that the communities of his African past were neither 'primitive' nor without history" (Clifford 10).

The interpretation of the Eastern culture and their tradition was rather biased as Edward Said says:

"Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the West. Thus the history of Orientalism has both an internal consistency and a highly articulated set of relationships to the dominant culture surrounding it. My analyses consequently try to show the field's shape and internal organization, its pioneers, patriarchal authorities, canonical texts, doxological ideas, exemplary figures, its followers, elaborators, and new authorities there is a linguistic Orient, A Freudian Orient, a Spenglerian Orient, a Darwinian Orient, a racist Orient-and so on". (Said 22)

The Igbo society had their own judicial system which their ancestors have passed unto them. The white missionaries Tried to abrogate the native laws of the Igbo society with their own ones The reaction of the Europeans or the white missionaries was reprehensive when the people of the village torched the Church. They hardly cared about the native laws and culture and were trying to impose their own culture These things created a deep chasm between two communities (natives and colonizers) and kept them poles apart. The statements of the missionaries proved to self-contradictory as they claimed themselves to be the civilized and cultured people but their actions proved them wrong in the village of Umuofia. The inherent values and the culture embedded in them was shattered after being suddenly violated by the Europeans. Frantz Fanon says: "To fight for national culture first of all means fighting for the liberation of the nation, the tangible matrix from which culture can grow. One cannot divorce the combat for culture from the people's struggle for liberation National consciousness which is not nationalism, is alone capable of giving us an international dimension. This question of national consciousness and national culture takes on a specific dimension in Africa" (Fanon 168-179).

The main character of the novel Okonkwo is not only a mere actor but he has had an immense significance so far as the concept of nation 'Africa' is concerned. He represents the whole of African historical authenticity. Achebe very craftily and aptly constructs him as a character. Achebe has himself commented about the novel and Okonkwo by saying; "The story of Okonkwo is almost inevitable; if I hadn't written about him, certainly someone else would have, because it really is the beginning of our story" (Achebe 19991, Interview). In the novel itself, Achebe praises Okonkwo in these words; "If ever a man deserved his success, that man was Okonkwo. At an early age he had achieved fame as the greatest wrestler in all the land" (Achebe 19). Thus, the novel "presents one of the most powerful nationalist cultural projects which affirms the integrity of indigenous culture and provides a rationale for its beliefs that is understandable from both the perspective of an inhabitant of Umuofia and that of metropolitan student of literature in modern-day London" (Msiska 174). The suicide of Okonkwo conveys his steadfastness or the finale of his pride which destroys him. Through this episode, Achebe conveys us the continuous conflict and confrontation between two different cultures and civilizations and the exploitation of one at the cost of another.

In conclusion, Achebe highlights the marginalized and submerged people of Africa and tries to expunge and challenge the discourses or narratives labeled to the African people. Achebe without hesitating projects the collapse of African culture and identity not only during the colonial period but also in post-colonial period. The novel writes back to the dominant literature of Europe. It shows how the voices of the subdued people are ultimately heard. Therefore, the objective of this research paper was to show how Achebe jettisoned Eurocentric view of Africa and through his own point of view tries to present the exact and real image of Africa and its people?

4.4 Introduction to African Culture:

African literature, literary works of the African continent. African literature consists of a body of work in different languages and various genres, ranging from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages (French, Portuguese, and English).

Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral histories, myths, and proverbs additionally serve to remind whole communities of their ancestors' heroic deeds, their past, and the precedents for their customs and traditions. Essential to oral literature is a concern for

presentation and oratory. Folktale tellers use call-response techniques. A griot (praise singer) will accompany a narrative with music.

Some of the first African writings to gain attention in the West were the poignant slave narratives, such as The Interesting Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African (1789), which described vividly the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. As Africans became literate in their own languages, they often reacted against colonial repression in their writings. Others looked to their own past for subjects. Thomas Mofolo, for example, wrote Chaka (tr. 1931), about the famous Zulu military leader, in Susuto.

Since the early 19th cent. writers from western Africa have used newspapers to air their views. Several founded newspapers that served as vehicles for expressing nascent nationalist feelings. French-speaking Africans in France, led by Léopold Senghor, were active in the négritude movement from the 1930s, along with Léon Damas and Aimé Césaire, French speakers from French Guiana and Martinique. Their poetry not only denounced colonialism, it proudly asserted the validity of the cultures that the colonials had tried to crush.

After World War II, as Africans began demanding their independence, more African writers were published. Such writers as, in western Africa, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ousmane Sembene, Kofi Awooner, Agostinho Neto, Tchicaya u tam'si, Camera Laye, Mongo Beti, Ben Okri, and Ferdinand Oyono and, in eastern Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Okot p'Bitek, and Jacques Rabémananjara produced poetry, short stories, novels, essays, and plays. All were writing in European languages, and often they shared the same themes: the clash between indigenous and colonial cultures, condemnation of European subjugation, pride in the African past, and hope for the continent's independent future.

In South Africa, the horrors of apartheid have, until the present, dominated the literature. Es'kia Mphahlele, Nadine Gordimer, Bessie Head, Dennis Brutus, J. M. Coetzee, and Miriam Tlali all reflect in varying degrees in their writings the experience of living in a racially segregated society.

Much of contemporary African literature reveals disillusionment and dissent with current events. For example, V. Y. Mudimbe in Before the Birth of the Moon (1989) explores a doomed love affair played out within a society riddled by deceit and corruption. The Zimbabwean novelist and poet Chenjerai Hove (1956–2015), wrote vividly in English and his native Shona of the hardships experienced during the struggle against British colonial rule, and later of the hopes and disappointments of life under the rule of Robert Mugabe. In Kenya Ngugi wa Thiong'o was jailed shortly after he produced a play, in Kikuyu, which was perceived as highly critical of the country's government. Apparently, what seemed most offensive about the drama was the use of songs to emphasize its messages.

The weaving of music into the Kenyan's play points out another characteristic of African literature. Many writers incorporate other arts into their work and often weave oral conventions into their writing. p'Bitek structured Song of Iowino (1966) as an Acholi poem; Achebe's characters pepper their speech with proverbs in Things Fall Apart (1958). Others, such as Senegalese novelist Ousmane Sembene, have moved into films to take their message to people who cannot read.

Literature has been described in diverse ways. In the first place, literature is seen as the totality of all works of imagination, which project the life of a people. That is why Eyo, Mufuaya and Foy (2011) define literature as a body of written or oral works such as novels, poetry and drama, which use words to stimulate the imagination and unique vision of life of the reader. This therefore means that literature is a creative universal form of expression which addresses the emotional, spiritual and intellectual concerns of human beings. Again, literature is described as any creative, factual or imaginative work about people and what they have done, believe and have created or are willing to create. Osunbade in Awa (2014) is of the opinion that literature mirrors the events of the past, transmits social-cultural values and creates great awareness of the tradition of its enabling society. Osunbade's description of literature is in consonance with the explanation posited by Obichukwu in Awa (2014: 1) that Literature displays man in his society by trying to explain human experiences and conducts, indicating the past and the present, while peering into the future.

FromtheeyesofOnukaoguandOnyerionwu(2009:23)weseeliterature as an imaginative act whose expression is dependent on words and through the use of imagination, heselects,ordersandinterpretslife experience,employingwordsashisbasic tool.

Going by the above elucidation of literature, literature is a creative writing which projects the life of a people in a society in the past, present while peering into the future and its main function is education, entertainment, signification and aesthetics. In other words, literature is a "humanistic discipline" which aims at improving man's lot on earth. Consequently, literature does not portray the positive side of human's activities and actions but also the negative consequence for a reversal

and improvement of society and people. This calls for a balance representation of views. This onerous task is the position of Achebe in his Things Fall Apart.

African Literature to be specific, is a reflection of African culture in African Society, African historical, political, social and religious experiences. Ojaide in Awa (2015:53) visualizes African literature as literary works that articulate the socio-cultural and historical imperatives of the African people which is written by any African who is a citizen of the African country.

African literature therefore are the literary works of the continent, which consists of a body of works in different languages and various genres, ranging from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages such as French, Portuguese and English. Much of Contemporary African Literature reveals disillusionment and dissent with current events. Achebe as a result, wrote vividly in English and his native Igbo of the hardships experienced during the struggle against British colonial rule. Achebe's characters intersperse their speech vividly with proverbs. Generally, African writers taking their cue from oral literature, use beauty to help communicate important truths and information to society (Welker, 2016).

The Western world viewed Africans as inferior set of people who lack self-governance, literacy, intelligence and culture, and are backwards and uncivilized consequently. Thus, Africans were seen as primitive. Looking at the precariousness of the situation, especially where most Africans were trying to run away from their culture to internalize the supposedly superior white European civilization, Achebe in his Things Fall Apart changes the label on Africans as primordial savages and thus presents African societies with their enviable traditions, ideals, values and behavior. Achebe thus, as a novelist who is a teacher, subtly educates Africans and non-Africans of the beauty of African culture, and to reinstate a sense of pride in African culture and belief in themselves and so, jettison the years of denigration and self-abasement (Achebe, 1975). He consequently portrays the complex, advanced, social institutions of Igbo culture prior to the coming of the white man. All these rhyme with the opinions of Brain in Agatucci (1998) that Achebe creates a portrait of African culture in his Things Fall Apart, in order to inform the outside world that African culture contains much value. Invariably and obviously, Achebe aims at conveying to his people and the world that Africans did not here of culture from Europe and that their societies were not mindless after all but have a philosophy and culture of great depth, value, beauty, signification and dignity.

Agatucci also believes that Achebe's intervention at the moment is timely because many Africans at the period were ready to accept the European judgement that African had no history or culture worthy of consideration and internalization. So, Achebe no doubt helped his people and society regain their belief in themselves. He consequently, achieved cultural revitalization in the English Language. Achebe proudly revealed Igbo creative expressions, skills traditional resources which include design, oral history, literature, music, drama, celebrations, indigenous botanical properties and medicine, architectural forms, historic sites, traditional technologies, traditional healing methods, patterns of social interactions and beauty to the world. So it is obvious that Achebe in Things Fall Apart represents the cultural roots of the Igbo in order to provide self-confidence. All these, he exposed using the English language laced with Igbo Language.

African literature is a manifestation of African culture, African society, African historical, political,social and religious experiences. Thus, it is a reflection and celebration of African culture (Awa, 2006). Achebetherefore depicts an Igbo society which has dignity and prominence in his *Things Fall Apart*. All the same,Achebe did not forget to present the weaknesses in the Igbo culture that require drastic and immediate changethus,eliminatingthegloomyonesfor thegrowthanddevelopmentofhisrevered society.

AchebeadmiresthedemocraticgovernmentinIgboculture.

Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people, who rule directly orthrough freely elected representatives. So, Abraham Lincoln the 16th President of America describes Democracyas "The government of the people, by the people and for the people". This is opposed to dictatorship, whereabsolutepowerisvestedinatyrant.AchebepresentstheIgbosocietythathasademocraticsystemofg overnment. For instance, before important decisions are taken, the elders or "Ndichie" and others gathertogether at the village square or Ilo or at the market place to take decisions that affect the people or individuals.The community is in control and the collective will and decision of the members of the community prevail. Thisis what obtains in a democratic dispensation. This is seen in chapter 1, P.9, where the people were informed thata daughter of Umuofia was killed in Mbaino. Collectively the people agreed that Umuofia should follow thelaw-going to war with Umuofia or offering Umuofia a young man and a young Virgin as compensation for thedeathofthe daughterofUmuofia.

Manyothers spoke, and at the end it was decided to follow the normal course of action(P.9)

AchebedescribestheEfficientSystemofJusticeinhisIgbo culture

Justice is another feature of democracy. Justice is the legal or philosophical theory by which fairness isadministered. Achebe's Igbo system adopts an effective and efficient system of justice. This makes Igbo systemnoble. Disputes inthe communityare presentedto theelders or the egwugwu, thegreatest andrespectedmasked spirits of the land, which is played by the titled men of the clan. This is the tribunal who takes decisionsafter hearing from the both sides. This is observed in chapter ten of *Things Fall Apart,* where the village holds aceremonial gathering to administer justice. The village ancestral spirits, known as egwugwu are presented withthe case of Uzowulu, who reports that his in-laws took his wife Mgbaforand therefore, request the return ofher bride price to him. Odukwe, Mgbafor's brother clarifies that his family took Mgbafor to rescue her fromdaily brutal beatings by Uzowulu, her husband. He maintains that his sister will return to her husband only if heswears never to beat her again. The egwugwu consult and their leader, the Evil Forest, gave a verdict, thatUzowulu takes wine to his in-laws and begs his wife to come back home. He reminds Uzowulu that "fighting awomanisnotbraver.

Summary

- Chinua Achebe was born on the 16 of November, 1930. Achebe's parents, Isaiah OkafoAchebeandJanetAnaenechiIloegbunam,wereconvertstothe Protestant ChurchMissionSociety (CMS) in Nigeria. The elder Achebe stopped practicing the religion of his ancestors, but herespecteditstraditions.Achebe'sunabbreviatedname,Chinualumogu,wasaprayerfordivinepro tection and stability. His first novel was called "Things Fall Apart" (1958), and his last was"Anthills of Savannah"(1987). The Achebe family had five other surviving children, named in asimilar fusion of traditional words relating to their new religion: Frank Okwuofu, John ChukwuemekaIfeanyichukwu,Zinobia Uzoma, AugustineNdubisi,and Grace Nwanneka.
- In Things Fall Apart, Achebe wanted to give Africa a voice of its own. He also wanted to crush the prejudice and racist portrayals of Africans in literature. Set in Igboland towards the end of the nineteenth century, Things Fall Apart is characterized by an imbrication of many themes among which one can mention male power, honor, the sense of duty, exile, clash of cultures, order and hierarchy. The novel illustrates the chaos and the conflicting situation caused by the arrival of the Europeans who brought with them a new religion, a new way of life, and new ways of thinking. The first part of the novel shows the well-structured society of Umuofia, with its 'political' organization and kinship system. One also witnesses the first illustration of male power through the main character,Okonkwo whoisdepictedascourageouswarriorwhosefame is beyonddoubt.The Nigerian society Achebe describes in *Things Fall Apart* is characterized by patriarchy whichmanifests itself at all levels. Despite the concept of *Nneka*, meaning "Mother is Supreme," which isreminiscentofSteady'sassertionthat"themostimportantfactorwithregardtothewomanintraditi onal society is her role as mother", women are always marginalized and looked upon as merepropertiesof men. But this is not inherent to Umuofia only. In fact, in African societies where phallocracy isdominant, women are usually placed in a secondary position. It is not then surprising if the authoropposeshimto hisfatherwho isdepicted as alazyand irresponsible drunkard. Unoka's lack of responsibility appears through his inability to manage properly the money he earns.His only concern is to get gourds of palm-wine and to celebrate with his friends. He is depicted as afailed man, as an *agbala.* This negative picture drawn of Unoka is not fortuitous. It is a device used by the narrator toepitomise male power in the Igbo society as well as the conception people have of men who fail toachieve it. Thus, one realizes that men's power is closely connected with their own quest for identity.This explains the reason why

Okonkwo is in a perpetual attempt to strengthen his power which sometimes is threatened in many regards. In other words, he tries to define himself by forging an image which, in his patriarchal society, is that of the real man with all the power attributed to him.

- African writers control the colonial tongue by altering the linguistic features of such languages. Specifically, Achebe manipulates the English Language in his Things Fall Apart to present the Igbo culture as splendid but not without the cultural storms, which should be purged in order to embrace modernity. So, Achebe's Igbo society know that change and progress are needful and indispensable. They recognize that some of their customs are becoming harmful and unproductive and they are ready to thrust them aside. For instance, when Okonkwo broke the Week of Peace, the punishment meted to him was not as obnoxious as before. He was only asked to make an offering to Ani. Formerly, a man who broke the Week of Peace was dragged through the village until he dies. Again, when Okonkwo was sent on exile, some people were not happy because they felt the punishment was unjust because his offence was inadvertent. The only mercy was that he would come back after seven years. Obierika also thought about his innocent twins that were thrown away.

Keywords

Anthropological: pertaining to the science of man, especially the beginnings, development, customs and beliefs of mankind

Apportioned:divided, distributed

Archaeological: pertaining to the study of ancient things especially remains of prehistoric times e.g. tombs, buried cities

Decimation:killing or destroying one-tenth or a larger part of

Demobilizing: release from military service

Hypothesis: idea or suggestion put forward as a starting point for reasoning or explanation

Indenture: agreement binding an apprentice to his/her master

Recession: slackening of business or industrial activity

Recuperation: recovering one's strength or health becoming strong again

Replenishment: fill up again

abomination anything hateful and disgusting.

agadi-nwayian old woman.

Agbala do-o-o-o! . . . Ezinmao-o-o-o Chielo, the priestess, takes on the voice of the divine Agbala to ask for Ezinma to come to her.

Agbala, the Oracle the prophet of the Igbo. Achebe bases the Agbala Oracle (the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves) on the Awka Oracle that was destroyed by the British. Chielo was the priestess who spoke to Unoka on behalf of the god Agbala.

albino a person whose skin, hair, and eyes lack normal coloration because of genetic factors: albinos have a white skin, whitish hair, and pink eyes.

alligator peppera small brown fruit of an African shrub; whose hot seeds are like black pepper; also called *offe*. The seeds may be ground and blended with kola nut in the ritual welcome of visitors.

Amadiora the god of thunder and lightning.

And these white men, they say, have no toes The white men's toes are hidden because they are wearing shoes.

Ani the earth goddess who owns all land.

anklet of his titles When a man achieves a title, he wears a special anklet to indicate his title. He may wear more than one anklet to indicate more titles.

Aru oyim de de de dei!egwugwu language translated as *greetings to the physical body of a friend*. The egwugwu speak in a formal language that is difficult for the the Umuofians to understand. Each of the nine egwugwu represents a village of the Umuofian community. Together, the egwugwu form a tribunal to judge disputes.

The body of the white man, I salute you. The egwugwu speak indirectly, using a formal language of immortal spirits.

bride-price in some cultures, money and property given to a prospective bride's family by the prospective groom and his family.

bull-roarer a noisemaker made from a length of string or rawhide threaded through an object of wood, stone, pottery, or bone; a ritual device that makes a loud humming noise when swung rapidly overhead.

calabash the dried, hollow shell of a gourd, used as a bowl, cup, and so on.

callow young and inexperienced; immature.

cam wood a dye from a West African redwood tree that is used by women to redden their skins before decorating themselves with other patterns for special occasions.

cassava any of several plants (genus *Manihot* and especially *M. esculenta*) of the spurge family grown in the tropics for their fleshy, edible rootsticks that produce a nutritious starch. Here, the plant also provides valuable leaves for livestock feed as well as tubers, which are prepared like coco-yams.

caste rigid class distinction based on birth, wealth, and so on, operating as a social system or principle.

chalk a material that represents peace. The Umuofians use chalk to signify personal honors and status by marking the floor and the toe or face, according to the level of honorific title they have taken. For example, Okoye marks his toe to indicate his first title.

chi a significant cultural concept and belief meaning one's personal deity; also one's destiny or fate.

Chielo the name of the current priestess of Agbala, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves.

Chukwu the leading god in the Igbo hierarchy of gods.

coco-yam the edible, spherical-shaped tuber of the taro plant grown in the tropics and eaten like potatoes or ground into flour, cooked to a paste, or fermented for beer. Here, the round coco-yam (a woman's crop) is a different tuber than the elongated-shaped yam (a man's crop).

compound an enclosed space with a building or group of buildings within it.

court messengers the native Africans hired by the British to carry out their law enforcement activities; also called *kotma.*Kotma is a Pidgin English word derived from the words court and messenger.

cowries shells of the cowrie, a kind of mollusk related to snails and found in warm seas; especially the shells of the money cowrie, formerly used as currency in parts of Africa and southern Asia.

creepersplant whose stems put out tendrils or rootlets by which they can creep along a surface as they grow.

the D.C. the District Commissioner.

defecates excretes waste matter from the bowels.

desecrated to have taken away the sacredness of; treat as not sacred; profane.

efulefu worthless men in the eyes of the community.

egusi melon seeds prepared for a soup.

egwugwuleaders of the clan who wear masks during certain rituals and speak on behalf of the spirits; the term can be either singular or plural.

Eke day, Afo day The Igbo week has four days: Eke, Oye, Afo, and Nkwo.

ekwea drum.

emissary aperson or agent sent on a specific mission.

eneke-nti-obaa bird that flies endlessly.

entrails the inner organs of humans or animals; specifically, the intestines; viscera; guts.

esoteric intended for or understood by only a chosen few, as an inner group of disciples or initiates (said of ideas, literature, and so).

evangelism a preaching of, or zealous effort to spread, the gospel.

Evil Forest the name of the leader of the egwugwu; also the name of the forest where taboo objects and people are abandoned.

Eze elina, elina a favorite song of Ikemefuna's about how Danda the ant holds court and how the sand dances forever; it was introduced as a story at the end of Chapter 4.

Ezeugo the name for a person of high religious significance, such as an Igbo priest.

Ezinma Ekwefi and Okonkwo's daughter; meaning true beauty. She is also called Nma and Ezigbo, which mean the good one (child).

fetish any object believed by some person or group to have magical power.

Go-di-di-go-go-di-go. Di-go-go-di-go the sound of drumbeats on the *ekwe*, or drums.

a great medicine a supernatural power or magic that may take the shape of a person. In the Umuike market, the medicine assumes the shape of an old woman with a beckoning, magical fan.

a great queen Queen Victoria, reigning head of the British Empire for sixty-four years (1837-1901).

guttural loosely, produced in the throat; harsh, rasping, and so on.

gyre a circular or spiral motion; a revolution. The word appears in the book's opening quotation from a W.B. Yeats poem, "The Second Coming."

harbingers persons or things that come before to announce or give an indication of what follows; heralds.

harmattan a dry, dusty wind that blows from the Sahara in northern Africa toward the Atlantic, especially from November to March.

heathen anyone not a Jew, Christian, or Muslim; especially, a member of a tribe, nation, etc. worshiping many gods.

I am Dry-meat-that fills-the-mouth / I am Fire-that-burns-without-faggots two phrases suggesting that Evil Forest is all-powerful. Faggots are bundles of sticks for burning.

I cannot live on the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle. One must act according to one's fortune and circumstances; spittle is one's spit.

ibafever, probably related to malaria.

Ibo a member of a people of southeastern Nigeria; known for their art and their skills as traders. Today, the word is spelled *Igbo* (the *g* is not pronounced).

Idemili title This title, named after the river god Idemili, is the third-level title of honor in Umuofia.

Ikengaa carved wooden figure kept by every man in his shrine to symbolize the strength of a man's right hand.

ilothe village gathering place and playing field; an area for large celebrations and special events.

impudent shamelessly bold or disrespectful; saucy; insolent.

iron horse the bicycle that the white man was riding when he apparently got lost.

isa-ifithe ceremony in which the bride is judged to have been faithful to her groom.

It is female ochu. Crimes are divided into male and female types. Okonkwo's accidental killing of Ezuedu's son is considered manslaughter and therefore a female crime.

iyi-uwaa special stone linking an ogbanje child and the spirit world; The ogbanje is protected as long as the stone is not discovered and destroyed.

Jesu Kristi Jesus Christ.

jigidastrings of hundreds of tiny beads worn snugly around the waist.

Self Assessment

1. What is the name of Okonkwo's motherland?

A. Mbaino
B. Mbutu
C. Mbanta
D. Mantra

2. What holy animal does Okonkwo's clan suspect the Christians have killed and eaten?

A. A locust
B. A python
C. A monkey
D. A tortoise

3. What is the name of the first missionary who comes to Umuofia?

A. Mr. Brown
B. Reverend Smith
C. Mr. Jones
D. Missionary Man

4. How many villages does Umuofia comprise?

A. One
B. Four
C. Nine
D. Seven

5. Whom did Okonkwo beat in his legendary wrestling match?

A. Ekwefi Ogbuedi the Rooster
B. Ogbuedi the Snake
C. Isaac the Toad
D. Amalinze the Cat

6. In what country does Things Fall Apart take place?

A. Kenya
B. Nigeria
C. Chad
D. South Africa

7. What do the inhabitants of Mbanta believe is responsible for the white man's miraculous survival after having built his church in the Evil Forest?

A. His eyeglasses
B. His Bible
C. His borrowed machete
D. His attitude

8. What is an ogbanje?

A. A masked spirit
B. A type of yam soup

C. A changeling child
D. A musical instrument

9. What does Okonkwo constantly wish Ezinma had been?
A. His firstborn child
B. A son
C. A better cook
D. A donkey

10. What does a palm tapper tap?
A. His hand, to keep the beat
B. A shoulder, for advice
C. A tree, for wine
D. The ground, for oil

11. For what reason is Okonkwo exiled?
A. He owes money.
B. He willfully kills a fellow clan member.
C. He steals yams.
D. He unintentionally kills a fellow clan member.

12. What are the outcasts required to do before they may join the church?
A. Shave their heads
B. Pierce their tongues
C. Get cam wood tattoos
D. Change their names

13. What is the name of Okonkwo's second wife?
A. Chielo
B. Ojiugo
C. Ekwefi
D. Ezinma

14. Where are the Christian women forbidden to go when the clan hears of the killing of a royal python?
A. To the Evil Forest
B. To the stream
C. To the church
D. To the Tribal Council Meeting

15. What does Okonkwo do even though he is advised not to?
A. Marry Ojiugo
B. Beat Nwoye twice
C. Attack Chielo
D. Help kill Ikemefuna

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	C	2.	B	3.	A	4.	C	5.	D
6.	B	7.	A	8	C	9.	B	10.	C
11.	D	12.	A	13.	C	14.	B	15.	D

Review Questions

1. Discuss Chinua Achebe as a writer.
2. How Africa was colonized?
3. What factors helped in development of African Literature?
4. What kind of identity crisis has been depicted by Rushdie in*Things Fall Apart?*
5. How struggle for dominance has been used as the central theme of *Things Fall Apart*?
6. Prepare a write up of African culture with reference to*Things Fall Apart.*

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Unit 05: Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Know theoutline of the novel *Things Fall Apart.*
- Understand the theme of cultural destruction
- Understand the theme of hybridity and marginalization

Introduction

Things Fall Apart is a novel written by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. Published in 1959, its story chronicles pre-colonial life in the south-eastern part of Nigeria and the arrival of the Europeansduring the late nineteenth century. It is seen as the archetypal modern African novel in English, one of the first to receive global critical acclaim. It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world. Achebe's debut novel, it was first published by William Heinemann Ltd in the UK; in 1962, it was also the first work published in Heinemann's African Writers Series. The title of the novel was borrowed from W. B. Yeats' 1919 poem "The Second Coming". The novel follows the life of Okonkwo, an Igbo ("Ibo" in the novel) man and local wrestling champion in the fictional Nigerian clan of Umuofia. The work is split into three parts, with the first describing his family, personal history, and the customs and society of the Igbo, and the second and third sections introducing the influence of Britishcolonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community.

Things Fall Apart was followed by a sequel, No Longer at Ease (1960), originally written asthe second part of a larger work along with Arrow of God (1964). Achebe states that his two laternovels AManofthePeople (1966)and AnthillsoftheSavannah (1987),whilenotfeaturingOkonkwo'sdescendants,are spiritual successorstothepreviousnovelsinchroniclingAfricanhistory.

The novel Things Fall Apart (TFA) (1958) is written by the late Chinua Achebe (1930-2013)who was a Nigerian author. The setting of the novel is in the outskirts of Nigeria in a small fictionalvillage, Umuofia just before the arrival of white missionaries into their land. Due to the unexpectedarrival of white missionaries in Umuofia, the villagers do not know how to react to the sudden culturalchanges that the missionaries threaten to change with their new political structure and institutions.Hence, this essay aims at analyzing the effects of European colonisation on Igbo culture. Towards theend of the nineteenth century most European states migrated to Africa and other parts of the worldwhere they established colonies. Nigeria was amongst other African

nations that received visitors whowere on a colonizing mission; introducing their religion and culture that is later imposed on Igbo. Theculture of the people of Umuofia (Igbo culture) is immensely threatened by this change.Things FallApart by Chinua Achebe is a story about personal beliefs,customs, and also a story about an identityconfliction.Thereisstrugglebetweenfamily,culture,andreligionoftheIbotribes.Itshowshowthingsfallapartwhenthesebeliefsandcustomsarechallengedandhowapersonalidentitychangesforaman.ThenovelconcernsthelifeofOkonkwo,aleaderandlocalwrestlingchampionthroughoutthevillagesoftheIboethnicgroupofUmuofiainNigeria,Africa,histhreewives,andhischildren.Throughoutthenovel, Okonkwoisinternallychallengedandslowlybecomessomeonethatisnolongerrecognizablebyhisfriendsorhisfamily.WhenOkonkwofaceschange,hisidentitystartstofade.Okonkwoisoneofthemost powerful men in the Ibo tribe. In his tribe, he is both feared and honored. This is evident by thisquote,"Okonkwowaswellknownthroughoutthenninevillagesandevenbeyond.Hisfamerestedonthesolid personal achievements. He brought honor to his tribe by throwing Amalinze the Cat". Thissuggests that in Okonkwo's tribe, making a name for yourself in any way possible, even if that meansfightingandwrestlingtogetyourfameattainspower.Okonkwowantedtobeoneofthehighestleadersin the tribe, and was willing to do anything in order to achieve that goal. He loved his tribe, and theydefined him. Our concern, therefore, is to show how male power, honor, and the sense of duty haveledto the declineof Okonkwo's identity.

5.1 Outline of the novel:

The immensity of the novel takes place in Umuofia, a cluster of nine villages on the lower Niger. Umuofia is a powerful clan, skilled in war and with a great population, with proud traditions and advanced social institutions. Okonkwo has risen from nothing to a high position. Through hard work, he has become a great man among his people. He has taken three wives and his barn is full of yams, the staple crop. He rules his family with an iron fist. One day, a neighboring clan commits an offense against Umuofia. To avoid war, the offending clan gives Umuofia one virgin and one young boy. The girl is to become the offended party's new wife. The boy, whose name is Ikemefuna, is to be sacrificed, but not immediately. He lives in Umuofia for three years, and during that time he lives under Okonkwo's roof. He becomes like a part of Okonkwo's family. In particular, Nwoye, Okonkwo's oldest son, loves Ikemefuna like a brother. But eventually the Oracle calls for the boy's death, and a group of men take Ikemefuna away to kill him in the forest. Okonkwo, fearful of being perceived as soft-hearted and weak, participates in the boy's death. He does so despite the advice of the clan elders. Nwoye is spiritually broken by the event.

Okonkwo is shaken as well, but he continues with his drive to become a lord of his clan. He is constantly disappointed by Nwoye, but he has great love for his daughter Ezinma, his child by his second wife Ekwefi. Ekwefi has born ten children, but only Ezinma has survived. She loves the girl fiercely. Ezinma is sickly, and sometimes Ekwefi fears that Ezinma, too, will die. Late one night, the powerful Oracle of Umuofia brings Ezinma with her for a spiritual encounter with the earth goddess. Terrified, Ekwefi follows the Oracle at a distance, fearing harm might come to her child. Okonkwo follows, too.

Later, during a funeral for one of the great men of the clan, Okonkwo's gun explodes, killing a boy. In accordance with Umuofia's law, Okonkwo and his family must be exiled for seven years. Okonkwo bears the exile bitterly. Central to his beliefs is faith that a man masters his own destiny. But the accident and exile are proof that at times man cannot control his own fate, and Okonkwo is forced to start over again without the strength and energy of his youth. He flees with his family to Mbanto, his mother's homeland. There they are received by his mother's family, who treat them generously. His mother's family is headed by Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle, a generous and wise old man.

During Okonkwo's exile, the white man comes to both Umuofia and Mbanto. The missionaries arrive first, preaching a religion that seems mad to the Igbo people. They win converts, but generally the converts are men of low rank or outcasts. However, with time, the new religion gains momentum. Nwoye becomes a convert. When Okonkwo learns of Nwoye's conversion, he beats the boy. Nwoye leaves home. Okonkwo returns to Umuofia to find the clan sadly changed. The church has won some converts, some of whom are fanatical and disrespectful of clan custom. Worse, the white man's government has come to Umuofia. The clan is no longer free to judge its own; a District Commissioner judge's cases in ignorance. He is backed by armed power.

During a religious gathering, a convert unmasks one of the clan spirits. The offense is grave, and in response the clan decides that the church will no longer be allowed in Umuofia. They tear the

building down. Soon afterward, the District Commissioner asks the leaders of the clan, Okonkwo among them, to come see him for a peaceful meeting. The leaders arrive, and are quickly seized. In prison, they are humiliated and beaten, and they are held until the clan pays a heavy fine.

After a release of the men, the clan calls a meeting to decide whether they will fight or try to live peacefully with the whites. Okonkwo wants war. During the meeting, court messengers come to order the men to break up their gathering. The clan meetings are the heart of Umuofia's government; all decisions are reached democratically, and an interference with this institution means the end of the last vestiges of Umuofia's independence. Enraged, Okonkwo kills the court messenger. The other court messengers escape, and because the other people of his clan did not seize them, Okonkwo knows that his people will not choose war. His act of resistance will not be followed by others. Embittered and grieving for the destruction of his people's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo returns home and hangs himself.

Main Themes in Things Fall Apart

The novel Things Fall Apart is based on a story of a tragic hero of a rich cultured society of Igbo tribes. Chinua Achebe encircled many aspects of that culture before arrival of white missionaries. Achebe highlighted the consequences of white missionaries on that society who were firmly adhered to their social norms. Towards the end of the story, readers witness many events by which Igbo society begins to fall apart.

Main Themes in Things Fall Apart are: theme of gender and muscularity, father vs. son, flexibility vs. rigidity, resistance of cultural change, theme of fear, and complexity of Igbo culture.

Theme of Gender and Muscularity in Things Fall Apart

The Importance and superiority of male gender in Igbo culture is one of the major theme of the novel. If a man has no muscularity, he is considered as a woman as we learned in the novel that in Igbo tribes if a man who has not taken any of the expensive, prestige-indicating titles is agbala, which also means "woman." The same fear was hovering over Okonkwo when a man says him that your father (Unoka) was agbala. Okonkwo associates masculinity with aggression and feels that anger is the only emotion that a strong man should display. For this reason, he frequently beats his children and wives.

In contrast to Okonkwo, Obierika was a man who thought about things. Obierika refuses to accompany the men who were going to kill Ikemefuna, Okonkwo was told not to follow Ikemefuna killing because he raised him at his home for three years and due to paternal feelings, he should avoid his killing. However, Okonkwo not only volunteers to join the party that will execute Ikemefuna but also violently stabs him with his machete simply because he is afraid of appearing weak.

People of Mbanta were less rigid and violent than the people of Umofia. Therefore, Okonkwo during seven-year exile consider his maternal relatives on fault for their preference of negotiation, compliance, and avoidance over anger and bloodshed.

Father vs. Son in Things Fall Apart

The novel Things Fall Apart fusses two significant change between father and son. Firstly we observer contrast between father and his son when we come to know between Unoka (father) and Okonkwo (son).

Unoka do not like wars and bloodshed, nor has he distinguished himself as a man in any other way. Unoka takes interest in arts and fun and prefers to drink and play music with his friends. However, his son is in contrast to his father. He is pure warrior and do not like music and entertainment. He only loves to beat his children and wives to make them strong.

Just as Okonkwo vs. Unoka, we see contrast between Okonkwo and his son Nwoye. Nwoye is like his grandfather and do not follow his father. Okonkwo is not ready to accept any change in the religion and traditions. However, Nwoye likes to accept change and joins white missionaries. Although Okonkwo feels ashamed of both his father and his son, the novel suggests that Okonkwo is perhaps more of an anomaly than either Unoka or Nwoye.

Flexibility vs. Rigidity

In cultural clashes, we come across different characters who have their own opinion regarding culture and traditions. Okonkwo, protagonist of the novel, is inflexible character and his rigidity leads him towards his doom even before arrival of European missionaries. The arrival of a new culture only hastens Okonkwo's tragic fate.

On the other hand, Obierika, a true friend of Okonkwo, is very flexible character. He is a sensible and thinking person who does not advocate the use of force to counter the colonizers and the opposition. H is also against many norms of his own Igbo culture. When Umofia's people gather to kill Ikemefuna, he does not participate and condemns violence. He is also against the violent resistant for change. Rather, he has an open mind about change in culture. How he comments about the arrival of missionaries: "Who knows what may happen tomorrow?"

Resistance of Cultural Change

Thing Fall Apart is a culture-based story that deals with how the prospect and reality of change affect individuals and society. However, Igbo culture was very complex in its custom and traditions, and with the arrival of Europeans, it became a mess. There were tensions among individuals about whether change should be privileged over tradition or they should remain adhered to the conventional norms.

Okonkwo, for example, resists the new religious and political norms proposed by Europeans. According to Okonkwo, Europeans are not manly and if he himself joins or even tolerate them, he will not be manly. Okonkwo's resistance of cultural change is also due to his fear of losing societal status because he has gained many achievements in his culture dependent upon the traditional standards by which society judges him and change in culture may lose his worth.

After change in community by European Missionaries, converts enjoy a more elevated status and even Okonkwo's son joins them afraid of his fathers' threat. Many villagers are in between state to resist or embrace change. Converts are excited about the opportunities and techniques brought by missionaries. Even Obierika is also not rigid like Okonkwo to resist change in culture.

Theme of Fear in Things Fall Apart

Fear played an important role in shaping tragic fall of the protagonist. Fear was not only issue of Okonkwo, but there are many characters in the novel who became victim of fear. Okonkwo feared from weakness and failure like his lazy, shameful father. He was a brave man but fear of weakness haunted on his mind though out the life.

Many of the characters suffer from fear of some sort. Ekwefi fears losing her daughter because she already lost nine children in early age. When Ekwefi's daughter Ezinma became sick, she always feared to lose her. Nwoye was lazy like his grandfather and his father Okonkwo beats him every time to make him strong. He fears his father's wrath and joins white missionaries. Fear in this novel leads characters to behave in negative ways that can bring the wrath of the gods, guilt, and the community disapproval upon them.

Complexity of Igbo Culture

Complexity of Igbo culture is one of the main themes in Things Fall Apart. Igbo culture was full of complexities and conflicts even before the arrival of the Europeans missionaries. There are lot of aspects that reveal Igbo culture that include: the social and family rituals, justice codes and the trial process, food production, the marriage customs, religious beliefs, supernatural practices, shared leadership, and the opportunities for virtually every man to climb the clan's ladder of success through his own efforts.

5.2 Theme of Cultural Destruction

Cultural clash is a conflict arising from the interaction of the people with different culture values. When two people of a different cultural or background meet and do not understand each other than the conflicts arises each other. Every single culture has its own traditions, habits, religions, languages and many other common features. Crucial condition of peaceful coexistence between various cultures is a mutual respect and willingness to accept the differences. Otherwise, it elicits the cultural clashes. The purpose of this paper is to identify the cultural clashes in postcolonial Africa and demonstrate its reflection in Achebe`s Things Fall Apart.The main objective of the writing this novel is to acquaint the outside world about the Ibo culture tradition as well as to make his own people realize that their tradition culture contained much that was valuable which must be integrated with the new culture that was coming into existence under the powerful impact of the western complex culture.

Things Fall Apart as Post-ColonialNovel Post-ColonialLiteratureisabodyofliterary writings that react to the discourseofcolonization.Post-colonialliteratureoften involves writings that deal with issueofde-colonizationorthepoliticalandcultureindependentofpeopleformerlysubjugated to colonial rule. Post-Colonialliteraturealsoattemptstocritiquethecontemporary post-colonial

discourse thathas been over correct times. It attempts toassimilatethisveryemergenceofpost colonialismanditsliteraryexpressionitself.

After reading the novel we can know that culture conflict rose from misunderstanding between two different cultures. The white men considered themselves that they superior than black people. And they thought that it is our supreme duty to enlighten black people who believe on superstition. Thewhite people have a notion that African people have no history and they want to make their own history of civilization. Achebe should become teacher and guide of the people and should use the novel as vehicle to disseminate ideas and beliefs among the people. He suggested the people that the social function of the novel should be different from the European concept of idea. Human beings are both acted on by culture and act back and so generate new culture forms of meaning. They undergo change alongside changes in the economic, social and political organization of society.

With the change of their culture thepeopleofAfricaforgottheimportancetheirtraditionandvalues.Theywerefollowing way and habits of white peoplewhich ultimately became the cause of theirdestruction.Okonkwoisthemainprotagonist, who perished his life for thesaketo defend his culture. Themainthemeofthenovelisculture clash or culture misunderstanding.When white men came to Nigeria sowedtheseedsofChristianreligionandultimatelythemisunderstandingstartedbetween two groups.Forster`s A Passageto India also depicts the conflict betweenthe Indian and British. One can see thatEnglishtreattheIndianwithlackofrespect and the Indian seem to expect it.Culture misunderstanding is turned into amajorthemeofthenovel.Different cultures, ideas and expectations regardinghospitality, social and role of religion dailylife responsible for the misunderstandingbetween English and Indians. At last thismisunderstandingturnedintoacultureclash because the English people thoughtthattheyaresuperiorthanIndian.

Okonkworeturnsafterjustsevenyears of the exile to find is village almostunrecongible.He finds his entire villagechanged. The white people built churchesand schools. His Son Nowye changed hisreligion and adopted Christian.Rushdie'snovel Midnight`s children also portrays themulticultural.AtthebeginningofthestorySalmanRushdiedescribesAdamAziz, Salem's grandfather. He spent fiveyears in Germany, where he was studyingto be a doctor. "Now, returning, he sawthroughtravelledeyes."AdamAzizisbackathomebuthedoesn'tfeelcomfortable at his birthplace. He suddenlyrealizesthat"theyearsinGermany hadreturnedhimtoahostileenvironment."Rushdieportraysacharacterthatis'caught' between the two cultures. Havingexperienceddifferentlife,differentEuropeanmanners,cultureandthinking,his doubts keep nibbling at his mind. Thissituationclearlyillustratesthemainproblemofmany Indiansandthatisasearchingofindividualfor hisidentity.ThatsearchingconfrontsAdamwithadilemma whether to accept newly acquiredexperiences on the one hand or whether tostay deeply connectedwiththetraditionsofhis countryon theotherhand.

Achebewrote novel to highlight the social and religious life of Nigeria. Things Fall Apart provides readers with an insight of Igbo society right before the white missionaries' invasion on their land. He portrays the customs, habits, ritual and social life of the Igbo people. Rushdie`s novel Satanic Verses provoked great controversy in the Muslimscommunity for what some Muslims believed were demonstrations in the United Kingdom. Rushdie was accused for freedom of speech. As the controversy spread, the importance of the book was banned in India and Islamic countries. This book was against the religion of Muslim and fatwa was issued to Rushdie. Following the fatwa, Rushdie was put under police protection by the British Government

The novel can be studied at three differentlevels:

1:Itcanbestudiedasthetragicandmovingstoryofaproudclansmanwhoperishedintheattempttodefendh isculture.

2: The novel is sociological oranthropological study of the Igbo culture.3:Thenovelcanbestudiedasaclashbetweentwocultures;infact,thisculture clashis themainthemeofthenovel.

ThenovelshowsthelifeofOkonkwo a leader and the local wrestlingchampion in Umoufia one of the fictionalgroupofthenine villagesinNigeriainhabited by the Igbo people. It describeshisfamilyandpersonalhistory,thecustoms and society of the Igbo and theinfluenceofBritishcolonialismandChristianmissionariesontheIgbocommunityduringthelate19thce ntury.TheIgboculture is represented by the people of village Umuofia is primitive and traditional.

They had no knowledge of theploughandsoitwasitssocialorganization.Theyhadnocontactwithoutsidetheworld.Inspiteofbackwardness, people were prosperous andtheylivedahappyandcontentedlife.Their way as depicted in the novel is freefromdailytensions,conflictthatplague thelivesofpeopleofeverymoderncivilizedsociety.

In the initial the missionaries camewith Bible in their hands in the Umoufiaregion. Their objective was to destroy theforcethathasheptthetribalsocietyinexistence for centuries. The real process ofdisintegrationbeganwhenthecolonialpower began to impose its own laws andcompletely ignored the tradition ways oftheir lives. The colonial powers set up itsown administration, courts of justice andalsointroducetradeandcommerce.Themissionariesopenedschoolsandthosewhofinishededucationgotjobintheadministration and some of them becamepriestsandschoolteachers.Withtheintroductionoftradeandcommerceordinarypersonsbecameprosperousbyselling palmoil,palm wine ,coca andotherproduct ofland.

Okonkwosays: "I heard. But I have also heard that AbamPeople were weak andfoolish. Why didthey not fight back? Had they no guns andmatches? We would be coward to compareourselveswiththemenofAbam.Theirfather had never dared to stand before ourancestors. We mustfightthese men anddrivethem from ourland".

ReturningfromexileOkonkwofindshisvillagechangedby presenceofthewhitepeople.Heandothertriballeaders try to reclaim their hold on theirnative land by destroying a local Christianchurch. In return, the leader of the whitegovernment takes them in prisoner. As aresultthepeopleofUmuofiafinallygather. However, Okonkwo was one of thefewandperhapsonetheonlyonewhowent on believing the white man must bedrivenoutbyforce.Onlywhenhehadkilledthegovernmentmessenger,herelied that as for as he was concerned, his fightagainstthewhitemanwas over.

WhenthelocalleaderscametoOkonkwo's house to take him to court theyfound that Okonkwo has hanged himself.Heultimatelycommittedsuicideratherthanhetiredinacolonialcourt.Okonkow`sactionhaverui nedthereputationandstatus as it is against the teaching of theIgboto commit suicide.

5.3 Theme of Hybridity and Marginalization

In Things Fall Apart hybridity can be discussed through different characters because they are all more or less affected by the colonizer's ways and rules. Even the novel's name Things Fall Apart implies the complicated situation of combining new traditions with old ones. It indicates the problems which arrived together with the missionaries. The Igbo population is forced to increasingly accept the new standards: "Hybridity is the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life" (Bhabha 314). Hybridity stops the old traditions and way of life and creates a mixture of a new one; something the people in the village of Umuofia learn when the missionaries and government bring new rules, regulations and religion to the land. However, they do not see it as a tremendous threat because: "many of them believed that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last" (Achebe 105).

They underestimated the new culture. Some of the villagers embraced the new culture and some resisted it.

Okonkwo's resistance against the new culture alienates him in his own village. When he arrives, after seven years in exile, he has troubles understanding why the villagers have not fought the colonial power: "What is it that has happened to our people? Why did they not fight back?" (Achebe 128). His rigid attitude towards the colonizers and his lack of understanding towards his fellow tribe members brings him into a position where the colonial power becomes even stronger. He finds himself in a position where his attitude makes him lonely and confused. He becomes more and more a loner in the old society.

Nwoye finds comfort in the new religion and finds it to be more compassionate than his old society's values. He is unsure about attending church at first, but his curiosity and feelings of loneliness make him go to mass. His advancement in the church gets him a new position and he becomes a teacher. At first the students who were sent to church were not prominent members of the community. However, the people changed their mind and sent more people to school: "If Umuofia failed to send her children to school, strangers would come from other places to rule them" (Achebe 132). They need to surrender to get some kind of control.

Nwoye becomes a part of the villagers‟ adaption to the colonizer's way.

Enoch on the other hand loves the position he has gained in the new society. He feels he is a powerful and a prominent member in the congregation: "On Sundays he always imagined that the sermon was preached for the benefit of his enemies" (Achebe 135). He is quick to pass judgment on the other members of the church. The new community has placed him in position where he is content with his life. When he violates the old traditions he hopes it will start a holy war. He has no second thoughts about turning against his old community.

When using a postcolonial critical approach, it is possible to detect similarities in Tracks and Things Fall Apart. Even if they describe different experiences from two different continents, both novels describe the complicated situations people need to adapt to when things change. With the help of the three concepts ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity this essay has focused upon how the characters react to the colonial and postcolonial pressure.

Summary

- Chinua Achebe was born in Ogidi, in Eastern Nigeria, in 1930. His father was one of the early Ibo converts to Christianity who was evangelist and teacher in the Church Missionary Society's village school. Chinua attended his father's school and have started to learn English at about the age of eight, went on to Government College, in 1944. In 1948 he entered University College and began to study medicine in Ibadan where he graduated in 1953. After teaching for a few months, he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1954 as a Talks Producer and rose, by way of being Head of the Talks Section (1957) and Controller, Estern Region (1959), to become Director of External Services in 1961. His job took him on long journeys about Nigeria and, as he drove, his mind was busy reviewing the history and life of his people and casting this mass of unique material in the classical fictional moulds he had studied at university. This resulted, in 1958, in the publication of his first novel, Things fall Apart. It was an immediate success and he won the Margaret Wrong Prize.No Longer at Ease was published in 1960 and won the Nigerian National Trophy. Arrow of God came out in 1964 and his fourth, and so far his last, novel, A Man of the People, appeared in 1966.
- Culturalclash is a conflict arising from the interaction of the people with different culture values. When two people of a different cultural or background meet and do not understand each other than the conflicts arises each other. Every single culture has its own traditions, habits, religions, languages and many other common features. Crucial condition of peaceful coexistence between various cultures is a mutual respect and willingness to accept the differences. Otherwise, it elicits the cultural clashes. The purpose of this paper is to identify the cultural clashes in postcolonial Africa and demonstrate its reflection in Achebe`s Things Fall Apart.The main objective of the writing this novel is to acquaint the outside world about the Ibo culture tradition as well as to make his own people realize that their tradition culture contained much that was valuable which must be integrated with the new culture that was coming into existence under the powerful impact of the western complex culture.
- Hybridity is not difficult to detect when using a postcolonial critical approach and reading a novel which describes the problematic situations when two cultures mix. Both Achebe and Erdrich have presented many different ways to express such cultural mixing. It is possible to find it effecting most situations, whether it is Nanapush, who needs to get passed his fear of signing documents, or in Pauline's case it is the new religion that replaces the old mysticism. The church and education play an important part in the societal change. Nwoye and Enoch become a part of the new religion. Okonkwo on the other hand resists the new world in every way he can and he finds it difficult to understand his fellow tribe members‟ choice when they do not want to fight.

Glossary

a just war Societies throughout history have rationalized certain wars as justified for religious or cultural reasons. For example, in the fifth century, St. Augustine of the early Christian church wrote extensively about the just war; the Crusades of the late Middle Ages were initiated as holy wars; and today's Muslim word *jihad* means holy war.

kernels the inner, softer part of a nut, fruit pit, etc. Here,found in the fleshy remains of the palm nut after its husk is crushed for palm-oil. The kernels can be processed by machine for the extraction of a very fine oil.

kites birds of prey with long, pointed wings and, usually, a forked tail; they prey especially on insects, reptiles, and small mammals.

kola nut the seed of the cola, an African tree. The seed contains caffeine and yields an extract; it represents vitality and is used as a courteous, welcoming snack, often with alligator pepper.

leprosy a progressive infectious disease caused by a bacterium that attacks the skin, flesh, nerves, and so on; it is characterized by nodules, ulcers, white scaly scabs, deformities, and the eventual loss of sensation, and is apparently communicated only after long and close contact.

making inyangaflaunting or showing off.

markets Igbo weeks are four days long, and the market day is on the first of day each week; therefore, three or four markets is a period of twelve to sixteen days.

Mbaino This community name means *four settlements*.

Mbanta The name means small town and is where Okonkwo's mother comes from, his motherland, beyond the borders of Mbaino (Ikemefuna's original home).

monkey tricks possibly a racial slur directed at the natives.

ndichie elders.

the new dispensation the new system; the new organization of society under British influence.

Nna-ayitranslated as *our father*; a greeting of respect.

nso-ania sin against the earth goddess, Ani.

the nuts of the water of heaven hailstones.

nzaa small but aggressive bird.

obi a hut within a compound.

ogbanjea child possessed by an evil spirit that leaves the child's body upon death only to enter into the mother's womb to be reborn again within the next child's body.

Ogbuefi a person with a high title, as in Ogbuefi Ezeugo (the orator) and Ogbuefi Udo (the man whose wife was killed in Mbaino).

ogenea gong.

ogwu medicine, magic.

Okonkwo The name implies male pride and stubbornness.

Okoye an everyman name comparable to John Doe in English. Okoye represents all the people to whom Unoka owes money.

Oracle the place where, or medium by which, the deities are consulted; here, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves.

ostracize to banish, bar, exclude, etc. from a group through rejection by general consent of the members.

osua class of people in Igbo culture considered outcasts, not fit to associate with free-born members of the clan.

Osugo The name means a low-ranked person.

ozoa class of men holding an ozotitle; it also refers to the ritual which accompanies the granting of a title to a person.

palaver a conference or discussion, as originally between African natives and European explorers or traders.

palm fronds leave of a palm tree. Here, they are tied together in clusters for "beating the ground" or the legs and feet of the pushing crowd.

pestle a tool, usually club-shaped, used to pound or grind substances in a mortar, or very hard bowl.

plantain a hybrid banana plant that is widely cultivated in the Western Hemisphere.

prophets of Baal Mr. Smith are comparing the pagan worship of the warrior god Baal, mentioned in the Old Testament (I Kings 18) to the Igbo religion. The Israelites saw the worship of Baal as a rival to their worship of God, causing the prophet Elijah to challenge the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

python a very large, nonvenomous snake of Asia, Africa, and Australia, that squeezes its prey to death.

raffia 1) a palm tree of Madagascar, with large, pinnate leaves. 2) fiber from its leaves, used as string or woven into baskets, hats, and so on.

resolute having or showing a fixed, firm purpose; determined; resolved; unwavering.

sacrament of Holy Communion the most sacred ritual of participating Christians.

saltpeter potassium nitrate; used in the preparation of snuff (also in gunpowder and fireworks).

sharecropping working land for a share of the crop, especially as a tenant farmer. Here, Okonkwo works as a sharecropper to obtain seed-yams.

silk-cotton tree any of several large, tropical, trees (genera *Bombax* and *Ceiba*) of the bombax family that have capsular fruits with silky hairs around the seeds. Here, the tree is revered because it contains spirits of good children as yet unborn.

singlets men's undershirts, especially the sleeveless kind.

snuff a preparation of powdered tobacco that is inhaled by sniffing, is chewed, or is rubbed on the gums.

superfluous being more than is needed, useful, or wanted; surplus; excessive.

taboo any social prohibition or restriction that results from convention or tradition.

tie-tiea vine used like a rope; from Pidgin English *to tie*.

Tufia-a!This sound represents spitting and cursing simultaneously.

twenty and ten years Igbo counting may not have a unique number for thirty, which is thus counted as twenty and ten. Similarly, in French, seventy is counted as sixty-ten, and eighty is four twenties.

twins two born at the same birth. Here, according to Igbo custom, twins are considered evil and must be placed in earthenware pots and left to die in the forest.

Udo peace.

udua clay pot.

ulia liquid made from seeds that make the skin pucker; used for temporary tattoo-like decorations.

umuadadaughters who have married outside the clan.

umunnathe extended family and kinsmen.

umunnathe extended family, the clan.

Umuofia kwenua shout of approval and greeting that means *United Umuofia!*

Umuofia The community name, which means *children of the forest* and *aland undisturbed by European influences*.

Unoka Okonkwo's father's name; its translation, *home is supreme*, implies a tendency to stay home and loaf instead of achieve fame and heroism.

a war of blamein Chapter2, the villagers state that a "fight of blame" (which Okonkwo expects the peacemakers to label this fight against the strangers) would never be sanctioned by their Oracle,

which approves only a "just war." Therefore, what Okonkwo is considering may go beyond even the clan's traditions — a fight for which they may not have full justification from their gods.

Week of Peace in Umofia, a sacred week in which violence is prohibited.

wherewithal that with which something can be done; necessary means.

Who is the chief among you? The kotma (court messenger) guards see by the anklets that all six leaders own titles and joke that they must not be worth much.

yam foo-foo pounded and mashed yam pulp.

yam pottage a watery gruel made of yams.

Yes, sah*Yes sir*; the form may be Pidgin English and illustrates how the native-born court messengers submitted to the orders of their white bosses — at least on the surface.

Self Assessment

1. Before dying, Ikemefuna thinks of Okonkwo as

A. a betrayer
B. a vessel of bravery and strength
C. an evil spirit
D. his real father

2. In Okonkwo's determination to be a perfect example of manhood, he begins to reveal the consequences of his tragic flaw, which is

A. greed
B. narrowmindedness
C. the fear of weakness
D. the pursuit of physical beauty

3. Like many other African writers, Achebe believes that artistic and literary works must deal primarily with

A. expression of the individual psyche
B. nature and the deities that rule its various aspects
C. the problems of society
D. truth and beauty

4. Nwoye questions the customs that condone the killing of twin babies and Ikemefuna. He seems to find the answers in

A. Christianity
B. the District Commissioner
C. the Evil Forest
D. the Oracle

5. The personal god that each individual is given by the Creator at the moment of conception is called

A. chi
B. nza
C. udo
D. uli

6. Okonkwo and his family are exiled for seven years, because his accidental killing of a clansman is considered a crime against

A. Chukwu, the Creator
B. humanity
C. the earth goddess
D. the village

7. When Okonkwo realizes that his clansmen will never go to war against the British, he knows that everything has fallen apart for him. His next action is to

A. commit suicide
B. join his clansmen in accepting the British
C. kill as many British as he can
D. move away to Mbaino

8. Which of the following is not considered to be one of the key outside influences that enabled the British to move into Umuofia?

A. Commerce
B. Government
C. Higher education
D. Religion

9. Who said the following: "We say he [Mr. Smith] is foolish because he does not know our ways, and perhaps he says we are foolish because we do not know his."

A. The egwugwu leader
B. The lepers
C. The Oracle
D. The prophets

10. Who said the following: "He does the most extraordinary things, and cannot explain why he does them.... He is not controlled by logic."

A. Baker
B. Basden
C. Bosworth
D. Brown

11. Who said the following: "[I] had something better to do."

A. Obierika
B. Ogbuefi
C. Ojiubo
D. Okonkwo

12. Who said the following: "My father, they have killed me!"

A. Agbala
B. Ezinma
C. Ikemefuna
D. Nwoye

13. Who is the Cat?

A. One of the spirit gods the villagers believe in
B. A great wrestler whom Okonkwo beat as a young man
C. Okonkwo's father, Unoka
D. Okonkwo is called the Cat when he wrestles

14. Why did people laugh at Okonkwo's father, Unoka?

A. Because he slept in the public square and begged for money
B. Because he was short, skinny, and spoke in a high voice
C. Because he was poor, a "loafer," and borrowed money without paying it back
D. Because his yam harvests were always pathetic

15. What does Okonkwo think about his son, Nwoye?

A. That he is industrious and takes after his father
B. That he is sullen and depressed
C. That even though he's only 12 he's already a man
D. That he may be lazy and lacking ambition

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	D	2.	C	3.	C	4.	A	5.	A
6.	C	7.	A	8	C	9.	A	10.	B
11.	A	12.	C	13.	B	14.	B	15.	D

Review Questions

1. Supply the plot of the novel *Things Fall an Apart*.
2. What are the key themes of the novel Things Fall Apart? Use references from the novel in support of your answer.
3. Comment on the theme of cultural destruction in the novel *Things Fall Apart*.
4. Comment on the theme of hybridity and marginalization in the novel *Things Fall Apart*.
5. How does Ikemefuna become Okonkwo's adopted son?
6. Why is Ezinma so special to Okonkwo?
7. Why does Nwoye convert to Christianity?
8. What causes Okonkwo's exile from Umuofia?
9. Why does Okonkwo hang himself?
10. Why are the villagers shocked when Okonkwo beats his wife during the Week of Peace?
11. Why are the villagers excited whenever the locusts come?
12. Why does Nwoye admire Ikemefuna?
13. What warning does Ogbuefi Ezeudu give Okonkwo about killing Ikemefuna?
14. Why does Okonkwo kill Ikemefuna?
15. Why do the villagers burn Okonkwo's buildings and kill his animals?
16. Why are the villagers confused by Mr. Brown's ideas?
17. What is an egwugwu, and why are the villagers horrified when Enoch unmasks one?
18. Why does Okonkwo kill the District Commissioner's messenger?
19. Why can't Okonkwo be buried.

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Unit 06: Chinua Achebe: Things Fall Apart

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Objectives

After reading of this unit students will be able to:

- Know theabout Chinua Achebe and his contribution to African Literature
- Understand the theme of Theme of Gender Discrimination
- Understand the Conflict between Tradition and Modernity

Introduction

Chinua Achebe is Nigeria's well-known novelist and probably the best-known writer of fiction from black Africa. The setting of Things Fall Apart (1958) is Igbol and in Eastern Nigeria just before and after the coming of the white man. The time can be narrowed further to the two decades spanning the turn of the nineteenth century when the British missionaries and administrators first penetrated the villages east of the Niger (Turkington, 1977, p.7).In this novel, Achebe offers an almost documentary account of the daily life, customs, ceremonies and beliefs of the Igbo people without evasion or romanticizing (Pala, 2017, p.1895). His objective in his first novel was not only to recreate an authentic picture of the traditional Igbo life, but also to reassert and re-establish its value and beauty. Literature acts as a tool to represent „life" and also to make "life" a social reality and easier to comprehend (Wellek and Warren, 1968, p. 94). As such, Things Fall Apart is regarded as a means of rehabilitating the African psyche, which had been severely damaged in its confrontation with the colonial invaders. It is also a means of destroying his society's acceptance of racial and cultural inferiority. The traditional Igbo society is depicted as a very well organized society where people live in harmony with their environment and their gods.

When the white man and the missionaries come, the Igbo people welcome them like good strangers. They give them a plot of land to build their house and their church. When they settle down, they ask the Igbo people to leave their traditional religion to the detriment of Christianity. The Igbo people refuse and start fighting against Christians to protect their land and their tradition. This cultural rap is the core of the conflict between tradition and modernity. In this strife, the main character Okonkwo is the embodiment of the Igbo tradition and the white man symbolizes western culture and its institutions. What are the causes of the conflict? How does Achebe represent this cultural clash? What is the implicit meaning of the clash between tradition and modernity? Our analysis focuses on two main points: pre-colonial Igbo society and modern Igbo society. The study of the novel, some critics believe, is the study of the society from which it emerges (Gikandi, 1987). The relationship between literature and society is a symbiotic one. To help in this analysis, sociological criticism and semiotics will be used.

The inception of Gender studies or Feminist criticism held in 1960s as a discipline of literary theory. It established the new perspectives in literary culture. Before hundred years of this inception, there were writers--male and female--like Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill who contributed to feminist writing; but in 1960s it formed the Women's Movement. From the time being many texts were discussed with feminist perspectives. A lot of material has been made available to study a text by gender point of view. In all cultures and societies on the earth-some might be exceptions (very rare) - there is gender discrimination, man and woman are considered different not only by biological but by socio-cultural, economic and politically they are treated different. Patriarchy is a system that indicates the rule of father; in broader sense the head of the family is a male person who rules and set rules for the family, patriarchy became a strong system in all cultures to accumulate and gain power in the society; it commenced the power patterns to rule the family and at large the society. The opposite system to patriarchy is matriarchy which doesn't have power patterns.

6.1 Theme of Gender Discrimination in the Novel

The theme of gender discrimination highlights and discloses the gender discrimination in Igbo community in Nigeria as it represents the all cultural communities in the world which have patriarchy as a dominant form of gender differentiation. Things Fall Apart is a novel by Nigerian postcolonial author Chinua Achebe and Igbo is a socio-cultural ethnic community portrayed in the novel. We find many routine activities of Igbo people that depict and maintain the gender discrimination. Both extreme peaks-one is to worship woman as a god in the form of Agadinwayi and other is suppression of their status and power are seen in Igbo society. Here, the focus is laid on gender roles, masculinity, femininity, socio-cultural status of male and female, traditional marginality of women and deprivation of political rights of women to clarify and explain the gender discrimination in*Things FallApart*.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), JohnStuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and the American Margaret Fuller's*WomenintheNineteenthCentury*(1845) hasstarted the struggle for identity of women writing imposing the socio-political, economic rights of women. These writers and their works formed the base for feminist criticism and gender studies. A lot of questions were raised against the primitive notions of man-woman relationship- inferiority of women imposed by the norms of society. The subjugation of women in socio-political and economic construct all over the world is disclosed in later writing of women. In 1960s, there formed a Women's Movement to make women aware of their status, rights, duties and responsibilities towards society and it is also maintained that she is the integral part of all the activities around her. The movement increased the confidence of women and made them able to fight against injustices to them. Krishnaswami highlights the traditional role of women and the view of society towards women:

"In all traditions women have always been considered inferior and incapable of any serious thinking; irrespective of religion, country, race, the period in which they live, more or less the same perception and sex-stereotyping is seen in language and literature." (Krishnaswami, et al. p.74).

The traditional point of view towards woman is erased by the movement and new conceptions and norms about women started to set. Gender studies is one of the off shoots of feminist criticism, more feminist criticism includes Gender Studies as a chief branch. Here it is necessary to make distinction between gender and sex to understand the Gender studies at length. The difference between sex and gender is made by Kate Millet's in Sexual Politics published in 1970. Krishnaswami argues:

"Kate Millet's Sexual Politics (1970) makes a distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'; sex is determined biologically whereas gender is culturally/ socially/ psychologically constructed through sex-role stereotyping and historical conditioning. Millet argues that women as much as men are responsible in perpetuating the sex-role images. She analyses the repressive role of the male and submissive role of the female." (Krishnaswami, et at. pp 75-76).

This article explains and tries to reconstruct the role of women, ill-treatment given to them and discrimination in societies like Igbo representing societies existed all over the world. Things Fall Apart is a novel published in 1958 in English Language by Nigerian postcolonial writer Chinua Achebe portraying the life- development and fall of the protagonist Okonkwo. With the main plot of the novel, Achebe dared to unmask the follies and foibles in Igbo cultural society. He also adhered the traditional cultural heritage of the Igbo society with its goodness. Achebe depicted the role, position and status given to women in Igbo community. There we find many nuances as well as vivid references in the novel marginalizing the role, status and position of women.

Patriarchy is a system having the rule of father in family or the head of the family is a male person. Male is a dominant in all in family and society. Women or female doesn't have any authority to lead a family or society, according to Igbo belief. Igbo considered that women should not interfere in social, political and economic matters. Man is able to handle all the things without the help of woman; she is only a sharing partner to man. She must agree with each and every opinion of man as man always takes right and good decisions regarding all. These facts are shown in the novel.

Okonkwo is the protagonist of the novel as he is a male. He is the supremeperson of his family. His development as a successful and powerful person of the clan and his fall as a man cover all patterns of gender discrimination. A successful and powerful person must have more than one wife. This is the symbol of power, prestige and after all success.

"Okoye (neighbour to Okonkwo's father) was also a musician. He played onthe ogene. But he was not a failure like Unoka (father to Okonkwo), He had a large, barn full of yams and he had three wives. And now he was going to take the Idemili title, the third highest in the land."(Achebe,p. 6).

Okoye'swealthandpositionisnotcompletewithoutmentionofhisthreewives.Againwehavesamecasere gardingOkonkwo.

"He wasa wealthy farmer and had twobarnsfull ofyams,and hadjustmarriedhis third wife."(Achebe, p.11).

Igbo has the counting system of wives--first wife, second wife, third wife, andso on--as we count things. Even they do not mention the name of wife, just they call first, second and third wife, this is what we can say that the roots of gender discrimination lay in the deep socio-cultural psyche of the Igbo community. It is a belief in Igbo society that he is a wealthy person who has more and more wives-more wife'swealthierperson.

"There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had three huge barns,nine wives and thirty children, His name was Nwakibie and he had taken the highest but one title which a man could take in the clan. It was for this man that Okonkwoworkedto earnhis first seedyams."(Achebe,p.11).

The misconception--more wives wealthier person--continued throughout thenovel. Achebe does not shy from depicting the injustices of gender discrimination of Igbo society. It is said that no more or less than Victorian England and many other countries of the world of the same era, the Igbo are deeply patriarchal. Igbo is a highly men ruler society where women has to follow the rules made by men. Living in a society where men rule, Okonkwo has a patriarchal attitude towards his family and does not express his love and affection. He thinks if he shows love and affection, it would be a womanish quality and disgraces his maleness.

"Okonkworuledhishouseholdwithaheavyhand.Hiswives,especiallytheyoungest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children."(Achebe,p. 12).

Itisvivid inthe thinking of Okonkwo that one mustbe a fiery temperedperson so that he can rule, especially over woman. To beat woman is a common thing in Igbo society, once Okonkwo's youngest wife went to plait her hair to neighbor's house and okonkwo came to know that; with this trivial reason of going out of the house, Okonkwo has beaten his wife severely. He didn't mind the Week of Peace in which one could not beat or make violence to anyone. It is a traditional, cultural rule of Igbo, but Okonkwo never thought about that and violated the tradition. After the event, he repented for his miss-behave. Okonkwo is a furious and woman dominant person. The dialogue between Okonkwo and his wife indicates that how the power of expression accumulated in the hands of male person in a family, Ikemefuna, a small boy brought to Okonkwo's house, Okonkwo called his most senior wife and handed the boy to her; the dialogueruns as:

"He belongs to the clan', he told her, 'so look after him.' 'Is he staying longwithus?'sheasked,'Dowhatyouaretold,woman;Okonkwothunderedandstammered. 'When did you become one of the ndichie of Umofia? And so Nwoye'smothertook Ikemefunatoherhutandasked nomorequestions."(Achebe,p. 14).

Thus, women don't have right to ask any question to men. The voice ofwomenisalwaysneglected and unheard. The above dialogue talks about the suppressive role of man and submissive nature of woman. The language employed here, is a language of a ruler and not the ruled one. Ezinma is the sickly daughter of Okonkwo and Ekwefi. She is Okonkwo's favorite child; even though she is a girl but Okonkwo frequently longs and laments that Ezinma should have been a boy. Here, the contract is seen in brother and sister, Nwoye is Okonkwo's eldest son. He is not very much like his father and is more interested in the stories his mother tells than in stories of war. Okonkwo worries that Nwoye is taking after his grandfather Unoka, and treats him roughly, which ultimately causes Nwoye to hate him, thinking ofmasculinityverythroughoutdifferentsocieties,Okonkwo views aggression and action as masculinity.

Gender differentiation also seen in Igbo classification of crimes. The narratorof*ThingsFall Apart*states that:

"The crime (Of killing Ezendus son) was of two kinds, male and female.Okonkwo had committed the female because it had been inadvertent, He could return to theclan after sevenyears."

Okonkwo fled to the land of his mother, Mbanta, because a man finds refusewith his mother. Uchenda explains this to Okonkwo!

"It is true that a child belongs to his father. But when the father beats his child,it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge, in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme?"

Both extreme points can be seen in Igbo society one worshiping woman as agodandanother demolishing her to the earth. Hence considering the gender roles of men and women, as well as society's conceptions of the associated concepts, are frequent themes in Achebe's writing. He has been criticized as a sexist author, in response to what many call the uncritical depiction of traditionally patriarchal Igbo society, where the most masculine men take numerous wives, and women are beaten regularly, others suggest that Achebe is merely representing the limited gendered vision of characters, and they note that in his works, he tries to demonstrate the inherent dangers of excluding women from society, for example, the tale about the earth and sky in Things Fall Apart, emphasizes the interdependency of the masculine and the feminine. Although Nwoye enjoys hearing his mother tell the tale, Okonkwo dislike for it is evidence of his imbalance. LaterNwoye avoidsbeatingsfromhisfatherbypretendingtodislikesuch'women's stories'.

6.2 Conflict between Tradition and Modernity

Pre-colonial Igbosociety

Thissectionofourworkisaboutpre-colonialIgbosociety.Inthispre-colonialsociety, Okonkwo is the incarnation of Igbo tradition. He fights for the maintenance of social cohesion, but his inflexibility turns him into a subversive. In this view, the analysis deals with a pillar of a peaceful society and a traditional subversive so as to show traditional society anditscontradictions.

Okonkwo,apillarofpeacefulsociety

The traditional Igbo society depicted in Chinua Achebe's*Things Fall Apart* is a well-organized society which works properly thanks to its traditional religion. In Igbo tradition, Chukwu is the supreme God. He is the almighty God who creates the earth and heaven. As such, he is the beginning and the end. Chukwu is a very busy God. He creates secondary gods: Ala (Ani), Ikenga, Chi, Agbala, Idemili, Amadiora, Ifejioku and Eruwho help him in his daily activities. In the Igbo collective consciousness, Ani plays a significant role in the life of every Igbo man. She is the goddess of the earth and fecundity (p.22).Beyond this classification of the gods, we see class conflict in traditional society. Moreover, moral values such as discipline, solidarity and labor contribute to the maintenance of social cohesion. At the very opening of the book, the main character Okonkwo is portrayed as the spokesman of the Igbo aristocracy thanks to his determination and courage. The narrator refers to Okonkwo's celebrity when heasserts:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the mine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. (P.3)

In this passage, Okonkwo is portrayed as a particular young man who vanquishes the powerful and invincible wrestler, Amalinze. This historical victory compels the Igbo people to take him for a superman who is able to take up the serious challenges of today and tomorrow. In the narrative, farming and individual success allow the Igbo men to climb the social ladder. This explains the celebrity of Okonkwo in the nine villages of Umuofia:"Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan" (p.3). Oknokwo becomes rapidity a great influential member of the clan because of his audacity and his ability of charismaticleader.

The murder ofOgbuefi Udo's wifeby the men of Mbainobrings about a crisisbetween the two neighboring villages. The men of Umuofia regard this murder as a declaration of war. They meet

together on the market to decide what is to be done. The meeting is also meant to announce the sad news to Umuofia as a whole. "Those sons of wild animals have dared to murder a daughter of Umuofia[…]. The woman, said Ezeugo, was the wife of Ogbuefi Udo" (p.8). After several discussions, the overheated spirits have calmed down. The elders of the clan decide to start diplomatic discussions with their enemies to reach a compromise. "An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation" (p.8). In this belligerence, Okonkwo is appointed as the messenger of Umuofia to Mbaino. Umuofia is a clan of warriors. As such, no neighboring village dares to wage war against Umuofia. However, Umuofia usually wages war when it fails to solve a conflict in a peaceful way. The mission of the ambassador (Okonkwo) of Umuofia is to ask Mbaino to choose between war andapacific settlement oftheconflict.

Whenthe messenger of Umuofia arrives in the village of their enemies, he is welcomed like an important guess. After two days' discussion, the two parties come to an agreement. Then, Okonkwo returns home with the young Ikemefuna and a young virgin as compensation. The young girl is given to the widow and Ikemefuna become a hostage of Umuofia. Okonkwo is duty bound to take care of the boy on behalf of the clan. "[…] Ikemefuna came into Okonkwo‟s household. When Okonkwo brought him home that day he called his most senior wife and handed him over to her. „He belongs to the clan, ‟ he told her.

"So look after him‟" (p.10). Okonkwo is still a young man but he plays significant roles in the clan. He then moves from one victory to another. Okonkwo is a promising young man. In this respect, he has to lead his people to the Promised Land like Moses. As the Igbo proverb states: "If a child washed his hands he could eat with kings. Okonkwo had washed his hands and so he ate with kings and elders" (p.6). As revealed in the proverb, Okonkwo is a true promoter of the Igbo culture and tradition. All the different actions and movements of the protagonist are meant to maintain social harmony. However, the custodianoftheIgbotraditionturns himself into adestroyerofsocial peace.

Okonkwo,atraditionalsubversive

In the plot, Okonkwo is portrayed as the advocator ofIgbo tradition. Despite, hissocial position, he violates traditional law several times. In so doing, he contributes to the fight against the ways of his forefathers. The hero's desire to be the antithesis of his father Unoka, is the first tangible sign of the fight of son against father. Unoka's failure turns himintothe laughingstock ofthe villageofUmuofia.

Unoka, for that was his father's name, had died ten years ago. In his day he was lazy and improvident and was quite incapable of thinking about tomorrow. If any money came his way, and it seldom did, he immediately brought gourds of palm-wine, called round his neighbors and made merry. He always said that whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime. Unoka was, of course, a debtor and he owed every neighbor some money, from a few cowries to quite substantial amounts. (pp.3-4)

Here,Unokaisdepicted asadebtorandalazyman.Contraryto Igbomen, Okonkwo's father dislikes farming. He enjoys playing music and drinking palm-wine with his friends. He is then an irresponsible chief of family who does not care about the future. "Whenever he saw a dead man's mouth he saw the folly of not eating what one had in one's lifetime" (pp.3-4). In this way, Unoka dies in squalor with no social recognition. His misfortune has a great impact on Okonkwo's life. Okonkwo is in search of social recognition. Therefore, he does not want to resemble his father(p.7). He succeeds in becoming the contrary of his father. For instance: Okonkwo's courage and strength are opposed to his father's laziness and weakness. In Igbo land, a man is judged according to his merit but not the social condition of parents.

Okonkwo is in quest of identity. It is this perpetual quest for power and glory whichbrings about his sudden down fall. His inflexibility compels him to violate the sacred week of peace. He beats his youngest wife Ojiugo during the week of peace. "[…] Okonkwo broke the peace, and was punished, as was the custom by Ezeani" (p. 21). The violation of this traditional law is a serious offense of the goddess Ani. Okonkwo refuses compromise and he finally becomes an ally of evil forces. Despite, the warming of his best friend Obierika, Okonkwo takes part in the killing of his adopted child, Ikemefuna. "Ikemefuna's assassination comes as the logic implement of a social catharsis: the necessity to shed blood to stone for blood being shed" (Djiman, 2013, p.9). For the traditional reformist, Obierika, Okonkwo's active participation in the ritual of human sacrifice is another way to violate the principles of the goddess of land, Ani.

"Icannotunderstandwhyyourefusedtocomewithustokillthatboy‟"heaskedObierika.

"Because I did not want to, ‟ Obierika replied sharply. „I had something better to do‟. […] You know very well, Okonkwo that I am not afraid of blood; and if anyone tells you that I am, he is

telling a lie. And let me tell you one thing, my friend. If I were you I would havestayed at home. What you have done will not please, the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families.(p. 46)

In this paragraph, Obierika shows clearly his opposition to Okonkwo's intransigent and the evil side of Igbo tradition. His refusal to partake in the killing of Ikemefuna can be seen as a manifestation of his revolt against the negative aspects of tradition. His absence during this ritual is due to a lack of time:"I had something better to do" (p.46). This discourse of the traditional elite questions the validity of tradition. In this view, Obierika is a carrier of a mask of modernism in the rural space epitomized by the village of Umuofia. Furthermore, the funerals of Ezeudu are perceived as the breaking point of Okonkwo's celebrity in the clan. This passage is about a crime committed by Okonkwo during the funerals of Ezeudu:

The drums and the dancing began again and reached fever-heat. Darkness was around the corner, and the burial was near. Guns fired the last salute and the cannon rent the sky. And then from the center of the delirious fury came a cry of agony and shouts of horror. It was as if a spell had been cast. All was silence. In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen-year-old son, who with his brothers and half-brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwos gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart.(p.86)

In the above extract, the narrator describes the attitude of the Igbo in front of death. Here, death is not viewed as a tragedy but as a continuation of life. In the text, funerals have political and social roles. The drums, the dance and the gunfire contribute to make death less alarming. In the village, when one dances during the funerals of a kinsman, one prays at the same time. As such, he or she who refuses to dance during the funerals of a close relation commits a serious offense. The novelist (Achebe) promotes a reform of culture in order to remove the obsolete practices from the Igbo tradition. The purpose of this cultural change is to save people life. For instance, Okonkwo could not have committed a crime during the funeral Ezeudu, if he were dancing without a gun. He wanted to perform an ancestral ritual and he finally destroyed his own life."Okonkwo's gun had exploded and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart" (p.86). As can be seen, the conflict between tradition (drums) and modernity (guns, cannon) in this traditional ritual engenders a tragedy. The explosion of the gun symbolizes the internal conflicts which corrode traditional African society before the coming of Europeans. We can also read this explosion as the end of social stability and the beginning of social anomy. The implicit of text suggests the preservation this social manifestation (funerals) without weapons. Okonkwo was dancing to show his attachment to the Igbo culture. But this same dance leads him to an exile of seven years. Okonkwo's exile toMbanta reveals that the Igbo society is in jeopardy.

ThefragileIgbosociety

In this second part of our work, traditional Igbo society is described as an unstable society which is torn between two opposing feelings: the preservation of its cultural identity and its will to accept the contribution made by western civilization. The analysis deals with social crisis and war of two religions.

Socialcrisis

The unstable society is a society where moral values are no more or are replaced by transitional ones. The unwanted departure of the hero Okonkwo to his mother's village, Mbanta, permits to understand that the village of Umuofia can never speak with one voice. The malice of man against his like becomes malice of the society against the individual. Okonkwo who is the torch carrier of the Igbo tradition becomes a social deviant. The Igbo aristocracy uses exile as a pretext to remove all traces of Okonkwo in Umufia. Okonkwo destroys the clan and he finally destroys himself. The destruction of his compound and his wealth is an expression of his symbolic death. This passage highlights Okonkwo's downfall:

As soon as the day broke, a large crowd of men from Ezeudu's quarter stormed Okonkwo's compound, dressed in garbs of war. They set fire to his houses, demolished his red walls, killed his animals and destroyed his barn. It was the justice of the earth goddess, and they were merely her messengers. They had no hatred in their heart against Okonkwo. His greatest friend, Obierika, was among them. They were merely cleansing the land which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a cleans man. (p.88)

In this analysis, we realize that all the men of Umuofia do not participate in the attack and destruction of Okonkwo's compound. This attack is led by men who dwell in the same quarter with Ezeudu. Obierika is the eyewitness of the revolt of the clan against Okonkwo. This explains in a

certain way his presence on the battlefield which Okonkwo's compound stands for in the plot. Here, Achebe denounces the intransigence and the cynicism of the law of land. This law is used to avenge the deceased son of Ezeudu. The violence and horror of this vandalism shows that the Igbo society is spitted. The destruction of Okonkwo's property by fire is a manifestation of the inflexibility of the Igbo men. As the narrator puts it:

It's true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme. (p.94)

This discourse of the narrator sheds light on the ungratefulness of Man. Okonkwo throws himself body and soul into the defense of Umuofia and the Igbo tradition. Despites his commitment and his strong love for his homeland, Okonkwo is forced to leave Umuofia without any preparation. As it can be seen, Umuofia used the hero's celebrity to reach its political goal. Achebe castigates and denounces patriarchal system. In this system, a man belongs to his father's village when he is wealthy and famous. But he is left alone, when he is in a sorry plight. As such, the mother's village is a kind of asylum where one's is welcomed by the beloved ones. In the text, patriarchal system is regarded as a system of intransigence and matriarchal system is viewed as the one of brotherhood, forgiveness, love and solidarity. This is the reason why Mbanta gives Okonkwo a warm welcome. He has integrated the society and is accepted as a full member of village. However, the sudden appearance of the white man in the village of Abame is seen as a threat for the stability of the Igbo world.

> „During the last planting season a white man had appeared in their clan". […] „He was riding an iron horse. The first people who saw him ran away, but he stood beckoning to them. In the end the fearless ones were near and even touched him. The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them. (p.97)

In the passage, we notice that the change of the Igbo society is unavoidable. The process of modernization is engaged and nothing could stop it. "The white man" and his "iron horse" (p.97) epitomize western civilization. In the narrative, the British colonizer uses Christianity as a means to impose himself on the local people. "The missionaries had come to Umufia. They had built their church there won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages" (p.101).As such, the white man murdered by the men of Abame, is a missionary conducting field study. The British settler considers the murder of his compatriot as a declaration of war. In this respect, colonial forces smash the village of Abame into pieces. "Abame has been wiped out […] It is a strange and terrible story […]. They killed the man and tied his iron horse to their sacred tree" (p.97). The conflict between tradition and modernity is also read through the antagonism of both cultures: "the elders", "their clan", "their Oracle", "their sacred tree" versus "the missionaries", "white man", "iron horse", "their church". The opposition of African and European civilization becomes a religious strife.

Thewarof two religions

The exile of Okonkwo has fostered the easy coming of the white missionaries and Christianity into Umuofia. The Igbo have accepted the missionaries like good strangers. Shortly afterwards, the strangers show themselves as enemies of the clan: "The arrival of the missionaries had caused a considerable stir in the village of Mbanta" (p.101). In the process of evangelization and conquest, Umuofia is already under the control of the British colonial forces and the evangelists are moving towards Mbanta. However, the traditional elite Obierika is utterly deterred when he realizes the presence Okonkwo's son Nwoye among the new converts. Nwoye's conversion is told in specific and emotional terms which describe a father's reactions to the unacceptable actions of his son. But Nwoye's conversion is also symptomatic of the way in which Christianity strikes against the things Okonkwo represents (Killam,1969, p.28). In the view of Abiola Irele, "Nwoye's defection to Christianity has a double significance. It is at the same time a revolt against his father as well as a rejection of the society that he embodied" (1967, p. 170). In his position of first child, he is the very heir of the best-known Okonkwo who is sent into exile. Beyond the psychological alienation of Nwoye, we perceive a rebellion of young Igbo men against the culture and the tradition of their forefathers. In so doing, the African contributes to his own depersonalization. The youngconverts are in certain way the arrow-spears used by the missionaries in their fight against tradition. In this paragraph, the revolt of Christians against traditional religion is in focus:

> The white man was also their brother because they were all sons of God. And he told them about this new God, the Creator of all the world and all

> the men and women. He told them that they worshipped false gods, gods of wood and stone. A deep murmur went through the crowd when he said this. He told them that the true God lived on high and that all men when they died went before Him for judgment. Evil men and all the heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into a fire that burned like palm-oil. But good men who worshipped the true God lived for ever in His happy kingdom. (p.102)

As revealed in the above passage, the white missionary laughs at the Igbo people and their culture. He describes the God of Christians as the mighty God who creates everything. Furthermore, he regards the Igbo man as a heathen who worships false gods. The implicit ideology of colonial discourse is meant to force the African to self-destruction. The church heartens African people to forsake their religion and follow their one if they wish to be in the kingdom of God in the hereafter. In this perspective, the Igbo man who worships several gods is in the eyes of Christians an agent of evil forces. The white settler scoffs at African people and their religious beliefs when he takes the indigenous gods for things with no important. "All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit […]. There is only one true God and He has made the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us" (p.103). The Igbo aristocracy fights against social change to perpetuate their traditional ways. In African collective consciousness, the negligence of traditional religion is an insult for the spirits and the gods of the clan. "„If we leave our gods and follow your god" […] „who will protect us from the anger of our neglected gods and ancestors?" (p.103).The Igbo people fear the misfortune which can befall on the clan, if they leave ancestral practices. They clearly know that no man can win a fight against the spirits and the gods. For this reason, the Igbo man is rooted in tradition despites threats of Christianity.

In this religious conflict, the outcasts and the victims of tradition consider Christianity as an escape or a way out of suffering. The new faith is opposed to the obsolete rituals of tradition: the rejection of twins in the evil forest and human ritual sacrifice. The young converts trample down shrines and traditional institutions to compel every Igbo to become Christian. The zeal of the new converts brings about disorder in the clan.

> One member in particular was very difficult to restrain. His name was Enoch and his father was the priest of the snake cult. The story went around that Enoch had killed and eaten the sacred python, and that his father had cursed him. (p.126)

Here, Enock succeeds in killing the sacred python which stands for the symbol of his father's power with the help of the church. The murder of the sacred python has dual meaning. It both represents the symbolic death of the custodian of tradition (priest of python) and it also symbolizes the end of the cult of snakes. In addition, Enock smashes into an egwugwu and takes off its mask in the eyes of non-initiated men and women. For the Igbo, to unmask anegwugwu outside the sacred forest is an abomination. This sacrilege is metaphorically the death of the egwugwu mask. Traditional masks are humiliated and reduced to mere ordinary men. They then decide to answer back to Enock's madness against tradition:

> One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask an egwugwu in public, or to say or do anything which might reduce its immortal prestige in the eyes of the uninitiated. And this was what Enock did. […] Enock boasted aloud that they would not dare to touch a Christian. Whereupon they all came back and one of them gave Enock a good stroke of the cane, which was always carried. Enock fell on him and tore off his mask. The other egwugwu immediately surrounded their desecrated companion, to shield him from the profane gaze of women and children, and led him away. Enock had killed an ancestral spirit, and Umuofia was thrown into confusion. (pp.131-132)

In this excerpt, one notices that Enock has committed an awful crime. His deed is unthinkable. Such event has never happened in the village of Umuofia since the beginning of the world. In this sense, Enock is a lunatic character who fights against invisible forces. In the narrative, an egwugwu mask is a very important institution of Igbo culture. The mask is the bridge which links the world of the living to the dead's one. In Igbo world, the judgment of the mask is uppermost. Since the advent of colonialism and Christianity, the stable Igbo society has become a fractured society. In this social anomy, immorality becomes social morality and disorder turns into social order. Enoch is a carrier of a mask. Behind this mask, we see the image of a facilitator of modernity. The death of the mask also epitomizes the downfall of the Igbo traditional society. The misbehavior of Enock engenders a war between the village of Umuofia and the Christian church."The band of egwugwu moved like a

furious whirlwind to Enoch's compound and with matchet and fire reduced it to a desolate heap. And from there they made for the church, intoxicated with destruction" (p.133).The destruction of the church and Enoch's living place can be analyzed as a rejection of a strange religion and an exclusion of the dissidents or rebels. From then on, the peaceful coexistence between tradition and modernity becomes a myth.

Enoch is then an advocator of Christianity in the clan. His mental and psychological alienation help the writer tacking the issue of the survival of African culture in a globalized society without social references. The character Akunna also stands against the destruction of tradition. He counter-attacks and shows his opposition to colonial ideology. „We also believe in Him and call Him Chukwu. He made all the world and the other gods"" (p.126). Implicitly, Achebe argues that Africans and Europeans worship the same God but in different ways. "„You say that there is one supreme God who made heaven and earth […] "" (p.126). However, the reaction of Mr Brown reveals that Europeans are not ready to accept the existence and the validity of an African religion. He laughs at Akunna when he asserts "You carve a piece of wood. […] and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood"" (p.127). Akunna explains to the invader how traditional society is structured and work properly. As it can be seen, the secondary gods are the counterparts of the messengers in Christianity. The strong resistance of the elders enablesMrBrown to knowthat no fightiswon in advance:

> Mr Brown learnt a good deal about the religion of the clan and he came to the conclusion that a frontal attack on it would not succeed. And so he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia. He went from family to family begging people to send their children to his school. But at first they only their slaves or sometimes their lazy children.(p.127)

Inthenovel, the colonizer uses colonial institutions like the church, the hospital and the school to impose his worldview on the local people. In this way, the acquisition of western education is linked to Christianity."From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand" (p.128).The school and the church are meant to alienate school boys so that they can become promoters of modern ways in their village. "Blessed is he who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake" (p.108).Colonial administration continues his fight against the Igbo tradition. The district officer of Umuofia summons all the elders of the clan to a meeting. When they enter the meeting room, he arrests them and turns them into prisoners. Settler Mr Brown regards the Aged of Umuofia as spoilsports. As a consequence, the elders must be judged and punished for alleged attacks against Christians: "I have brought you here because you joined together to molest others, to burn people's houses and their place of worship. […] I have decided that you will pay a fine of two hundred bags of cowries" (p.137). The imprisonment of the custodians of tradition expresses the victory of Christianity over tradition. The traditionalists have lost the fight and they are bound to compensate the white man and his allies for their victory. As such, they must pay "two hundred bags of cowries" (p.137). Here, cowries refer to the money African people used at that specific moment of their history. The amount of money the Igbo leaders have to pay for their freedom is too much. "Two hundred bags of cowries" is beyond the reach of the villagers.

Okonkwo is back from exile and he is among the captives of the colonial administration. The elders of the clan perceive their imprisonment as a downfall of their power. They decide to engage a last attack against the forces of occupation in order to restore their dignity. "Our fathers never dreamt of such a thing, they never killed their brothers. But a white man never came to them. So we must do what our fathers would never have done.[…] We must root out this evil. We must root them out too"(p.144). The final assault aims at avenging the spirits and the divinities of the clan. They all mourn the death of tradition. "All our gods are weeping. Idemili is weeping. Ogwugwu is weeping. Agbala is weeping, and all the others. Our dead fathers are weeping because of the shameful sacrilège they are suffering and the abomination we have all seen with our eyes" (p.143). All the divinities of the clan are in mourning because tradition is no more under the yoke of colonialism. Okonkwo believes that he is still the powerful and invincible warrior. He then invites the Igbo men to wage war against the missionaries. But he realizes that Umuofia has lost courage and cohesion. Consequently, the Igbo men are turned into cowards and they do not speak with one voice. Okonkwo stands against social change which happens in the clan. He then decides to fight alone to avenge his ancestors: "I shall fight alone if I choose" (p.142). Okonkwo is a man of actions. He succeeds in killing one of the white man's messenger: "The messenger crouched to avoid the blow. It was useless. Okonkwo's matchet descended twice and the man's head lay beside his uniformed body" (p.142).After killing a messenger with the blows of his matchet, Okonkwo takes his own life. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Ngũgĩ, 1967). His suicide symbolizes his refusal of modernity and self-sacrifice and

compromise. Okonkwo's death expresses the desire of African society to cooperate with European invaders.

Summary

- Chinua Achebe was born in Ogidi, in Eastern Nigeria, in 1930. His father was one of the early Ibo converts to Christianity who was evangelist and teacher in the Church Missionary Society's village school. Chinua attended his father's school and have started to learn English at about the age of eight, went on to Government College, in 1944. In 1948 he entered University College and began to study medicine in Ibadan where he graduated in 1953. After teaching for a few months, he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1954 as a Talks Producer and rose, by way of being Head of the Talks Section (1957) and Controller, Estern Region (1959), to become Director of External Services in 1961. His job took him on long journeys about Nigeria and, as he drove, his mind was busy reviewing the history and life of his people and casting this mass of unique material in the classical fictional moulds he had studied at university. This resulted, in 1958, in the publication of his first novel, Things fall Apart. It was an immediate success and he won the Margaret Wrong Prize.No Longer at Ease was published in 1960 and won the Nigerian National Trophy. Arrow of God came out in 1964 and his fourth, and so far his last, novel, A Man of the People, appeared in 1966.
- Okonkwo, the embodiment of Igbo tradition in the story, has started acting a way that can jeopardize social peace. His exile makes easier the coming of the missionaries and Christianity into Umuofia. The Igbo have accepted the missionaries on their land like good strangers. Shortly afterwards, the foreigners appear as enemies of the clan. In this religious conflict, the outcasts or the victims of tradition regard Christianity as a way out or the source of salvation and freedom. The traditional Igbo society has become a fragile society under the yoke of colonialism. In this sense, immorality becomes morality and disorder turns into order. This can explain the subversive deeds Enoch perpetrates in the village under the cover of Christianity. Through the desanctification of the mask, one perceives the loss of ancestral values looming up on the horizon. His mental and psychological alienation impel Achebe to wonder about the survival of tradition in modern African society without references.
- The inception of Gender studies or Feminist criticism held in 1960s as a discipline of literary theory. It established the new perspectives in literary culture. Before hundred years of this inception, there were writers--male and female--like Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill who contributed to feminist writing; but in 1960s it formed the Women's Movement. From the time being many texts were discussed with feminist perspectives. A lot of material has been made available to study a text by gender point of view. In all cultures and societies on the earth-some might be exceptions (very rare) - there is gender discrimination, man and woman are considered different not only by biological but by socio-cultural, economic and politically they are treated different. Patriarchy is a system that indicates the rule of father; in broader sense the head of the family is a male person who rules and set rules for the family, patriarchy became a strong system in all cultures to accumulate and gain power in the society; it commenced the power patterns to rule the family and at large the society. The opposite system to patriarchy is matriarchy which doesn't have power patterns. A Study of Gender Discrimination" highlights and discloses the gender discrimination in Igbo community in Nigeria as it represents the all cultural communities in the world which have patriarchy as a dominant form of gender differentiation. Things Fall Apart is a novel by Nigerian postcolonial author Chinua Achebe and Igbo is a socio-cultural ethnic community portrayed in the novel. There are many routine activities of Igbo people that depict and maintain the gender

discrimination. Both extreme peaks-one is to worship woman as a god in the form of Agadinwayi and other is suppression of their status and power are seen in Igbo society. Here, the focus is laid on gender roles, masculinity, femininity, socio-cultural status of male and female, traditional marginality of women and deprivation of political rights of women to clarify and explain the gender discrimination in Things Fall Apart.

Keywords

a just war Societies throughout history have rationalized certain wars as justified for religious or cultural reasons. For example, in the fifth century, St. Augustine of the early Christian church wrote extensively about the just war; the Crusades of the late Middle Ages were initiated as holy wars; and today's Muslim word *jihad* means holy war.

kernels the inner, softer part of a nut, fruit pit, etc. Here,found in the fleshy remains of the palm nut after its husk is crushed for palm-oil. The kernels can be processed by machine for the extraction of a very fine oil.

kites birds of prey with long, pointed wings and, usually, a forked tail; they prey especially on insects, reptiles, and small mammals.

kola nut the seed of the cola, an African tree. The seed contains caffeine and yields an extract; it represents vitality and is used as a courteous, welcoming snack, often with alligator pepper.

leprosy a progressive infectious disease caused by a bacterium that attacks the skin, flesh, nerves, and so on; it is characterized by nodules, ulcers, white scaly scabs, deformities, and the eventual loss of sensation, and is apparently communicated only after long and close contact.

making inyangaflaunting or showing off.

markets Igbo weeks are four days long, and the market day is on the first of day each week; therefore, three or four markets is a period of twelve to sixteen days.

Mbaino This community name means *four settlements*.

Mbanta The name means small town and is where Okonkwo's mother comes from, his motherland, beyond the borders of Mbaino (Ikemefuna's original home).

monkey tricks possibly a racial slur directed at the natives.

ndichie elders.

the new dispensation the new system; the new organization of society under British influence.

Nna-ayitranslated as *our father*; a greeting of respect.

nso-ania sin against the earth goddess, Ani.

the nuts of the water of heaven hailstones.

nzaa small but aggressive bird.

obi a hut within a compound.

ogbanjea child possessed by an evil spirit that leaves the child's body upon death only to enter into the mother's womb to be reborn again within the next child's body.

Ogbuefi a person with a high title, as in Ogbuefi Ezeugo (the orator) and Ogbuefi Udo (the man whose wife was killed in Mbaino).

ogenea gong.

ogwu medicine, magic.

Okonkwo The name implies male pride and stubbornness.

Okoye an everyman name comparable to John Doe in English. Okoye represents all the people to whom Unoka owes money.

Oracle the place where, or medium by which, the deities are consulted; here, the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves.

ostracize to banish, bar, exclude, etc. from a group through rejection by general consent of the members.

osua class of people in Igbo culture considered outcasts, not fit to associate with free-born members of the clan.

Osugo The name means a low-ranked person.

ozoa class of men holding an ozotitle; it also refers to the ritual which accompanies the granting of a title to a person.

palaver a conference or discussion, as originally between African natives and European explorers or traders.

palm fronds leave of a palm tree. Here, they are tied together in clusters for "beating the ground" or the legs and feet of the pushing crowd.

pestle a tool, usually club-shaped, used to pound or grind substances in a mortar, or very hard bowl.

plantain a hybrid banana plant that is widely cultivated in the Western Hemisphere.

prophets of Baal Mr. Smith are comparing the pagan worship of the warrior god Baal, mentioned in the Old Testament (I Kings 18) to the Igbo religion. The Israelites saw the worship of Baal as a rival to their worship of God, causing the prophet Elijah to challenge the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

python a very large, nonvenomous snake of Asia, Africa, and Australia, that squeezes its prey to death.

raffia 1) a palm tree of Madagascar, with large, pinnate leaves. 2) fiber from its leaves, used as string or woven into baskets, hats, and so on.

resolute having or showing a fixed, firm purpose; determined; resolved; unwavering.

sacrament of Holy Communion the most sacred ritual of participating Christians.

saltpeter potassium nitrate; used in the preparation of snuff (also in gunpowder and fireworks).

sharecropping working land for a share of the crop, especially as a tenant farmer. Here, Okonkwo works as a sharecropper to obtain seed-yams.

silk-cotton tree any of several large, tropical, trees (genera *Bombax* and *Ceiba*) of the bombax family that have capsular fruits with silky hairs around the seeds. Here, the tree is revered because it contains spirits of good children as yet unborn.

singlets men's undershirts, especially the sleeveless kind.

snuff a preparation of powdered tobacco that is inhaled by sniffing, is chewed, or is rubbed on the gums.

superfluous being more than is needed, useful, or wanted; surplus; excessive.

taboo any social prohibition or restriction that results from convention or tradition.

tie-tiea vine used like a rope; from Pidgin English *to tie*.

Tufia-a!This sound represents spitting and cursing simultaneously.

twenty and ten years Igbo counting may not have a unique number for thirty, which is thus counted as twenty and ten. Similarly, in French, seventy is counted as sixty-ten, and eighty is four twenties.

twins two born at the same birth. Here, according to Igbo custom, twins are considered evil and must be placed in earthenware pots and left to die in the forest.

Udo peace.

udua clay pot.

ulia liquid made from seeds that make the skin pucker; used for temporary tattoo-like decorations.

umuadadaughters who have married outside the clan.

umunnathe extended family and kinsmen.

umunnathe extended family, the clan.

Umuofia kwenua shout of approval and greeting that means *United Umuofia!*

Umuofia The community name, which means *children of the forest* and *aland undisturbed by European influences*.

Unoka Okonkwo's father's name; its translation, *home is supreme*, implies a tendency to stay home and loaf instead of achieve fame and heroism.

a war of blamein Chapter2, the villagers state that a "fight of blame" (which Okonkwo expects the peacemakers to label this fight against the strangers) would never be sanctioned by their Oracle, which approves only a "just war." Therefore, what Okonkwo is considering may go beyond even the clan's traditions — a fight for which they may not have full justification from their gods.

Week of Peace in Umofia, a sacred week in which violence is prohibited.

wherewithal that with which something can be done; necessary means.

Who is the chief among you? The kotma (court messenger) guards see by the anklets that all six leaders own titles and joke that they must not be worth much.

yam foo-foo pounded and mashed yam pulp.

yam pottage a watery gruel made of yams.

Yes, sah*Yes sir*; the form may be Pidgin English and illustrates how the native-born court messengers submitted to the orders of their white bosses — at least on the surface.

Self Assessment

1. What does the use of Igbo words, folktales, proverbs, and songs do to the story?

A. It shows the richness and complexity of Igbo culture and language.

B. It proves Igbo culture is confusing and inferior to European culture.

C. It demonstrates Reverend Smith had to act the way he did.

D. It added little to the story.

2. What does Okonkwo believe are the proper outer displays of manliness?

A. A hearty appetite, womanizing, extravagant displays of wealth

B. Storytelling, restraint, wit

C. Aggression, violence, anger, ambition

D. Chivalry, valor, strong sword fighting skills

3. Why do Igbo outcasts join the Church?

A. The village elders force them to join.

B. The Church provides a refuge from the strict Igbo social system that rejects them.

C. Mr. Brown promises them new homes and jobs in exchange for converting.

D. The District Commissioner imprisons them if they don't.

4. What is chi?

A. An individual's personal god that determines his/her fortune

B. A type of tea that the Igbo make

C. An ointment made from palm leaves for treating minor burns

D. Showing off, bragging

5. What do the locusts symbolize?

A. Fertility, good harvest, bounty

B. The marginalization of effeminate males within Igbo society

C. Okonkwo's intense and dangerous anger

D. The white settlers who will come and exploit the villagers

6. What does Okonwko wear to the town meeting?
A. His ancestral spirit costume
B. The outfit he wore when he wrestled the Cat
C. White men's clothing
D. His war dress

7. What does Okonkwo do at the town meeting?
A. Give a rousing speech
B. Incite the villagers to fight against the white men
C. Kill two court messengers
D. Call the villagers cowards and women

8. What happens to Okonkwo after he leaves the meeting?
A. He hangs himself.
B. The District Commissioner shoots him.
C. Reverand James Smith convinces him to convert.
D. He locks himself in his compound and dies of grief.

9. Why won't the clansmen touch Okonkwo's body and insist the white men do it?
A. They consider suicide a grave sin and that his body is now evil.
B. They want the white men to understand that his death is the missionaries' fault.
C. They are angry with Okonkwo because they will be imprisoned for his actions.
D. They want to prove their new loyalty to the white men.

10. When a woman of Umuofia bears twins, the infants are
A. dedicated to the priesthood
B. abandoned in the forest
C. worshipped as gods
D. thrown in the river

11. When Ikemefuna is taken to be killed, Okwonko
A. goes with the men
B. participates in Ikemefuna's execution
C. weeps for three days
D. both goes with the men and participates in Ikemefuna's execution

12. The staple crop of the Igbo is
A. wheat
B. rice
C. corn
D. yams

13. Ekwefi's sorrow is that
A. she has born ten children, and nine have died
B. she used to be a princess

C. she is secretly a Christian
D. her husband is cruel

14. The relationship between Okwonko's wives could best be described as
A. catty and backstabbing
B. sisterly and supportive
C. angry and full of jealousy
D. competitive and ruthless

15. Okonkwo's treatment of his family could best be described as
A. stern but often indulgent
B. generous and rational
C. loving and tender
D. stern and often violent

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	C	3.	B	4.	A	5.	D
6.	D	7.	C	8	A	9.	A	10.	B
11.	D	12.	D	13.	A	14.	B	15.	D

Review Questions

1. Discuss the theme of Gender Discrimination in *Things Fall Apart*.
2. What is important about the title: "Things Fall Apart?" Is there a reference in the novel that explains the title?
3. What are the conflicts in "Things Fall Apart?" What types of conflict (physical, moral, intellectual, or emotional) are present?
4. What is the primary purpose of the story? Is it important or meaningful?
5. Do you think the novel is meant to be political? What point was the author trying to make? Did he succeed?
6. Why is the novel so controversial? Do you think the book should be censored or banned? Should it be taught in schools?
7. How essential is the setting to the story? Could the story have taken place anywhere else?
8. What is the role of family and community in this novel? How does it change when the missionaries arrive?
9. Does the story end the way you expected? How? Why? What point do you think the author was making with the conclusion of the novel? Does your perspective change know there is a sequel?
10. Would you recommend this novel to a friend? Why or why not?
11. How is religion portrayed in this novel? Do you think the Christian missionaries had a positive or negative impact on the characters?
12. What is important about the time period the novel is set in?
13. What point is the author trying to make about the African identity? What problems does the author outline? Does he offer solutions? Why can't Okonkwo be buried.

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Unit 07: Bapsi Sidhwa: An American Brat

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Objectives

After reading this Unit, the students will be able to:

- Learn the life and achievements of the writer.
- Understand Parsi/Zoroastrianism.
- Define the theme of male domination in society.
- Comprehend Feroza's American Experience.

Introduction

The renowned Zoroastrian author Bapsi Sidhwa overcame a solitary and traumatic upbringing that was marred by disease to become a well-known novelist around the world.

We travel thousands of miles, through continents and cultures, from South Asia to the United States with Bapsi, one of the first women writers from the Indian subcontinent to write in English. Her life strikes us deeply. Her tale also sheds light on the Zoroastrians, a secret and nearly extinct group. The words, artwork, and life narrative of Bapsi Sidhwa will enchant and inspire.

7.1 The Life and Achievements of the Writer

The top writer from Pakistan's diaspora is Bapsi Sidhwa. She has written four English-language books that are based on her own experiences with immigration to the US, being a part of the Parsi/Zoroastrian community, and the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Bapsi Sidhwa, who was born on August 11, 1938, in Karachi, in what is now Pakistan, and moved to Lahore shortly after, was a little child in 1947 when the terrible Partition of the Indian Subcontinent took place. She had polio as a child and received her education at home until she was 15 years old, reading a lot. She subsequently continued on to Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore where she obtained a BA. Sidhwa married at the age of nineteen, and the first of her three children was born not long after. She hid her literary talent due to the demands of a family. Every time there was a bridge game, she claims, she would sneak away and write. Nevertheless, a whole new world has opened up for me since I was published. However, she claims that "I was taught for many years that Pakistan was too distant in time and place for Americans or the British to empathize with. She participated in the

1975 Asian Women's Congress on behalf of Pakistan as a vocal advocate for women's rights during this period.

In Pakistan, Bapsi Sidhwa created English-language literature. In contrast to India, which Pakistan was cut from, the nation lacked a well-established English literary heritage. Many people would have intended that the language of the former colonists completely vanish, but Urdu served as the official language.

Sidhwa, who came from a rich family, lived in Lahore for her initial seven years as an Indian citizen. She adopted Pakistani citizenship in 1945, the year India was split. Sidhwa was profoundly impacted by the extreme instability and bloodshed she witnessed as a youngster, and later in her fiction, she brought back those vivid recollections of Partition (as the division of India has come to be known). Her writing was influenced by the fact that she was born a Parsee. The Parsees, a Zoroastrian religious community of fewer than 200,000 people, have long had a significant impact on the subcontinent due to their prominence in business and the professions. Additionally, they seemed to be much more Westernized than the majority of their countrymen.

Sidhwa was diagnosed with polio at the age of two and did not start school until she turned fourteen. She received English tutoring at home and read a lot of British literature, which inspired her to pursue writing as a career. However, her parents had other plans, so when she was nineteen, she joined an arranged marriage and gave birth to three children quite quickly. Sidhwa, an upper-class mother and wife, defied convention by beginning to write, but she acknowledged in an interview that initially she did so covertly. She explained that she was simply a businessman's wife in order to avoid appearing "pretentious" to her acquaintances.

She was inspired to write her debut book, The Bride, by a tale she overheard while on a family trip to Pakistan's tribal areas in the Himalayas. A young woman and a tribal guy were married in an arranged union. She fled because she couldn't handle the brutal treatment women received in that society, but her husband and his family followed her and killed her. Sidhwa was driven to share this tale because she saw it as a metaphor for the fate of several women in the subcontinent. She received assistance from a friend to submit the work to an agency, who searched for a publisher for seven years.

The Crow-Eaters, a rowdy and gritty portrayal of the Parsee community in pre-Partition India, was written by Sidhwa in the interim. Sidhwa eventually got a British publisher for the book despite being cautioned that Pakistan was too far away for Western consumers to find it intriguing. The Bride was first released in London in 1983, then in America. The closely knit Parsee community first opposed to The Crow-Eaters, criticizing it as an irreverent depiction of their traditions, religious beliefs, and attitudes, despite the fact that both works were well regarded abroad and on the subcontinent. After Sidhwa gained recognition as a significant writer on a global scale, the Parsees, who were pleased of one of their own, pardoned her for her mocking behavior toward them.

Early in the 1980s, Sidhwa, who had been divorced and remarried, immigrated to the US. She settled in Houston, Texas, after becoming a citizen of the United States in 1992. She started composing Ice-Candy-Man not long after arriving in America, despite being far distant from the environment of her youth. At the time of Partition, when millions of Muslims and Hindus were displaced to create Pakistan as an Islamic nation and India as a Hindu nation, Sidhwa was seven years old. Several hundred thousand deaths are thought to have occurred, however the exact figure has never been determined. The city of Lahore, which belonged to Pakistan, saw some of the bloodiest combats throughout this conflict over land and resources. A female seven-year-old narrator of Ice-Candy-Man recounts Lahore on the brink of Partition before describing the bloody fallout of the political actions that led to what she refers to as the "breaking" of India. Sidhwa's story has a greater immediacy even though numerous Indian novelists in English have concentrated on Partition; perhaps due to the fact she was there and was able to re-create that turbulent time through a single act of remembering four decades afterwards. For Ice-Candy-Man, Sidhwa was won the 1991 Liberatur Prize, which is given annually by Germany to a notable author from a non-Western nation.

Sidhwa explores the experience of the Pakistani immigrant in America in her next book, An American Brat. In an interview, she stated that while getting to know a new place on her own, she was also trying to identify her own feelings and reactions. The story involves Feroza, a Parsee girl from Lahore, as she makes changes to life in America and as a college student. The book, which is partly set in Pakistan, also introduces Feroza's colourful family, particularly her mother, who travels to Colorado to end an affair between Feroza and a non-Parsee. By the end of the book, Feroza has accepted that there is no turning back and that she has become a hybrid of two cultures, even if she still has roots in the Parsee society.

Sidhwa won the $105,000 Lila Wallace-Digest Reader's Fund Award for her literature in 1994. This acknowledgement demonstrates that, although being distant and unfamiliar to readers in the West, the Pakistani-Parsee experience has global relevance when seen through the eyes of a smart writer.

7.2 Parsi/Zoroastrianism

Being a Parsi/Zoroastrian, Bapsi Sidhwa is religiously removed from the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent's most immediate impacts, which is what makes her viewpoint on it so remarkable. According to the myth, an Indian ruler sent a messenger with a glass of milk to Zoroastrian refugees fleeing Islamic expansion in the eighth century C.E., denoting that the Indian people were a single, homogeneous group that shouldn't be interfered with. The Parsees said that they would easily blend in and enhance the culture sweeter by dropping a lump of sugar in the milk. Consequently, they were given a place to call home in India since Parsees refrained from proselytizing and participating in politics. Due to Parsees' political and religious neutrality, Bapsi Sidhwa was able to see the Partition from such a safe distance as a result of her lineage. She claims in an interview that she felt qualified to provide an objective description of this enormous, historic conflict because she is a Parsee (a member of a Zoroastrian sect.

The Proto-Indo-Iranians, who lived about 3000 BCE, were the first followers of Zoroastrianism. East of the Volga River, in the South Russian Steppes, lived these people. The Proto-Indo-Iranians searched for divinity in the sky, the land, and the water because they understood that reality is cyclical because of day and night and the seasons. But when bronze casting was discovered around 2000 BCE, a lot of these tranquil shepherds gave up their flocks and turned become fighters. Around 1500 BCE, Zarathustra was born into this culture. He finally had a dialogue with one God, Ahura Mazda, "The Lord of Light," after years of meditation. As a result, one of the first monotheistic religions is Zoroastrianism. From his conversations with Ahura Mazda, Zarathustra created hymns known as The Gathas. He sang of an all-knowing, independent of idolatry, present-active God. Zarathustra taught that Ahura Mazda's strength is shown through the intricate laws of the universe, drawing on the history of his people (Asha). The heavenly endowment of the mind ("Voho Manoh"), which enables people to perceive their God, is also thought to have been bestowed upon them by Ahura Mazda.

Marriage and death are two of Zoroastrianism's key tenets. The sole accepted way for discarding of the deceased is dakhma-nashini. The body is positioned in a stone Dakhma that is exposed to the sky and raptors. Again highlighting the life cycle, the body enters the food chain exactly like any other dead animal or plant. Additionally, Dakhma-nashini guarantees that the water supply won't be tainted. To protect ethnic identity and tradition, conversion and marriage outside of the religion are both prohibited. The Zoroastrians/Parsees do not distinguish between ethnicity and faith. In her most recent book, An American Brat, Bapsi Sidhwa discusses the pressures placed on the Parsee community as the globe becomes more interconnected. There are currently roughly 1 million Parsees living in the world. They are typically well educated and Anglicized.

The Faravahar is the Zoroastrian religion's holiest figure. With the assistance of the mind, it represents the soul's journey throughout life and ultimate union with Ahura Mazda. The man's profile that is positioned in the center of the Faravahar represents the idea that the soul is the most important thing in existence. The soul advances along its two outstretched wings throughout its life journey. Each wing bears five layers of feathers, each of which corresponds to one of the five Zoroastrian partitions of the day, one of the five Gathas of Zarathustra, or one of the five senses (Gehs). The two curved protrusions from the male profile's ship represent the two contrasting paths of virtue and evil that each soul must deliberately choose between. The rudder of the soul is symbolized by the feathery tail that falls between these two legs. For Humata (Good Thoughts), Hukhta (Good Works), and Hvarasta (Good Deeds), it has three feather layers (Good Deeds). Zoroastrians are urged to recall the cycles of death and birth, success and failure, reincarnation, and other realms of existence outside of this one by the circular ring that the guy is holding in his hands.

7.3 The Theme of Male Domination in Society

As a little girl initially constrained by traditions and later becoming a westernized American young woman, Feroza meets a variety of scenarios. She still struggles with some of the social awkwardness she has developed since being accustomed to American culture. The novella reveals the author's expertise in artistic editing. Like with most family stories, many of the tragedies, joys, annoyances, and sentiments weaved throughout an American Brat are both identifiable and satisfying. The narrative demonstrates how families throughout the world experience similar

fundamental issues, such as how women repressed their souls while transforming their uniqueness from the Third to the First World. In this book, Sidhwa depicts a cutting-edge American theme that coincides with the story of the Americanization of a young Parsi girl. She combines the issues of female marginalization and migration, showing through Feroza Ginwalla how a Parsi lady is harmed by the dual norms. R.K. Dhawan notes that Sidhwa is concerned about the unfairness and marginalisation of women as well. Thus, even when Sidhwa writes about Feroza, a 16-year-old girl, Sidhwa's distress is still accompanied by Pakistani customs and conventions as well as the joys and sorrows of being a Parsi woman.

7.4 Feroza's American Experience

The novel describes the mental, psychological, social, and cultural struggles that Feroza, a quiet, traditional Pakistani girl, faces as she immigrates to the United States. It explains how she is forced transplanted into the strange American culture after being ripped from her "mother culture." At the start of the book, Feroza is depicted as a shy young girl, but as the story goes on, Feroza's migration to America transforms her into a brave and self-assured woman. Later, she starts leading an independent life. Her transformation in America doesn't happen overnight; it takes time.

Feroza's lack of perspective causes problems for her parents, Zareen and Cyrus. Despite having a significant age gap from her mother Zareen, she ends up becoming more conservative. Zareen, Feroza's mother, is upset that her daughter has acquired a parsi-like orthodoxy in her outlook and attitude, making her an outcast in her neighborhood. However, the father, Cyrus Ginwalla, is concerned about a different form of identity loss. He worries that his impressionable young daughter will date and wed a non-Parsi boy. He believes that sending Feroza on vacation to the United States is the best way to resolve this issue. He believes that travel will broaden her perspective and help her to rid herself of this puritanical nonsense. America receives Feroza. Feroza follows the elders' rules in Pakistan during her voyage, but as soon as she arrives in America, she starts to alter.

The customs officers treat Feroza in a fairly brutal manner. The stern cops appeared to be sceptical of what she stated. They questioned her repeatedly about her plans, including how long she intended to stay, where she would stay, who would support her, how old her uncle was, what he did, and whether he was a resident or visitor of the US. Feroza is instructed to enter for a secondary examination after retrieving her bags since the unfriendly officer does not find her explanations to be adequate. Feroza makes an effort to adapt to the Americans' distinctive way of life and their usage of contemporary technology. She is not at all familiar with the escalator and moving stairs, which are common in even modest American establishments. A senior American couple assists her in overcoming this obstacle. The woman grabs Feroza's arm to help her go on and off the escalator as the man removes the duty-free items from her hands.

Bapsi Sidhwa writes passionately about the first impressions a foreigner has of contemporary America. She documents the ugliness and degradation of America in addition to its glitter and glamour.

The following day, Feroza's journey of New York begins soon as uncle Manek and he exit the Kennedy airport. When Feroza also experiences New York's negative aspects, her introduction to America is complete. She passes loudly flashing little, dark video parlours on Eighth Avenue as she wanders by filthy pawnshops, budget hotels, and bars.

Later, Manek draws Feroza's attention to pimps, exquisite transvestites, and male prostitutes in miniskirts. She struggles to accept the filth and poverty in the USA, though. Feroza had become accustomed to the smell of squalor and poverty, which included perspiration, urine, open drains, carrion that had gone bad, vegetables, and other trash. Pakistanis have grown accustomed to these sights and odours.

Manek's early difficulties adjusting to US society helped him to help his niece Feroza face the issues he experienced with ease. He sees his experiences as a way to impart information about the US to Feroza. Over time, Feroza gives in to the allure of America and decides to remain there as a student. Manek wants her to enrol in a junior college in the little town of Twin Falls, Idaho, believing that this will help her more easily assimilate into American culture.

The university was prepared to provide a stipend. Her parents gave her permission to study in America as well. Her new roommate, Jo, makes arrangements for her needs and gives her advice on everything. Jo assumes "control of Feroza's life" (AB 151) and turns into her companion, mentor, and friend. She quickly adopts Jo's speech pattern. Jo and Feroza then enrol in the hotel management school at the University of Denver.

Feroza now feels independent and is gradually altering her behavior. She learns about the benefits and drawbacks of American campus life here. She consistently encounters a variety of obstacles, which helps her recognize internal changes. Her association with Jo aids in her education about American culture. Feroza fully adopts an American way of life. She behaves, converses, and appears like an American woman. She picks up driving, drinking, dancing, and American language. Feroza transforms from a timid and reserved girl to a bold and aggressive woman.

The turning point in Feroza's change occurs when she approaches David Press to purchase his used automobile. Her development to this point has been primarily intellectual and mental in nature. David was the one who started it and led her through the emotional wilderness. She goes with him to the bar, orders drinks, and dances while she is unsure of exactly when her heart was won.

Feroza, who once prioritized religion and culture, is now exclusively concerned with David and wants to wed him, a non-Parsee. She once questioned whether she was actually the same girl who had stayed in Lahore and attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart as she snuck back into her room at three in the morning with her shoes in her hand. She was fully conscious of every shift she had undergone. David, in Feroza's opinion, is everything to her, and their love cannot be ended. In response, she writes her parents a letter expressing her love for David.

Her mother is extremely upset by Feroza's choice to wed Jewish man David Press. So she travels to America to prevent her disobedient daughter from getting married to a non-Parsi.

Zareen tries to convince Feroza that if she marries David, she will be cut off from her religion and family. She would never be permitted to enter the Parsi houses of worship or take part in her parents' or grandparents' funeral rites. Zareen is committed to distracting Feroza. She advises Feroza to put males out of her mind and focus on her studies. She tries her hardest to persuade her daughter Feroza to reconsider her decision. She desires that Feroza reconsider her choice to wed David Press. Zareen becomes enraged when Feroza refuses to grant her request.

David feels obligated to explain his position when Zareen persists on upholding her traditional duties by lavishly showering David's relatives with presents and staging a lavish wedding. Zareen poses as being in favor of the union but imposes on the customs and ceremonies, which David finds objectionable. David hears her describe the Parsi wedding rites and traditions. She does this to show David how different their cultures are and gradually distances him from Feroza. David recoils in horror as Zareen performs a ceremony to throw out the evil eye enchantment that she believes is plaguing Feroza. David leaves Denver after realizing the differences between the two civilizations.

Initially devastated by her breakup with David Press, Feroza gradually gets over it and becomes more determined than ever to stay in America. She refused to live without freedom after experiencing it in America. She returns to her friends after her relationship with David ends, but she also starts to take on an autonomous persona. Her past experiences have given her the ability to consider her life seriously and make confident decisions regarding the future. Feroza, a migrant, has successfully assimilated into a new culture, and there wouldn't be any going back for her.

Feroza will never feel completely at home in the nation she left, but she also has no desire to fully adopt American society. With adulthood, an equilibrium has emerged in which the migrant's hybridity is reason for celebration rather than regret. Feroza's devotion to the public sphere results from her self-discovery. She is now a changed woman who is considerably different from the naïve girl at the novel's beginning and is ready to take advantage of all the opportunities that America has to offer.

Feroza's mother forces her to travel to America because she is discovered to be extremely conservative in all of her actions. At first, Feroza works very hard to adapt to American culture.

Feroza adjusts to life as an immigrant in America gradually but progressively. And totally reinvents herself as a bold American girl. Feroza is unwilling to resume her previous strict lifestyle in Pakistan. She has experienced the benefits of freedom and does not want to be restricted by the customs of her community. She fervently desires a life as a free bird. She reaches adulthood and self-hood. Although her mother may view Feroza as an American brat, she too recognizes that Feroza is now mature enough to be herself. She has evolved from the innocent, naive child to a self-assured young adult. She has acquired the ability to make her independent decisions as a consequence of her immigrant life in America. As a result of her immigrant experience, she has uncovered her self-identity. Sidhwa paints a good picture of a sense of loss, yet Feroza's credentials, convictions, and self-awareness help to reposition and reclaim this feeling of dislocation.

The travel to America by Feroza's mother is a major topic of contention. The mother-daughter struggle centres on traditional religious beliefs vs contemporary ideals, with Feroza more willing to

give up old customs and experiences and adopt new ones than Zareen, Feroza's mother, who is accustomed to her religion: "Oh, mum!' Feroza protested indignantly that she can't believe that her mother still tolerates this foolishness and dropped her head as she had done before. After moving to America, Feroza considers her mother's old customs to be foolish and pointless, and she doesn't consider it essential for her to carry them on. Because she has been given access to the benefits of a developed nation but her mother has never experienced them before, it's probable that Feroza feels superior to her mother. She believes she does have the right to advise her mother on which customs are necessary. Her mother is obstinate and set in her ways because she has never encountered another culture and has lived according to them her entire life.

One of the main disagreements among Feroza and her mother seems to be whether Feroza should adhere to the religion or give in to her feelings for the man she loves who does not adhere to the faith's "rules" for marriage. He would rob her daughter of her community, family, heritage, and faith. Her children would be declared to be illegitimate and she would be called an adulterer. She would be charged with the most horrible sacrilege. Due to her strong maternal instincts, Zareen is concerned for Feroza's welfare in the event that David and Feroza get married. She passionately believes that Feroza should not defy her religion, and she is concerned about the potential effects on the family should Feroza choose to wed a non-Parsee. On the other hand, Feroza remains at ease with her decision to marry David at that point in the story and either hasn't bothered to think about the repercussions or thinks the passion they experience will be worth more than the repercussions. She exhibits teenage angst toward her mother and the Parsee community as part of her rebellion against them.

On her first flight from America to Pakistan, Feroza experiences a struggle in her mind. She isn't sure if she should be happy with her adventures and the knowledge that she will eventually return to America, or whether she should be upset about the time she didn't spend with her family. The following remark from the author proves this that Feroza saw that many things had altered after the initial euphoria. She couldn't have predicted the changes brought about by time. Feroza is glad to return home for a short time and spend time with her family, but she is unprepared for the degree of change she encounters when she gets there. She struggles to resist the urge to visit her ailing grandma and stay longer in the land of opportunity, America. She feels bad that her grandmothers are losing their independence while she has the good fortune to complete her education in America. She struggles with the idea that while back home, her grandmothers are starting to lose their sense of independence and uniqueness, she has discovered both in America.

Feroza and her uncle Manek have a connection similar to that of siblings; they quarrel all the time, yet there is love underneath it all. The two of them frequently argue about America and Americans, in part because Manek has lived there for a longer period of time than Feroza and believes his knowledge to be better to hers. One of their reasons is that there is no such thing as "Cook, bring me soup" and "Bearer, bring me whiskey-pani." Only on Saturdays and Sundays do they attend a movie or a disco at night. They are really busy on workdays. Feroza is understandably accustomed to her native society, where family values and priorities differ significantly from those in America. Feroza is accustomed to living in a home where lower-class family members are paid to perform household duties and where school and festivities predominate over work and school. Manek has spent more time in America than most people, therefore he is familiar with the stereotyped framework of an American family's daily schedule, which is made up of work, school, extracurricular activities, and domestic duties. It is a society that is far more independent than the one Feroza considers home. When Feroza first arrives in America, there is a significant cultural mismatch.

Summary

An interesting depiction of a young Pakistani immigrant's experience in the 1970s in the US may be found in "An American Brat" by Bapsi Sidhwa. The story also discusses the reluctance and apprehension felt by various sects in Pakistan as a result of the shift from Bhutto's liberal to Zia's conservative administration.

Keywords

Acquired: adopted

Affair: romance

Altering: changing

Approaches: meets

Assistance: aid

Degradation: squalor

Discarding: disposing

Displaced: uprooted

Drawbacks: tribulations

Endowment: gift

Exquisite: elegant

Extremely: very much

Falls: dips

Gradually: slowly

Impose: insist

Intricate: precise

Partitions: divisions

Pimps: prostitutes

Pleased: proud

Repercussions: consequences

Repressed: oppressed

Reserved: conservative

Timid: shy

Tranquil: peaceful

Self Assessment

1. Bapsi Sidhwa is _____ leading diasporic writer.

A. Pakistan's
B. India's
C. America's
D. Canada's

2. Which of the following is the first novel of Bapsi Sidhwa?

A. *The Crow-Eaters*
B. *The Bride*
C. *An American Brat*
D. *Ice-Candy-Man*

3. Sidhwa spent her first seven years as an _____ citizen

A. American
B. Canadian
C. Indian
D. Pakistani

4. At age two, Sidhwa suffered from which of the following disease?

A. TB
B. Pneumonia

C. Cancer
D. Polio

5. In which of the following novel, Feroza is one of the character?
A. *The Crow-Eaters*
B. *The Bride*
C. *An American Brat*
D. *Ice-Candy-Man*

6. At what age, Sidhwa had married?
A. 17
B. 18
C. 19
D. 20

7. In *an American Brat*, Sidhwa depicts the _____ immigrant in _____.
A. Pakistani, America
B. American, Pakistan
C. Pakistani, India
D. Indian, Pakistan

8. What is the name of Feroza's mother?
A. Sophia
B. Zareen
C. Joe
D. Cyprus

9. Who is Manek?
A. Feroza's father
B. Feroza's brother
C. Feroza's cousin
D. Feroza's uncle

10. One of the main arguments between Manek and Feroza is over?
A. India and Indians
B. Pakistan and Pakistanis
C. America and Americans
D. Africa and Africans

11. Feroza's mother's trip to America is a large source of _____ .
A. Conflict
B. Relief
C. Enjoyment
D. Happiness

12. Bapsi Sidhwa invented English-language fiction in _____.
A. India

B. Pakistan
C. England
D. America

13. Which of the following two are Zoroastrianism's key tenets.
A. Birth and death
B. Birth and marriage
C. Marriage and love
D. Marriage and death

14. In which year the novel The Bride was first released?
A. 1983
B. 1984
C. 1985
D. 1986

15. In which year Bapsi Sidhwa was born?
A. 1936
B. 1937
C. 1938
D. 1940

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	B	3.	C	4.	D	5.	C
6.	C	7.	A	8.	B	9.	D	10.	C
11.	A	12.	B	13.	D	14.	A	15.	C

Review Questions

1. Discuss the life and achievements of Bapsi Sidhwa in detail.
2. Explain the theme of male domination in society with the help of the novel*an American Brat*.
3. Discuss Feroza's American experience in detail in the novel*An American Brat.*
4. Write the character sketch of Feroza in the novel*An American Brat*.

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Unit 08: Bapsi Sidhwa: An American Brat

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Objectives

- Understand cultural assimilation of Feroza and the application of Bhabha's theory of hybridity.
- Describe how Feroza loses her identity in America.
- Comprehend cultural conflicts between Parsee culture and American culture.
- Write the character sketch of Zareen.

Introduction

The renowned Zoroastrian author Bapsi Sidhwa overcame a solitary and traumatic upbringing that was marred by disease to become a well-known novelist around the world.

We travel thousands of miles, through continents and cultures, from South Asia to the United States with Bapsi, one of the first women writers from the Indian subcontinent to write in English. Her life strikes us deeply. Her tale also sheds light on the Zoroastrians, a secret and nearly extinct group. The words, artwork, and life narrative of Bapsi Sidhwa will enchant and inspire.

She has written four English-language books that are based on her own experiences with immigration to the US, being a part of the Parsi/Zoroastrian community, and the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Bapsi Sidhwa, who was born on August 11, 1938, in Karachi, in what is now Pakistan, and moved to Lahore shortly after, was a little child in 1947 when the terrible Partition of the Indian Subcontinent took place. She had polio as a child and received her education at home until she was 15 years old, reading a lot. She subsequently continued on to Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore where she obtained a BA. Sidhwa married at the age of nineteen, and the first of her three children was born not long after. She hid her literary talent due to the demands of a family. Every time there was a bridge game, she claims, she would sneak away and write. Nevertheless, a whole new world has opened up for me since I was published. However, she claims that "I was taught for many years that Pakistan was too distant in time and place for Americans or the British to empathize with. She participated in the 1975 Asian Women's Congress on behalf of Pakistan as a vocal advocate for women's rights during this period.

8.1 Cultural Assimilation of Feroza and the Application of Bhabha's Theory of Hybridity

The idea of identity crisis is relevant in diasporic writing, and the protagonist in the work under study undergoes several changes. The protagonist of the book experiences cultural displacement and identity crises during this process. Because of her indigenous cultural roots, to use Said's terminology, she was unable to fully assimilate a foreign culture.

At both the metropolitan and periphery levels, identity is crucial in post-colonial literature. In terms of superiority and inferiority, the discussion is exceptional. While the west is corrupt and admirable, the east is undeveloped, illogical, and illiterate. Because of exploitation in their countries, people from the third world integrate into western culture and lose sight of their own identity, as evidenced in postcolonial literature. Postcolonial writers use a technique known as imitation in their writings. Immigrants adopt western culture and live according to it. They acquire a new identity as a result of the process itself, one that neither the imitated nor the local society accepts. As a result, identity crises take on several forms, and the victims of these crises expand their search for identity. They typically succeed for a while before failing.

The story examines how the clash of civilizations and the ongoing costs of ethnic profiling have strained the relationship between the East and the West. According to Hall (1996), the term "race" should not be interpreted as relating to genetic makeup but rather as a "floating signifier" with an ephemeral meaning. Sidhwa attempts to examine the relationship and assimilation between two various, nearly opposed cultures in this setting. One of the writer's main concerns is the postcolonial portrayal of the colonized, thus she seeks to investigate its implications. She makes an effort to address the problems and causes of imitation as well as the search for identity loss and repositioning in relation to racial prejudice. Thus, the same problem is raised, demonstrating America's superiority complex and its insistence on treating Eastern cultures and people as "Others" within the context of their own cultural and political identities, while Easterners desire to adopt American culture while retaining their own cultural values and identities.

In post-colonial literature, particularly in South Asian literature, the topic of identity is at the centre of discussion. Due to their personal experiences with identity problems in the west, Pakistani writers place a high value on the context of identity. As a result, the term "identity" is controversial. Dislocation is the main source of identity difficulties in Pakistani writers. The same images of identity at home and in the diaspora are presented in An American Brat Sidhwa (2012). Pakistani identity is portrayed as being traditional, constrained, and infused with backwardness, whereas American cultural identity is portrayed as being liberal in every way. As a result, those who are diasporic are affected by this clash of cultures. 'An American Brat' presents a fine example of identity crises which have been portrayed through various characters in the novel. The immigrants have the vision to emulate the freedom found in the west and ultimately lose their native identity. In this regard, the movie "An American Brat" is a great illustration of how different characters have presented identity crises.

In the book, Sidhwa depicts Feroza's suffering at the hands of her own culture. She does not, however, chase the American dream; instead, her mother sends her to America for a decent education under the guidance of her American uncle Manek. Even after arriving in America, the main character did not at first seem to enjoy herself. Through mimicry, Feroza loves her liberal position, but towards the book's conclusion she loses her sense of self and becomes melancholy. As her boyfriend David pushes her away and rejects her, her friend Ghazal helps her maintain her composure. Even her faith and customs are rejected, along with her native Pakistan.

Postcolonial literature's use of identity is two-dimensional. Identity is defined as being based on similarity and unit, which is required, as opposed to identity construction through discontinuity, which is more accurate and related to the established country. The first is a result of diaspora. Even when they relocate to the west, people from third-world nations nevertheless have the same identities there. Consequently, the terms illogical and uncivilized are applied to them. Sidhwa, an American brat, exposes stereotypical views of the East as Feroza and her uncle Manek are made fun of and insulted. They are labelled as dumb and given the word "desis." While Sidhwa in this context is depicting the identity of Pakistani people from an American perspective, Feroza and Manek are stripped of their identity and essentialized with the same identity that westerners typically give to the eastern people. The protagonist of the story suffers from identity difficulties as a result of traps built into the staircase, which stands for American dominance over countries in the developing world. The tragedy instils Feroza's identity with fear, gloom, and doubt.

The young Pakistani woman cannot confront the harshest realities that exist for Pakistanis in America. When Feroza, a student, observes that Manek used to frequent upscale eateries for

delectable lunches and dinners, she feels insulted and uneasy about living in these desi reality. He typically departs the hotel without paying the bill using various justifications; they (Feroza and Manek) surveyed the menu and, after discussion and procrastination during which Manek made the following comment two or three times, Manek said, "Don't worry about the prices-order what you like... I have coupons. 'We pay for one dinner and get other free.

These depictions of brown people via the western prism create a mocked identity. As Feroza, the novel's protagonist, behaves contemptuously in her first visit to America, they depict the usual identity of Pakistani people. She behaves like a typical girl: she wears an improper outfit and has a desi accent, which her uncle Manek enjoys calling desi. She also avoids glancing at Americans, which is a sign of a third-world fool in America. Feroza's position is unclear because she can't uphold it while maintaining her desi identity, and she also can't absorb American culture because, to Feroza, it's full of filth because she's assimilating it from an exotic place. Her search for who she is is in peril. Diaspora identities are locked in hybrid cultures that immobilize people and prevent them from moving, advocating the postcolonial experience ingrained by colonial occurrence in the mind, the collective cataleptic of the colonized nation that cannot be quelled.

In order to maintain her place, Feroza is compelled to imitate American culture, which could lead to a rich life—as she has observed in her uncle Manek, who has grown conceited and self-important in his position. As he changes his name and assumes an American identity, Manek has assimilated American society. Unexpectedly, Feroza discovers that Manek Junglewalla has changed into Mike Junglewalla, who is making an effort to blend into American culture.

As a result, Manek begins to educate Feroza "How to Live in America," showing her how to use an elevator, dress comfortably in jeans and paint, travel to the world of rock stars, and generally enjoy herself in the United States. Her identity is transformed in this way. Since she creates numerous identities and rejects her own, Americans do not accept her identity as American, leading to the concept of multiple identities crises. She also rejects her native country in imitation and loses her sense of self in America. She criticizes her own culture over the phone because she feels that the adopted culture is more modern and pure.

When Feroza is joyful and thinking back on the annoying incidents when she was expelled from the cinema in Lahore, she exhibits her adaption of an American persona in Harvard. In America, happiness is a representation of a woman's freedom. As she enrolls in a university where drinking, smoking, prostitution, and dancing are prohibited, she exclusively assimilates to American culture. Despite this, she does not give a damn and eventually accepts American culture. Additionally, Jo is crucial to her assimilating into American culture. As she could not do that in Pakistan, she trains her to speak in American, wear jeans, t-shirts, blouses, and even her legs are depicted bare in the narrative. In Pakistan, it's impolite to expose your legs (p. 151). Feroza also complains to Jo that she shouldn't bring males home, but Jo encourages her to interact with them by saying that she is not used to boys. OK, fine, acclimate to them. In Jo's company, Feroza develops a dependence on drinking and the company of boys; her identity is completely altered by her adoption of the American way of life, while she still feels regret and considers her family in Pakistan. She has adapted to American society, nevertheless.

She then meets David and develops feelings for him. Their physical proximity to one another causes them to feel sexually attracted to one another. She does not feel embarrassed about being an American citizen to marry a Jewish lad and asks her family in Pakistan for approval when David's parents inquire about her religion. Due to her caste and religion, Feroza's situation is intolerable, yet her children continue to stand by her. Bapsi Sidhwa demonstrates how children are encouraged to adopt American culture. Not just Feroza, but also the others, are dissatisfied with her parental culture.

In order to stop Feroza from being married to David, her mother Zareen finally makes it to America. Feroza and Daivd welcome her. Her mother threatens Feroza because she plans to marry a Jew, which is against Zoroastrian tradition and belief. She won't be able to go to her grandma and parents' funeral if she marries a Jewish lad. The conflict between two cultural identities occurs in the setting of both mother and daughter. While Feroza takes her mother in an American manner, Zareen wants Feroza to understand in a French manner; and she will have to look at it her way. Not in her culture! She can't just throw her past away like that. Her bones contain it. In order to accept her own cultural identity and favour American culture, Feroza is no longer in a position to do so. But the fights between the mother and daughter continue. Finally, the mother herself loses sight of the reason for her trip while having fun in America with Feroza and David.

As Zareen expresses interest in American culture, her identity is called into question. When she tells David about Zoroastrian traditions and customs, her American cultural identity relaxes her attitude toward him, but David simply dismisses her opinion and prefers his Jewish culture.

David's outright rejection of Parsi culture serves as a classic illustration of how east and west interact, with the west demonstrating its supremacy over the east through David. David discovers that Feroza and his culture are incompatible and that they cannot coexist. As a result, he reconsiders and leaves Feroza, with the justification that he found another employment in California. Feroza, though, is startled and uneasy. She is unable to travel to Pakistan or leave the United States. She now has the option to wed any one of her three Pakistani relatives. She is now prepared to reflect on her history in order to protect her priceless identity and assimilate the culture, religion, society, music, and memories she had of Pakistan. She feels compelled by her current identity to recall her previous identity, which was natural and pure, but because she has changed, she is unable to do so.

Feroza's identity is rejected by both her native culture and the American culture, as demonstrated by Bapsi Sidhwa. Her quest for individuality is thus in danger. Her freedom from a constrained culture that was full of poverty, insecurity, and the oppression of women based on discrimination against women was provided by American culture, despite the fact that it brought her prosperity and happiness. Her presence throughout the entire book is a result of the impersonated identity. She is not yet prepared to return to Pakistan, even though staying in America would be preferable to leaving her life up to chance in Pakistan. She is therefore unable to impart all the tastes of life she enjoyed in America while they were illegal in Pakistan. Since Feroza, the novel's protagonist, fully assimilated American culture and was unable to reconstruct or adopt her earlier identity, she loses her identity in the context of mimicry. She is forced to choose between both cultures, but her difficult time in America has made it impossible for her to do so.

In terms of identification, Sidhwa's portrayal of the characters is accurate and authentic. Sidhwa is believed to represent a certain aspect of American life because she lived there for her entire life. Her description of how Feroza was portrayed might therefore relate to her own experiences in America. She relocates and moves around a lot, developing her own identity through a certain style. The work explores themes such as immigration, identity crises, identity loss, identity relocation, homelessness, achieving prominence, dreaming of liberty and liberation, orientation towards sexuality, cultural limits, and social taboos. These topics are all based on the novel's true identity crises. The characters' struggle for identity never ends, and neither their native nor foreign identities are acknowledged. Male characters are unharmed whereas female characters fail because they have the same identity at home as their owners.

The complex question of identification is portrayed in the book anAmerican Brat and demands an explanation. The novel's characters make an effort to integrate themselves into American society. They find American society foreign, and neither does it accept nor recognize them. Feroza neglected her culture, which got her into difficulties because David had rejected her, which meant that American culture had rejected her as well. She also avoided cultural identification by denying her own culture. As a result, because Feroza lives in diaspora and is rejected by both cultures, the concerns of hybridity and identity might be addressed to her. Living in Diaspora is therefore a third space or hybrid that Feroza has occupied in a fortunate location. She has the option to choose between the best of both worlds—America and Pakistan—and she can enjoy all the freedoms of the free world without encountering any restrictions because American society is more accepting of Feroza than would be the case in her native country. The author was unable to resolve the identity problem through the portrayals of her characters, and was instead compelled to problematize the fragmented and contradictory nature of a never-ending search for oneself and identity.

8.2 Loss of Identity of Feroza in America

Diaspora refers to a community that has left its country of origin in the modern, globalized globe. They are an ethnic group that has immigrated, leaving their own country in search of wealth and prosperity. They always battle to maintain their ethnic identity because they are the minority in the host nation. Their intense affection for their native country, as well as their shared ethnic identity and sense of community, are the fundamental ideas of the diaspora. Diaspora refers to the dispersion of individuals from their native countries. They are frequently subjected to expatriation, extradition, migration, and relocation. The struggle of the migrants to settle and adapt in the host country is portrayed in diaspora literature. They never lose touch with their native lands. They never stop missing their home country and are still devoted to its traditions and customs.

Bapsi Sidhwa is born and raised in United India. It is really difficult to categorize some writers in this age of globalization; Sidhwa is one of them. She prefers to be portrayed as a Punjabi, Pakistani, and Parsee woman. Her books cover the Indian subcontinent's pre- and post-colonial periods. Her dual perspective, which is based on both the Pakistani and the Parsee worldview, is what makes

her fiction so extraordinary. She speaks for both the marginalized Parsee people and Pakistanis. Then selects a few major events from either her own life or the lives of others, and she gives them more detail to build a more substantial fictional world. The goals, struggles, and displacement of the Diaspora are portrayed in Sidhwa's fiction. She focuses on the societal issues that migrants face that drive them to emigrate. She was aware that her community was in danger of dying out physically and culturally, therefore she tried to portray this in her writings. She took on the job of documenting their cultural conundrums, and as a result, their issues with integration and adaptability play a significant role in Sidhwa's works. She makes use of pictures and symbols that are taken from their cultural practices and traditions. It makes sense why Sidhwa includes many Parsee traditional customs, traditions, and ideals in her books. She frequently uses religious metaphors, imagery, and language in her stories. In her novels, she has made an effort to delve into the Parsee mentality. Sidhwa depicts the anxieties plaguing the Parsee community in her books. These phobias are a result of marginalization, displacement, and cultural collision. The loss of ethnic stability and sterility are problems for the Parsee people.

Sidhwa has seen every gruesome act of violence that has taken place since the partition of India and Pakistan. She endured tyranny when she moved from Pakistan to America as a Diaspora. She describes her personal experience with the division of the Indian subcontinent in her book an American Brat. Multiculturalism has its roots in culture, which is a verb that meaning to grow and nourish. One of the most crucial ideas in social science is culture. Without a thorough comprehension of that society's culture, studying that society is insufficient. A sixteen-year-old Feroza's heartbreaking experiences while studying abroad in America are portrayed in an American Brat. Her

Her parents are members of Pakistan's traditional culture. They are worried about Feroza's development since he is adopting an orthodox and conservative mentality. Cyrus Ginwalla and Zareen are taken aback by her conservatism. In order to improve her education and avoid her more fanatical attitude, her mother plans to send her to America.

The patriarchal social structure of Pakistani society had a significant impact on Feroza's behavior as she developed into an orthodox and closed-minded woman. Concerned by her traditional attitude on life, Zareen. She chooses to send her on vacation to the USA. She believes that exploring new places will broaden her perspective. Feroza will be able to shed her puritanical attitude. Zareen is genuinely overjoyed. She begins daydreaming of living in a glamorous Hollywood and rock star world. The novel's main theme is the cultural difficulties and identity fragmentation that a Pakistani woman has when she leaves her country. Feroza experiences the rush of freedom at the Kennedy airport.

Feroza is taken aback by the joy and glitz of the steel and glass tubes. She is shocked by her encounter with the question-asking passport official. She becomes aware for the first time that she is in a foreign nation. In fact, the novel's plot shows how the collision of Parsee and American society hurts Feroza deeply. An American Brat illuminates Feroza's inner, outer, social, and cultural difficulties in the book. The storyline of the book details Feroza's trip, her search for identity, and her meeting with American culture. Feroza, a victim of patriarchal oppression in Pakistani society, encounters an odd cultural clash at Kennedy Airport. She is forced to leave her "mother culture." She finds it difficult to fit into the strange American culture.

8.3 Cultural Conflicts between Parsee Culture and American Culture

The idea of cultural fusion is the foundation of the novel an American Brat. She cannot simply be classed as a Parsee novelist due to the breadth of her interests. Her books are remarkably dissimilar from one another in terms of topic matter and literary style. Her literature covers a wide range of subjects, including female sexual oppression, cultural dislocation, and relocation. Her writing also touches on issues related to women's issues, migratory trends, and marriage. Her treatment of such diverse subjects is evidence of her development as a potent author, astute observer of human society, and astute storyteller. She is arguably the best English-language novelist in Pakistan. Her novels have a rich scattering of ideas that resist easy categorization.

In The American Brat, Sidhwa illustrates Feroza's cultural clash as she tries to fit into American culture. The story of a young woman travelling through three cultures—her own Parsee culture, Islamic culture, and western civilization—is told in the novel. The core of the book is Feroza's journey to America, her education in life, and her development into a mature young woman. In American Brat, there are a number of cultural issues between Parsees and Muslims, Parsees and wives, mothers and daughters, young and elderly, conservative and progressive, East and West. Sidhwa has created a stunning portrait of contemporary immigrants' perceptions and experiences

of American society. The protagonist of the book is Feroza Ginwalla. She is a sixteen-year-old Parsee living in a wealthy little household in Lahore. She rejects her mother's attire of a sleeveless blouse and Saree because she is adhering to the strict Islamic law and is greatly offended by the Islamic way of life. The tale explores Feroza's transformation in the west and how her outlook on life alters. The novel's premise is centred on expatriate experiences that dramatically alter peoples' perspectives and mindsets. Additionally, the issue of intercommunity marriage is covered throughout the book. Although Feroza is not depicted in the plot as a typical teenage girl, she has demonstrated her ability to adjust into American culture. Sidhwa's postcolonial literature discusses the subject of globalisation in terms of the power structures that have developed as a result of western imperialism. The women who experience the disruption of peaceful postcolonial existence are those who are most impacted by this process. Sidhwa's female characters in his books go through a process of assimilation and alienation. An American Brat focuses on the problem of women's hybrid identities. It's interesting how the work explores the idea of the fixed identity, highlighting the contribution of cultural decay and gender discrimination.

In American Brat, Feroza's various identities are revealed to be the primary reason for her horrifying ordeals. The book provides a window into American life and draws comparisons between liberal American culture and living and orthodox Pakistani society. With her new surroundings, Feroza maintains a tense relationship that swings between admiration and alienation. Dangerously torn between two civilizations is Feroza. American licentiousness and conservative Parsinism are at odds.

Feroza is taught the honour of labour by Manek. The household is run by the family as a whole. We folks here value our time extremely highly. Together, the husband and wife manage the household. Due to the high expense of living, it is quite challenging to exist alone in America. The tragic experiences of a migrant who suffers from cultural misunderstanding are depicted in Feroza's story. To avoid being persecuted for their religion, travelers flee their home countries. However, they find it quite difficult to adapt to the other nation. The migrants must deal with fresh problems and difficulties. Sidhwa's postcolonial literature discusses the subject of globalization in terms of the power structures that have developed as a result of western imperialism. The women who experience the disruption of peaceful postcolonial existence are those who are most impacted by this process.

Sidhwa's female characters in his books go through a process of assimilation and alienation. She has assimilated two cultures and is the sufferer of shattered identities. Although she likes American values and sexual freedom, she does not despise Pakistan. Feroza does, however, experience a sense of dislocation and a sense of not belonging as a newbie, but this feeling is more manageable because it is experienced by thousands of other arrivals just like her. Feroza has cultural disorientation and feels alienated in America. Sidhwa affirms the reality that tradition and modernity, the two opposing poles, cannot bring about peaceful coexistence among people due to their mutual hostility. Her fake assimilation causes alienation as the cultural interaction tears her identity apart.

To sum up, Sidhwa's post-colonial literature focuses on her concern for the underprivileged, their notions of exile and home, and themes of homelessness, cultural displacement, and moving diasporic experiences. The socio-cultural approach aids in the exploration of the different ethnic pluralities and cross-currents covered in their post-colonial literature. Sidhwa looks at the issues faced by migrants who are uprooted, evicted, and marginalized.

8.4 The character of Zareen

Beginning with her point of view, Zareen conveys her deep concern for one's individuality. The story begins with Zareen being extremely anxious about raising her daughter in a world without modernism. Zareen talks to Cyrus, her husband, about Feroza's restricted thinking.

Zareen is upset that her daughter has adopted a rigid outlook and attitude identical to that of the Parsis, making her an outcast in her neighborhood. America receives Feroza. Feroza follows the elders' rules in Pakistan during her voyage, but as soon as she arrives in America, she starts to alter.

Her mother is extremely upset by Feroza's choice to wed Jewish man David Press. So she travels to America to prevent her disobedient daughter from getting married to a non-Parsi. Zareen tries to convince Feroza that if she marries David, she will be cut off from her religion and family. She would never be permitted to enter the Parsi houses of worship or take part in her parents' or grandparents' funeral rites. Zareen is committed to distracting Feroza. She advises Feroza to put males out of her mind and focus on her studies. She tries her hardest to persuade her daughter

Feroza to reconsider her decision. She desires that Feroza reconsider her choice to wed David Press. Zareen becomes enraged when Feroza refuses to grant her request.

David feels obligated to defend his position when Zareen insists on upholding her traditional duties by lavishly showering David's relatives with presents and staging a lavish wedding. Zareen poses as being in favour of the union but insists on the customs and ceremonies, which David finds objectionable. David hears her describe the Parsi wedding rites and traditions. She does this to show David how different their cultures are and gradually distances him from Feroza. David recoils in horror as Zareen performs a ceremony to throw out the evil eye enchantment that she believes is plaguing Feroza. David leaves Denver after realising the differences between the two civilizations.

It's already too late when Zareen decides, toward the end of the book, to take back parental authority by taking a flight from Lahore to Denver, where Feroza is now a hotel-management student. Her daughter is already a "American brat," a woman with her own thoughts and beliefs who enjoys having a choice.

Summary

An interesting depiction of a young Pakistani immigrant's experience in the 1970s in the US may be found in "An American Brat" by Bapsi Sidhwa. The story also discusses the reluctance and apprehension felt by various sects in Pakistan as a result of the shift from Bhutto's liberal to Zia's conservative administration.

Keywords

Absorb: adopt

Acclimate: get used

Acknowledged: recognized

Annoying: irritating

Blend: fit

Confront: face

Depictions: images

Dissatisfied: unhappy

Doubt: uncertainty

Employment: job

Emulate: enjoy

Exceptional: unique

Favour: prefer

Gloom: darkness

Harshest: worst

Justifications: excuses

Moremodern: updated

Prejudice: discrimination

Recall: look back

Relevant: important

Self Assessment

1. Postcolonial writers use a technique known as _____ in their writings.

A. Imitation

B. Creativity
C. Learning
D. Metaphor

2. Immigrants adopt _____ culture and live according to it.
A. Eastern
B. Western
C. Southern
D. Northern

3. _____ identity is portrayed as being traditional, constrained, and infused with backwardness.
A. Indian
B. American
C. Pakistani
D. Canadian

4. Which cultural identity is portrayed as being liberal in every way?
A. Indian
B. American
C. Pakistani
D. Canadian

5. Under whose guidance Feroza is sent to America for a decent education?
A. Uncle Manek
B. Jo
C. Zareen
D. Cyprus

6. Who departs the hotel without paying the bill using various justifications?
A. Jo
B. Zareen
C. Cyprus
D. Manek

7. In order to maintain her place, who is compelled to imitate American culture.
A. Manek
B. Jo
C. Feroza
D. Zareen

8. Who begins to educate Feroza "How to Live in America"?
A. Manek
B. Jo
C. Feroza
D. Zareen

9. Who complains to Jo that she shouldn't bring males home?

A. Manek

B. Jo

C. Feroza

D. Zareen

10. For whom Feroza develops feelings?

A. Manek

B. David

C. Cyprus

D. Jo

11. Whose quest for individuality is in danger?

A. Feroza

B. Zareen

C. Jo

D. Manek

12. Feroza's parents are members of _____ traditional culture.

A. America's

B. Canada's

C. Pakistan's

D. India's

13. The idea of _____ fusion is the foundation of the novel an American Brat.

A. Social

B. Cultural

C. Political

D. Economical

14. Who is the protagonist of the novel an American Brat?

A. Feroza Ginwalla

B. Manek

C. Zareen

D. Jo

15. What is the age of Feroza?

A. 13

B. 14

C. 15

D. 16

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	B	3.	C	4.	B	5.	A
6.	D	7.	C	8.	A	9.	C	10.	B

11. A 12. C 13. B 14. A 15. D

Review Questions

1. Discuss Cultural Assimilation of Feroza in detail.
2. Discuss Bhabha's theory of hybridity in the context of the novel*an American Brat.*
3. Explain in detail how Feroza loses her identity in America.
4. Discuss the cultural conflicts between Parsee Culture and American Culture.
5. Write the character sketch of Zareen.

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Unit 09: Jean Rhys: Wide Sargasso Sea

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Objectives

After reading this Unit, the students will be able to:

- Learn the life and achievements of the writer.
- Understand the theme of race, relations and prejudice.
- Comprehend the theme of oppression of slavery.

Introduction

Wide Sargasso Sea is a 1966 novel by Jean Rhys. It is a well-received fictional work that borrows its concept and lead character from Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane Eyre.

The story of Antoinette Mason, a West Indian who marries an unnamed man in Jamaica and travels back to his house in England after their marriage (known in Jane Eyre as Bertha), is chronicled in the novel. Antoinette goes insane and exhibits frequent violence because she is trapped in an unhappy marriage and living in a harsh environment. Her husband keeps her in the attic of his Thornfield home. The only people who are aware of Antoinette are him and Grace Poole, the caregiver he hired to take care of her. The unknown spouse of Antoinette is eventually revealed to be Mr. Rochester, who would go on to become Jane Eyre's beloved.

9.1 Introduction to the Writer

On August 24, 1890, Jean Rhys was born in Roseau, Dominica. Her father was a Welsh doctor. She was sent to England when she was sixteen years old to live with an aunt, attend the Perse School in Cambridge, and eventually enroll at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Although Dominica would have an impact on her writing, Rhys would only visit her hometown once, in 1936. After her father passed away, Rhys was obliged to undertake a variety of jobs in England, including those as a mannequin, an artist's model, a book's ghostwriter, and a chorus girl for a travelling theatrical group.

She and her French-Dutch journalist and songwriter husband, Jean Lenglet, relocated to Paris in 1919. She gave birth to a baby that year, but he passed away at the age of three weeks. Her daughter was born later. Rhys met Ford Madox Ford at about the same time, and while her husband was serving time for unlawful financial dealings, they had an affair. Ford supported Rhys' writing and contributed to his debut book, The Left Bank, a collection of short stories, by writing its

introduction. Lenglet and Rhys' union ended in divorce. Rhys would get married once again. She became a widow after every one of these unions.

Rhys's first book, Quartet (1929), which was first released in Britain as Postures, was purportedly based on his relationship with Ford. This book introduced Rhys's sensitive, seductive, helpless, and sometimes self-defeating heroine, a theme that would recur frequently in his later works. After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie (1930), Voyage in the Dark (1934), which is thought to be Rhys's most autobiographical work, and Good Morning Midnight (1936) are later works (1939).

About twenty years after that, Rhys vanished from view. Many people believed she had passed away. Following that, the BBC in Britain created a drama based on Rhys' Good Morning Midnight in 1958. Her Wide Sargasso Sea was published in 1966 to rave reviews.

For the majority of her life, Rhys received little critical appreciation for her writings, and when it did come in her latter years, she claimed it came too late. Because Rhys was ahead of her time, according to modern critics who have studied her work, she mostly went undetected in the literary world. Particularly feminist critics think that Rhys's topic of exploited women as victims was not readily accepted in his day. But following the release of Wide Sargasso Sea, Rhys received the queen's honorary title of CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) in 1978. For her most recent book, she also received the W. H. Smith Award, the Royal Society of Literature Award, the Arts Council Bursary, and other honors. She passed away in Exeter on May 14, 1979. Posthumously, her incomplete autobiography with the working title Smile Please was released (1979).

The most popular of Jean Rhys's books was Wide Sargasso Sea, which was released in 1966 toward the end of his writing career. The book was favorably received when it was initially released, and copies have never run out. Academics and literary critics are still interested in it now. There could be a number of reasons for Wide Sargasso Sea's appeal. The intriguing tale of a lonely young woman who is brought to the brink of insanity by her desperation to be loved can make this book appealing to the average reader. On the other hand, literary scholars consider Rhys's book to be rich in its depiction of the detrimental repercussions of colonization on a conquered nation and the crippling effects of sexual exploitation of women. Wide Sargasso Sea may also appeal to readers who are interested in multiculturalism because of Rhys' insider account of nineteenth-century life and culture on a Caribbean island.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, Rhys tries to describe Bertha Mason's personality from Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. Rhys was interested in discovering what led Bertha Mason to lose her mind. Rhys adds conflict to her plot in this way. There are conflicts between freed slaves and their former masters, widespread prejudices towards black people, and differences in worldviews between the island's new English immigrants and the island's longtime white plantation owners. Men and women are at odds with one another as they attempt to satiate their wants through their partnerships. The protagonist must contend with an internal conflict between her emotional and rational states of being, which is the final and most difficult conflict.

Antoinette, the female lead in Wide Sargasso Sea, tells the story in the opening chapter. She explains that she is the only one living alone on the little Caribbean island where her family's plantation is located. After the recent emancipation of slaves in the British Empire, the story begins in 1839. The liberation has left her family in poverty, but it has also forced them to deal with the tension of being freed slaves as the island's white and black residents work out their new romantic alliances.

Part 1 of Rhys' story depicts him as being alone. Antoinette seems to be the key character who is most affected by the solitude. She resides with her mother Annette Cosway as well as her brother Pierre, who has an unspecified mental illness. At Antoinette's cost, Antoinette's mother devotes most of her time on raising Pierre. Antoinette is compelled to look elsewhere for love. She makes an effort to become friends with the young black kids that reside in the neighboring rural area, but she is jeered at and even threatened. She then turns to Christophine, the chef for the household and Antoinette's adopted mother. Antoinette claims that the family would have perished without Christophine. The child of a friend is introduced to Antoinette by Christophine. Tia is the name of the girl. Tia and Antoinette spend several days together eating and swimming. However, one day Antoinette gets upset with Tia and refers to her as a "nigger." She herself has used the term "white nigger" in the past. The two little girls fight, and their friendship is over.

Antoinette's mother befriends a new white family at about the same time; Christophine refers to them as "trouble." In order to buy fabric for gowns for herself and Antoinette so they can dress nicely, Antoinette's mother sells the last of her valuables. Antoinette's mother then weds Mr. Mason not long after.

The family's estate, Coulibri, is renovated with Mason's funds. Mason, on the other hand, treats the black servants carelessly, which causes Antoinette's mother to worry that something terrible may happen. But Antoinette feels secure. The only place she feels safe is in Coulibri. The family's fortune is not good, though. Black residents in the area dislike Mr. Mason, and one night they set fire to the house. An enraged mob waits outside for the family as they try to flee. Blacks who are enraged only disperse when they witness the Mason family parrot trying to soar over their heads while his feathers are on fire. For them, the burning parrot is a bad sign. Antoinette spots Tia as the family flees and begins to run to her, thinking that they are still friends. However, Antoinette is struck in the head by a rock that Tia threw at her, rendering her comatose. After a protracted sickness, Antoinette later finds out that her mother has been taken away and that her brother Pierre has passed away. Currently, Antoinette resides with her aunt Cora. The narrative of Antoinette's experiences at a convent school concludes this section.

The man who has married Antoinette tells the story's second half from the beginning. Throughout the narrative, he goes unidentified. However, it is easily assumed that this is Bronte's Edward Rochester because it has been acknowledged that Rhys wrote Wide Sargasso Sea as a prelude to Jane Eyre and because the information she provides about the male narrator fit Bronte's male protagonist.

After leaving the convent school, Antoinette married Rochester. Richard Mason, Antoinette's stepbrother, orchestrated this union. If Antoinette doesn't consent to marry a guy of Mason's choosing, she will not receive her inheritance. For this same purpose, Rochester, the younger son of a British aristocrat, has travelled to Jamaica.

In a letter to his father, Rochester refers to the newlyweds' return to their "small estate in the Windward Islands." Ganbois is the location; it is Antoinette's inheritance. Everything about the island, from the hues of the countryside to the smell that Antoinette puts in her hair, seems too vivid to Rochester, who is recovering from an illness. Rochester does guarantee Antoinette "peace, pleasure, [and] safety," but he is eventually unable to deliver on any of these promises. He is feeling very down about his marriage and fears that he may have sold his soul for gain.

Rochester, who is often plagued by uncertainty over his union and his wife, is easily convinced by a mystery letter he receives from Daniel Cosway, who makes the claim that he is Antoinette's half-brother. Cosway indicates that Antoinette is not a virgin and informs Rochester about Antoinette's mother's instability. In fact, Cosway identifies her black cousin Sandi Cosway as Antoinette's previous sexual partner. Rochester no longer wants anything to do with Antoinette, despite the fact that in letters prior to this one he appeared to be trying to build a relationship with her. The narration of Rochester ends with him reading a voodoo book.

Now the tale is continued by Antoinette. She is unhappy since Rochester won't interact with her. She visits Christophine and requests a potion to entice Rochester to have a sexual relationship with her. Antoinette receives what she requests, despite Christophine's concerns that "if the man don't love you, I can't make him love you."

Daniel sends Rochester another note, in which he requests a visit, which Rochester fulfils. "Old Cosway's" illegitimate son, according to Daniel. Because Cosway never acknowledged him, Daniel feels upset. Daniel also expands on Antoinette's relationship with Sandi for Rochester. When Rochester gets home, he briefly interrogates Antoinette but won't let her finish her sentence. She insisted and gave him some background information. In the course of her story, Rochester refers to Antoinette as Bertha, another allusion to Jane Eyre by the Bronte sisters. In Bronte's work, Bertha was Rochester's first wife and the insane person who resided in the attic.

Rochester wakes up feeling ill and remembers little of the previous evening's events. He suspects that he may have been poisoned. He makes love to Amelie, a servant girl who brings meals to his chamber later, once he is feeling better. Rochester admits that he does not love Antoinette when she confronts him about his sexual encounter with Amelie.

Antoinette, who is in extreme distress, is assisted by Christophine. Christophine is confronted by Rochester, who orders her to leave. Christophine tries her hardest to defend Antoinette, pleading with Rochester to return at least half of the cash so that Antoinette can start over. He should leave Antoinette with her, she instructs. Rochester, though, is a perplexed man. He searches for evidence that Antoinette is in love with him but is unsuccessful. He prepares to sell the house by packing up all of their possessions. Antoinette is being taken to England, and he calls her his "lunatic".

The third part introduces Grace Poole, another one of Bronte's characters, as the new narrator. To take care of Antoinette, Poole has been hired. Due to the passing of his father and brother, Rochester is now an extremely wealthy man. He is travelling rather than being at the English estate.

Rochester's house seems "secure" to Grace, who accepts the position. Antoinette takes over the narrating at that point.

It's clear that Antoinette's thoughts are torn between reality and her dreams. She confuses the current with recollections, making it difficult to tell what is real and what is just in her head. She does, however, acknowledge having slept with her cousin Sandi. She also discusses how miserable and alone it is for her to live in Rochester's estate's attic. She mentions starting a fire in the house before returning to her memories of Coulibri on fire. Antoinette takes hold of a blazing candle as this little segment of the story comes to a conclusion. Finally, she replies that I understand "why I was brought here and what I have to do."

9.2 Race, Relations and Prejudice

We learn about the many groups of inhabitants on the island in the first 86 pages of Wide Sargasso Sea. There is a mixing of former black slaves, long-time residents of the island who are creole white, and mixed-race people who are typically the offspring of slave owners who raped their slaves in the past. English-speaking whites from other parts of Europe are also present. These white people give the island resources, social standing, and decency. They stand out from the more established and esteemed white residents of the island. On the island, we observe the emergence of a racist and oppressive culture.

Here, the black folks insult Antionette and her family by using a slur frequently used against black people. These underprivileged white Creoles are given the status of former slaves because to the idea of a "white nigger." The same term that is used against black people has been applied to white people in an effort to maintain their inferior status.

The connections between the races in Jamaica at the time this book was written were complicated. English whites who were wealthy and in positions of power (as usual) were given less respect than former slaves. The white former slave owners who remained on the island were outnumbered by the black ex-slaves and people of mixed races.

There is racial ambiguity on the island despite these obvious deviances. A mixture of white and black residents is produced by the significant number of mixed-race individuals. On her way to school, Antionette was the victim of an attack, which she narrates.

Sandi, Antionette's half-brother, intervenes to save her. He is black and the offspring of one of her father's slaves who was raped.

This demonstrates how people's relationships are complicated. Although they were both mixed-race lads, one appeared whiter than the other. They each chose a side in this situation, continuing to support his black side while the other supported his white side and blood relative. Due to the complicated racial identities on the island, racial tensions are heightened.

Due to the severe conflicts between blacks and whites in the 1950s, which had a clear enemy: the whites, Americans are accustomed to numerous racial scenarios between whites and blacks. However, Rhys addresses a more significant issue: a generalized racial animosity among all Jamaicans during the novel's time period, for which no one is to blame. Rhys doesn't just use racism; she also uses topics that her readers can readily identify with, such betrayal, infidelity, and a sense of not belonging.

Rhys puts Antoinette in this situation to illustrate her readers a number of things, including how Antoinette dealt with racism and prejudice, how she misunderstood racism, and the violence directed towards those who were discriminated against. By implying that Jamaicans are destructive by adding that "they are more alive than [Mr. Mason is], lazy or not, and they may be dangerous and vicious for reasons you wouldn't understand," Rhys further highlights how obvious racism toward white people is (29). Rhys uses Rochester and Antoinette to help readers better relate to the characters because he needs to demonstrate that races, Creoles, and white people cannot escape racism. The purpose of this technique is to demonstrate that Rochester and Antoinette are both victims and aids in forging a nuanced relationship between them based on their shared flaws as well as their differences in conflict and marital status.

9.3 The Theme of Oppression of Slavery

Wide Sargasso Sea is haunted by the ghost of enslavement and slavery. Part One of the book, which is set in the West Indies at the start of the nineteenth century, makes significant use of the former

slaves who labored on the sugar plantations owned by affluent Creoles. By the time Antoinette was a kid, the Emancipation Act had freed the slaves, but the black inhabitants of the island had not received any recompense, leading to antagonism and resentment between the servants and their white employers. Antoinette's mother, Annette, is particularly sensitive to the hostility that permeates many encounters between employers and employees.

Many of the connections in Rhys' book—not only those between blacks and whites—are shaped by slavery. After her husband's passing, Annette feels helpless and marooned at Coulibri Estate, repeatedly using the word "marooned." In the same way, Antoinette's love for and dependence on her husband condemn her to a state of captivity. Women's infantile reliance on spouses and fathers symbolizes a metaphorical form of slavery that is made concrete by Antoinette's ultimate physical enslavement.

Keywords

Abolished: eliminated

Account: view

Affected: effected

Caregiver: attendant

Chamber: room

Conflict: clash

Confronted: challenged

Credibility: trustworthiness

Crippling: debilitating

Deliberate: thoughtful

Deviances: diversions

Enslavement: captivity

Escalated: heightened

Exploitative: manipulative

Gain: money

Hostility: aggression

Inhabitants: people

Insane: Mad

Insanity: madness

Lead: protagonist

Obvious: clear

Patois: jargon

Perished: died

Perplexed: confused

Personality: character

Plagued: troubled

Prestigious: renowned

Release: publication

Renovated: refurbished

Repercussions: effects

Resentment: bitterness

Resided: lived

Stayed: remained

Unidentified: unnamed

Summary

The prestigious W. H. Smith Award and the Heinemann Award from the Royal Society of Literature were given to Wide Sargasso Sea. The book was also chosen by Random House as one of the top 100 novels published in the English language in the 20th century.

Wide Sargasso Sea is written in the trisect form with Parts One and Three narrated by Antoinette and Part Two narrated by Antoinette's husband. This shift in narrative voice, along with forward and backward movements through time and space, is quite different from the linear autobiographical Jane Eyre on which the characters are based. In the Parts narrated by Antoinette, Rhys uses the device of fragmentation and shifts tense from present to past making Antoinette's character seem disembodied. Antoinette's husband's narration is in past tense delivered by a nameless character, giving his account authority and credibility.

The shift in narrative voice also gives the reader insight into the cultural and psychological differences between the two characters. The husband, with his deliberate, educated tone, gives us a disturbed and disgusted image of Antoinette. Antoinette's simple language and patois evoke sympathy and show her as the victim of racial isolation and patriarchal oppression. We are able to view the developing madness from the outside and the inside.

The combination of whites and blacks and white/blacks in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea" produces a cutthroat atmosphere that makes Jamaica's inhabitants vulnerable. Racial tension is a significant theme in the book.

Even though slavery had been officially abolished, the bondage imposed by dependency became like slavery to ex-slaves and women alike. The hostility between ex-slave servants and their white employers escalated as the relationship changed from legal ownership to financial dependence, a figurative slavery. The fire at Coulibri illustrates this resentment of the black workers against the exploitative whites dramatically.

Women's dependence on their husbands and fathers was another form of financial slavery. Annette's marriage to Mr. Mason was an attempt to escape her captivity at Coulibri. The men in the novel married to increase their wealth. Women had no financial rights. This is summed up in Antoinette's explanation to Christophine, "And you must understand I am not rich now, I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him."

Self Assessment

1. When was Jean Rhys born?

A. On August 24, 1890

B. On August 24, 1891

C. On August 24, 1892

D. On August 24, 1893

2. What was the profession of Jean Rhys' father?

A. Her father was a Welsh teacher.

B. Her father was a Welsh doctor.

C. Her father was a Welsh lawyer.

D. Her father was a Welsh artist.

3. At what age she was sent to England to live with an aunt and to attend the Perse School at Cambridge?

A. 14

B. 15
C. 16
D. 17

4. What is the name of Jean Rhys' husband?
A. Jean Lenglet
B. Paul Lenglet
C. Paul Rhys
D. Jean Rhys

5. In which year *Wide Sargasso Sea*was published?
A. 1965
B. 1966
C. 1967
D. 1968

6. Jean Rhys' baby passed away at what age?
A. Of three months
B. Of three days
C. Of three weeks
D. Of three years

7. In part one of *Wide Sargasso Sea,* who seems to be the key character who is most affected by the solitude?
A. Rhys
B. Christophine
C. Annette Cosway
D. Antoinette

8. What is the name of Antoinette's mother in *Wide Sargasso Sea*?
A. Rhys
B. Christophine
C. Annette Cosway
D. Pierre

9. What is the name of Antoinette's brother in *Wide Sargasso Sea*?
A. Rhys
B. Christophine
C. Annette Cosway
D. Pierre

10. Who is Christophine in*Wide Sargasso Sea*?
A. Chef
B. Painter
C. Teacher
D. Doctor

11. With whom Antoinette spends several days together eating and swimming in *Wide Sargasso Sea*?

A. Jia
B. Tia
C. Cia
D. Eia

12. Who is Cora in Wide Sargasso Sea?

A. Antoinette's uncle
B. Antoinette's friend
C. Antoinette's aunt
D. Antoinette's cousin

13. In third part of *Wide Sargasso Sea,* who has been hired to take care of Antoinette?

A. Poole
B. Annette Cosway
C. Pierre
D. Tia

14. Antoinette's thoughts are torn between _____ and _____ in *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

A. Facts and figures
B. Ups and downs
C. Reality and her dreams
D. None of the above

15. Who in the area dislike Mr. Mason, and one night they set fire to the house?

A. Black residents
B. White residents
C. Both of the above
D. None of the above

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	B	3.	C	4.	A	5.	B
6.	C	7.	D	8.	C	9.	D	10.	A
11.	B	12.	C	13.	A	14.	C	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Write in detail about Jean Rhys.
2. Write the character sketch of Antoinette in*Wide Sargasso Sea.*
3. Discuss the theme of Race, Relations and Prejudice in *Wide Sargasso Sea.*
4. Discuss in detail the theme of oppression of slavery in *Wide Sargasso Sea.*
5. Discuss *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a postcolonial study.
6. Discuss *Wide Sargasso Sea* as an ecocritical study.
7. Explain the theme of women and powerin *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

8. Discuss Gender roles in in*Wide Sargasso Sea.*

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Unit 10: Jean Rhys: Wide Sargasso Sea

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Objectives

After reading this Unit, the students will be able to:

- Learn the episodes of magic and incantation in the novel.
- Understand the male domination and patriarchal power structure.
- Comprehend the characters and their roles in the novel.
- Discuss the themes of isolation, hunger and madness in the novel.

Introduction

Wide Sargasso Sea is a 1966 novel by Jean Rhys. It is a well-received fictional work that borrows its concept and lead character from Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane Eyre.

Numerous references are made to the concept of magic, and it is demonstrated through Christophine's special abilities; she serves as a significant representation of magic. She understands how to cast spells, is an expert in Obeah activities, and is obsessed with superstitious and paranormal ideas. Antoinette is integrated with voodoo mythology, which Christophine uses as inspiration for her paranormal tales. Antoinette thinks her mother has turned into a zombie, a corpse devoid of a soul. Antoinette thought it was unlucky to kill a parrot or see its death, thus she thought that when the Coulibri Estate burns down and the parrot bursts into flames, that was terrible luck.

10.1 The Episodes of Magic and Incantation in the Novel

No falser heavens, Rochester sadly muses to himself as he decides to remove Antoinette from Jamaica. No more freaking magic, please. The mystical, syncretic religions of the local Black population are practiced on the Windward Islands, where Granbois is situated. Christophine's special abilities, which are revered by her peers, come from her mastery of obeah rituals and her proficiency with spell casting. Christophine's superstitious ideas are incorporated by Antoinette, who uses them to interpret symbols and signs in the natural world. For instance, Antoinette shrinks in fear when she witnesses her mother's parrot burn alive on the night of the fire because she thinks it is unlucky to harm a parrot or witness its demise. Antoinette's only source of strength and independence is her understanding of magic.

The portrayal of a disturbed Creole outcast by Charlotte Bront in her gothic novel Jane Eyre served as the inspiration for the character of Antoinette. Rhys gives Bronte's character a backstory by charting her progression from a young, reclusive girl in Jamaica to a love-crazed lunatic in an English garret. Rhys helps us empathize with a person's mental and emotional degeneration by giving depth to Bront's one-dimensional madwoman. The typical female protagonists of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century literature, who are frequently more logical and self-restrained, are a long cry from Antoinette (as is Jane Eyre herself). By contrast, we see the potential risks of a vivid imagination and heightened sensitivity in Antoinette. Her struggle to fit into any specific community appears to be a contributing factor to her restlessness and instability. She is a white Creole who lives in both the Caribbean culture of her birth and the European civilization of her ancestors.

As a young girl who was largely left to her own ways, Antoinette delves within and discovers a world that can be both serene and horrifying. In the opening chapters of the book, we see the growth of a sensitive kid who seeks solace in the seclusion and isolation of the convent. She tries to break off her arranged marriage since it bothers her and she fears being hurt. The marriage is, in fact, culturally and traditionally inappropriate. She and her English husband, Mr. Rochester, are unable to communicate, and her past actions, particularly her relationship with a half-caste brother as a youngster, have tarnished Mr. Rochester's perception of her. Antoinette is unable to find a calm place for herself since she is an outcast inside her own family, a "white bug" to her contemptuous slaves, and an anomaly in her own husband's eyes. Beyond Bronte's pitying perspective, Rhys humanizes "Bertha's" unfortunate circumstance, allowing the reader to experience Antoinette's fear and agony.

10.2 Male Domination and Patriarchal Power Structure

In the first chapter of Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette's place as a subjugated and marginalized group in a post-emancipation society was established. Rochester is included in the second section, which is designed to highlight the idea of the quiet female. In the patriarchal society, Antoinette is pushed to the very bottom. She represents patriarchal domination in very typical ways, as evidenced by the way she is treated financially and spiritually. Antoinette doesn't give up, though, and occasionally she speaks out against the masculine hegemony.

Women's financial dependence on men in the patriarchal colonized society is a topic covered in Wide Sargasso Sea. Women are economically dependent on those in power and excluded from the center of power in such a society. Due to their subjugation as a result of their economic dependency on males, women's economic activities fell along with their social standing. Rhys examines the financial reliance her female characters have on the men in their lives. Antoinette loses her source of income and her independence. She is a victim of a loveless union that her stepfather and stepbrother contrived.

Her sorrow can readily be compared to Rochester's because Rochester, the younger son of an uncaring father, is abandoned and has always been tormented by his own shortcomings as well as his desire to possess and dominate. He successfully arranges a financially beneficial match in accordance with his father's plan and seeks to escape the domestic situation. Although Antoinette hesitates briefly, her resolve is as weak as a bird. Antoinette concedes to Rochester's half-joking promises and blandishments and consents to the union. Her spouse receives her 30,000-pound dowry in accordance with English 1aw. Antoinette ends up depending solely on her spouse and destitute. She cannot be independent if she lacks financial freedom.

According to English law, the wife gives her husband full ownership of all of her assets. Everything that was formerly the wife's property becomes her husband's after marriage. With the aid of the law, Mason is able to take the Coulibri Estate from Annette. In a similar manner, Rochester will also receive Granbois from Antoinette in addition to the dowry of 30,000 pounds. Without financial security, she is unable to fly. As time goes by, Rochester's desire for power grows stronger. His previous caution is wearing thin, and he begins to express his displeasure with Antoinette's approach to handling money. And soon their relationship and roles are inverted; Rochester is now in charge of making all the arrangements. Although Christophine originally emphasized to Antoinette the value of financial independence, it appears that Antoinette has grown totally reliant on Rochester because she is terrified of upsetting him if she needs financial assistance. Antoinette, who was formerly the hostess of Granbois, no longer has any authority over a single coin, making her independence impossible.

Rochester has a tremendous desire to acquire Antoinette, both materially and spiritually. He initially travels a long way to her house to implore her to agree to a marriage. He successfully gains

Antoinette's trust by luring her in with promises of happiness and security. So Antoinette can't help but fall in love with this man. She dons the dress he prefers. She treasures the love with her entire soul since it is so profound. Rochester had her in his grasp piece by piece. But once he has what he wants, he completely changes. When Rochester receives Daniel's letter, everything is different. Daniel is the child of a black servant and Mr. Cosway. He must battle in that evil world to establish his own position because he is a black Creole who is not allowed to inherit his father's wealth. He uses Antoinette, who marries a white man, as an outlet for his anger and hatred. He wants to exact revenge on white people by extorting money from Rochester. He claims that Rochester was duped into getting married to a woman who has "bad blood" and a crazy mother. The rejection of Antoinette by Rochester begins with this letter. It's time for him to express his true feelings. Since he has never loved Antoinette, he doesn't feel bad when he starts to alienate her. But because Antoinette cannot leave her husband and is bound to him by the idea that a woman should be faithful to her spouse for all time once she is married, she has been coerced, deceived, and trapped. She tries to dispel Daniel's rumors, but Rochester turns her down. Rochester's tone must be important. Antoinette is angry. As a result, he mutes Antoinette's voice in the role of colonial ruler. The capacity to speak for oneself is the ability to define one's identity and place in the world. From that point forward, Antoinette is continuously suppressed by the prevailing patriarchal and colonial power. The voice is leaving Antoinette.

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys exposes the harmful and powerful patriarchal power structures. Since all of the individuals in Rhys's book are members of patriarchal societies, they are evident in the economic, legal, family, and educational institutions that have an impact on all of the characters. In addition to standing for patriarchal beliefs, Mr. Rochester is a Victorian who thinks that female sexuality ought to be regulated. In order to demonstrate how Antoinette has been repressed throughout her life and how this has contributed to the development of her "madness," it is crucial to analyses the patriarchal power structure in Rhys's work.

When one considers the circumstances of Antoinette's mother, Annette, who is monetarily dependent upon males, the economic imbalance in a patriarchy becomes clear. She becomes so poor after the passing of her first husband that she is unable to provide for her family, and it is only through her marriage to Mr. Mason that her financial position is rectified. Due to her dependence on males, according to Maria Olaussen, Annette represents the patriarchal economic system's gender paradigm. She competes against other women for English protection and financial assistance only on the basis of her looks.

At the time when Wide Sargasso Sea is set, marriage was a means of securing financial support. Mary Wollstonecraft, a feminist, questioned why only males were trained for professions and not women in her 1792 essay Vindications of the Rights of Woman criticizing patriarchal educational systems. She thought that this was the reason why women needed to get married—so that they could be financially supported. Wide Sargasso Sea runs counter to Wollstonecraft's beliefs on marriage in that Mr. Rochester must wed Antoinette because he will not inherit from his father as the youngest son. He secures Antoinette's riches through marriage, making her totally dependent on him financially. If there is a son in the household, patriarchal law forbids women from inheriting money; inheritance only passes down the male line.

Richard Mason, Mr. Mason's son, is a perfect example of patriarchal law since, once his father passes away, he legally takes over as Antoinette's guardian and provider. Without her consent, he controls her actions and arranges her marriage to Mr. Rochester. In the majority of patriarchal family systems, the father is in charge of his wife and children, who are legally and financially reliant on him. Women are taught to respect their fathers, which helps the patriarchal family system endure throughout time. Antoinette is dependent on Mr. Rochester in the patriarchal family structure (both legally and monetarily), making it nearly impossible for her to leave him. Mr. Rochester utilizes this dependence to drive Antoinette insane.

10.3 Characters

Antoinette Cosway

Antoinette Cosway, the protagonist and partly narrator of the book, is a creole, or a person of European ancestry, born in the Caribbean. She continuously finds solace in the natural environment because of the isolation, exclusion, and brutality that characterize her relationships with people throughout the narrative. She observes the destruction of her family's home by a mob of enraged former slaves and the subsequent deterioration of her mother's mental state. For the sake of his financial security, she is wed to an Englishman she hardly knows. After a horrible wedding, her husband ultimately confines her to his attic, where her only option for emancipation is death.

The female lead, Antoinette, is a very little child at the start of the narrative. Her rough upbringing shaped her personality. Her dad passed away. Because of her brother's reliance on her mother, Antoinette is deprived of maternal love and must fend for herself. Christophine, the family cook, is the person who gives her the most support. Otherwise, Antoinette lives alone and is frequently afraid and lonely.

Except when she is by herself, Antoinette cannot find a place where she fits in. Compared to the wealthy white plantation owners, she is not as "white." In addition, she is not as "black" as the former slaves. She is regarded as an island foreigner in Jamaica and Dominica because her Creole ancestors originated from the Martinican island. The only time she feels secure is when she is by herself in Coulibri, which is destroyed by fire when she is still a small girl. When she later comes back to the property, she accuses her husband of further undermining her sense of security by bringing his bitterness and the deep pain he has caused her into the family home.

It is an unrequited love, despite the fact that she has fallen haplessly in love with her husband. She is further tormented by Rochester's infidelity, and eventually, like her mother, she withdraws into her own world.

Christophine

Christophine serves as Antoinette's surrogate mother, educating her about the black culture of the Caribbean and instilling in her a respect for the natural world and a belief in obeah. Notably, Christophine's voice introduces the book as she explains Annette's isolation from Spanish Town society. Christophine is the authoritative voice that both explains Antoinette to the readers and the world to Antoinette. The strength of her words and her capacity to conjure enchantment are matched by her knowledge of language, which allows her to effortlessly transition from French patois to a Jamaican dialect and back into English. She exudes omniscience, a close connection to the natural world and the tropics, and a keen awareness of both animal and human behavior.

Christophine is an outcast, much like Antoinette and her mother were. She dresses and speaks differently than the Jamaican blacks because she is from Martinique. She is a servant, but unlike the other black employees who work at Coulibri, when the Cosway family's finances decline, she stays loyal to the Cosway women, forming an alliance that the other servants scorn. Similar to Antoinette and her mother, Christophine is the target of vicious home rumors, yet she nevertheless commands some respect due to her understanding of magic.

Christophine is a commodified woman who was given to Annette as a wedding gift by the old Mr. Cosway, yet she is still fiercely independent. She stands in contrast to Annette since she is totally independent of men and implicitly doubts their intentions. When Mr. Rochester first arrives at Granbois, he feels Christophine's disdain and immediately links her to everything strange and twisted about his new Caribbean mansion and his unintelligible Creole wife. Christophine calmly observes Rochester's attempts to exert his male authority and threatens his English privilege. "Woman must have spunks to live in this evil world," she instructs Antoinette. The more Rochester questions his wife's sanity, the more vocal Christophine becomes in defending Antoinette. In the end, Christophine counsels Antoinette to leave her ruthless husband, citing her own independence as a model to follow. Christophine is still single despite having three children with three separate fathers, claiming "I thank my God. I keep my money. I don't give it to no worthless man." Christophine becomes Antoinette's more intelligent spokesperson after her final encounter with Rochester.

Mr. Rochester

More than a third of the book is narrated by Antoinette's young husband, Mr. Rochester, who describes Antoinette's mental decline in his own words. The appearance of Mr. Mason, another English aristocracy looking to make his fortune through a Creole heiress, in the earlier section of the book foreshadows his arrival in Jamaica and his forced marriage to Antoinette. Rochester is only referred to as "that man" or "my spouse" throughout the book, unlike Mason, who is never given a name. Rochester's anonymity emphasizes the assumed authority of his report in a story where naming characters is so crucial. He is the nameless creator, and because he is a white guy, he has the power and privilege to give other people identities. For instance, in an effort to set his bride apart from her insane mother, whose full name was Antoinette, he decided to rename her "Bertha." Later, he refuses to hear Antoinette's version of the tale and takes away both her voice and her name. He gives her a new name, "Marionetta," a cruel joke that captures Antoinette's flexible nature like a doll as he continues to shred her identity. In the end, he transforms Antoinette into a wild lunatic and treats her like a ghost. Rochester exaggerates his own cool, logical, and clearly English thinking; he asserts his entire English dominance over the Caribbean scenery and people. Rochester has completely abandoned his Creole wife and her cultural customs.

In Part Two, Rochester's narrative indicates that he and his estranged wife are more alike than different. Both individuals are effectively orphans who are left to fend for themselves after being left by their family members. Rochester, the father's youngest kid, has no legal entitlement to anything because his father already prefers the older child. Antoinette obtains an inheritance that is, at best, tainted because she was consistently overlooked by her mother in favour of her brother, Pierre. She is left to bear the weight of a fractured cultural identity, the animosity of the black community, the disrespect of the white community, and the burden of an abandoned estate. Both Rochester and Antoinette struggle with a feeling of belonging and identity, and they both feel apprehensive and uneasy about the arranged marriage. By comparing the two antagonists' feverish episodes and their similar encounters with real or imagined forests, Rhys draws even more connections between them.

Amelie

Amelie works as a maid at Ganbois, where Rochester and Antoinette move following their wedding. Amelie, says Rochester, reminds him of Marie Antoinette. Rochester has sex with Amelie the day after Antoinette sneakily mixes a potion into his drink. Amelie is subsequently given money so she can leave the island by his side.

Baptiste

At Ganbois, Baptiste serves as a manservant. He doesn't express it outright, but Antoinette has his sympathy, especially when Rochester compels her to leave Ganbois.

Bertha

Rochester calls Antoinette Bertha a few times. He explains to her that he enjoys the name Bertha and likes to imagine her as Bertha. This is Rhys' allusion to the Bronte novella in which Bertha serves as Rochester's first spouse.

Aunt Cora

When Antoinette's mother is taken away, Aunt Cora welcomes Antoinette into her house. Mr. Mason, Antoinette's stepfather, and Richard Mason, his son, are not liked by Aunt Cora. She also dislikes Edward Rochester, the prospective husband Richard has chosen for Antoinette. After Coulibri burns down and Antoinette is rendered unconscious, Aunt Cora takes care of her.

Annette Cosway

Antoinette's mother is Annette Cosway. When the story begins, Annette is mourning the loss of her first husband and is sad. She and her family are barely making ends meet. She has two children and limited resources for their upbringing. Most of the time, she leaves Antoinette alone. She befriends a group of wealthy individuals, and when they offer her the chance to marry Mr. Mason, she happily accepts. She is not content in her marriage, and after Coulibri was destroyed and her son died, she began to distance herself from reality.

Daniel Cosway

Daniel is the one who writes Rochester a letter informing him of Antoinette's mother's instability and of Antoinette's alleged sexual encounter before to meeting Rochester. Daniel claims to be Antoinette's half-brother by adoption. Daniel's charges drive Rochester to question his love for his wife, and he subsequently believes that Antoinette is a "lunatic" as a result.

Pierre Cosway

Antoinette's brother is Pierre. He has a mental disability, although it is never made clear what that disability is. While denying Antoinette any affection, Pierre receives continual attention from Antoinette's mother. Pierre suffers and perishes when Coulibri is burned.

Sandi Cosway

Antoinette has a distant relative named Sandi. In a brief scene when Antoinette is walking to school, he defends her. Later, speculation regarding Antoinette and Sandi's alleged relationship before Antoinette's marriage is spread. After Rochester compels Antoinette to leave Ganbois, her contact with Sandi infuriates Rochester, who then decides to take Antoinette to England. Antoinette relishes her memories of Sandi's final kiss at the book's conclusion. She might have never been so close to love.

Mr. Luttrell

Between the loss of her husband and her marriage to Mr. Mason, Antoinette's mother only has Mr. Luttrell as a friend. Living on the nearby plantation, Luttrell one day "swam out to sea and was gone forever." He stands in for one of the older white households who experienced financial hardship following the freeing of slaves.

Mannie

At Coulibri, Mannie is a manservant. One of the few black individuals that supports Antoinette's family and makes an effort to put out the fire that burns down the house.

Mr. Mason

Antoinette's stepfather is Mr. Mason (no first name is ever given), the man her mother marries in the opening section of the novel. Mason is wealthy but has little love, certainly not for the emancipated slaves. However, he does spend his cash on remodelling Coulibri. Ironically, the freed slaves rise up against the family and set the house on fire because of his demeaning attitude toward the black population. His wife is driven insane by this and his lack of affection. He wants to set up a marriage for Antoinette before his passing since, in his own way, he cares about her future.

Richard Mason

The son of Mr. Mason is Richard. Richard arranges for Antoinette's marriage to Rochester and invites Rochester to the islands. Although he only makes a few brief appearances in the novel, he is partially to blame for leading Antoinette down the path to lunacy. He grants Rochester control over Antoinette's whole estate, giving him control over her life. At the conclusion of the narrative, he returns and pays Antoinette a visit in England. She uses a knife to attack him.

Myra

Myra works as a maid for Coulibri. It is advised that Myra informs the other black residents of the neighborhood of all of Mr. Mason's disparaging remarks. On the night of the fire, Myra was meant to be caring for Antoinette's brother. Inexplicably, she vanishes just as the flames in the brother's room start to spread.

Grace Poole

Part 3's opening section is told by Grace. For Antoinette's care in England, she has been employed. She believes that the outside world is hazardous, much like Antoinette. She feels secure in the large home and is compensated extra for providing particular care for Antoinette, who occasionally gives her anxiety.

Edward Rochester

The male protagonist of Wide Sargasso Sea is inspired by Edward Rochester from Jane Eyre, despite the fact that he is never given a name. He is Antoinette's spouse, and he tells the most of the story's second half. When Rochester discovers his money in Antoinette's bequest, he feels as though he has sold his soul and regrets coming to the islands in search of riches. He lacks the right to an inheritance because he is the second son of an English gentleman. Additionally, he has a frail and feeble soul and is readily convinced that he has been duped. He finds the islands to be quite unusual and not in a good manner. He decides that Antoinette is a "lunatic" after grossly misinterpreting her needs and her affection.

She first has his attention, at least physically. But it doesn't take him long to find her touch and aroma repulsive. When Antoinette tries to put a love potion on him, he seeks retaliation by having a sexual encounter with one of the servants while she is around. She is utterly outraged by this. By removing her from her cherished family estate, he further punishes her. Then, after discovering that she could be having an affair with a distant relative, he coerces her into travelling with him to England, where he imprisons her in the attic. Antoinette's demeanor is never consistent, but Rochester is the one who tips her over the brink.

Tia

The closest thing Antoinette has to a childhood friend is Tia. She is a friend of Christophine's friend's daughter. In an effort to alleviate some of Antoinette's loneliness, Christophine introduces Antoinette to Tia. Tia and Antoinette become friends for a while, going swimming and eating together. One day, Tia connives with Antoinette to steal a few coins, and Antoinette calls Tia a "nigger." After swimming, Tia is upset by this and decides to wear Antoinette's clothing rather than her own. The first time the two kids meet one another is the night of the Coulibri fire. In an effort to hug Tia, Antoinette rushes to her. However, Tia tosses a boulder at Antoinette, striking her in the head and knocking her unconscious. Antoinette imagines Tia waiting for her at the end of the novel

as she prepares to burn down Rochester's home in England, despite the fact that they never see one another again.

10.4 Themes

Isolation

The majority of this book takes place on a small island where Antoinette resides. The island itself is a metaphor for Antoinette's overwhelming sense of solitude throughout this novel. Antoinette, her mother, and her brother first reside far from even the tiny island villages. Because her mother is from another island, they are even more isolated because they are seen as outsiders by the locals. But Antoinette's family is not just isolated by islanders. Due to their great poverty, the other white landowners, many of whom are recent immigrants, have minimal interaction with Antoinette's family. And while a small number of former slaves continue to be loyal to the family, the majority of the black residents in the area don't want anything to do with them and eventually forcibly evict Antoinette's family by setting their house on fire.

In many ways, Antoinette's mother shares her daughter's sense of loneliness. Widow Annette Cosway is attempting to support herself and her two children alone. She is also responsible for looking after her son, who has a mental illness. Annette is a woman who wants affection but can't seem to get any. However, she is charged with utilizing her sexuality to locate a second spouse who has enough money to support her family. But because Mr. Mason is incapable of loving, Annette turns inside even more. Her final connection to reality is severed when her son is burned to death, and she then falls into the gloomy seclusion of her own inner world.

Antoinette lacks love as well. Because she is white and they are black, she tries to make friends with the kids her own age but is rejected. Antoinette doesn't have any childhood pals, save from one brief interaction with a little black girl named Tia. Because her mother is preoccupied with caring for her crippled son and looking for love, or at the very least, someone who would assist lessen her financial problems, Antoinette is even more lonely. Without the comforting affection of a mother, Antoinette finds herself in a world where her needs, wants, and thoughts are the only things that matter.

Antoinette experiences a variety of forms of isolation when she is made to live with her Aunt Cora. She is first forbidden from seeing her mother. The nuns who run the school she attends also reside behind high, gated gates. As a result, Antoinette is cut off from the neighborhood kids, who frequently threaten her. Additionally, Antoinette is prevented from visiting the homestead where she spent her formative years. The only location she has previously known had been cut off from her.

Antoinette feels temporarily less alone after being married. She has found love and has been brought back to the country she adores. This phase, nevertheless, is brief because she quickly learns that her husband doesn't care about her. Even the comfort of residing on her ancestral estate is taken from her when he makes love to another woman. Antoinette is currently just experiencing unhappiness at the estate, and she starts to isolate herself even more. By the book's conclusion, Antoinette is residing in an attic chamber in a huge English home. Now, she discovers herself in a strange, chilly, and dark environment. She no longer possesses the vivacious hues and cosiness of her island house. Father, brother, and mother all passed away. She has been cut off from Christophine's mother figure and her aunt. Her husband avoids her at all costs. Her sole company is provided by a paid caregiver. Here, Antoinette experiences her greatest sense of seclusion from the outside world. She is so far from reality that she resides in a dream-like state.

Hunger

This narrative uses a variety of various hunger depictions. Antoinette and her family are first seen in the story struggling to survive. There is also the clear bodily hunger brought on by a lack of nourishment. But there's also the desire for love. Annette and Antoinette, mother and daughter, both look for love. While Antoinette looks to her mother for love, the mother seeks to find that love in a guy. Later, Antoinette turns to Tia in her seek for love from a friend. Antoinette's hungers are momentarily sated when she marries. It seems as though the need for love and sexual expression has lessened slightly. But this is short-lived. In fact, because she had just experienced love for the first time, when it was taken away from her, the need grew even more intense. She eventually becomes insane due of her desire for love.

There are other hungers as well, as the one that drives Rochester to marry Antoinette for her inheritance and sell his soul. As white immigrants settle on the island and build sizable plantations

there to make a living, there is also a land shortage. As former slaves battle for their rights and build a new way of life, there is a longing for freedom. Antoinette and her husband play out their desire to be understood as their mistrust grows. Additionally, Antoinette's desire to feel secure, which is never entirely satiated, exists on a more subliminal level.

Madness

Antoinette and her mother both experience mental collapses. They withdraw into their own innermost worlds, realms where their ideas have complete control over them and they are unable to discern between their imaginations and reality. They feel compelled to go there in order to get away from their current situation. When Coulibri burns down and her son dies, Annette's final tie to reality is severed. Although Antoinette's decline may have started when she was a young child, the breakdown of her marriage and her relocation to England ultimately sealed her doom. According to Rhys, if they had been given the love and support they so sorely needed, both the mother and the daughter might have been prevented from becoming insane.

Summary

The prestigious W. H. Smith Award and the Heinemann Award from the Royal Society of Literature were given to Wide Sargasso Sea. The book was also chosen by Random House as one of the top 100 novels published in the English language in the 20th century.

Wide Sargasso Sea is written in the trisect form with Parts One and Three narrated by Antoinette and Part Two narrated by Antoinette's husband. This shift in narrative voice, along with forward and backward movements through time and space, is quite different from the linear autobiographical Jane Eyre on which the characters are based. In the Parts narrated by Antoinette, Rhys uses the device of fragmentation and shifts tense from present to past making Antoinette's character seem disembodied. Antoinette's husband's narration is in past tense delivered by a nameless character, giving his account authority and credibility.

Keywords

Assets: possessions

Contrived: arranged

Hegemony: power.

Infidelity: unfaithfulness

Lunatic: crazy

Muses: thinks

Prevailing: dominant

Seclusion: solitude

Self Assessment

1. Who sadly muses to himself as he decides to remove Antoinette from Jamaica?

A. Rochester
B. Christophine
C. Antoinette
D. None of the above

2. Whose special abilities, which are revered by her peers, come from her mastery of obeah rituals and her proficiency with spell casting?

A. Rochester's
B. Christophine's
C. Antoinette's

D. None of the above

3. Antoinette's struggle to fit into any specific community appears to be a contributing factor to which of the following?

A. Her restlessness
B. Instability
C. Both of the above
D. None of the above

4. Whose only source of strength and independence is her understanding of magic.

A. Antoinette's
B. Rochester's
C. Christophine's
D. Tia's

5. Due to their subjugation as a result of their economic dependency on males, women's economic activities fell along with their _____ standing.

A. Political
B. Social
C. Both of the above
D. None of the above

6. With the aid of the law, Who is able to take the Coulibri Estate from Annette?

A. Christophine
B. Antoinette
C. Mason
D. Tia

7. Rochester has a tremendous desire to acquire whom, both materially and spiritually?

A. Mason
B. Tia
C. Christophine
D. Antoinette

8. "Wide Sargasso Sea" by Jean Rhys exposes which of the following patriarchal power structures?

A. Harmful
B. Powerful
C. Both the harmful and powerful
D. None of the above

9. At the time when Wide Sargasso Sea is set, which of the following was a means of securing financial support?

A. Job
B. Business
C. Parents
D. Marriage

10. Who serves as Antoinette's surrogate mother.
A. Christophine
B. Tia
C. Antoinette
D. Mason

11. Who is Mr. Rochester in "Wide Sargasso Sea"?
A. Antoinette's young wife
B. Antoinette's young husband
C. Antoinette's young father
D. Antoinette's young mother

12. Who is Pierre in "Wide Sargasso Sea"?
A. Antoinette's father
B. Antoinette's mother
C. Antoinette's brother
D. Antoinette's sister

13. What is the relationship between Antoinette and Sandi in "Wide Sargasso Sea"?
A. Antoinette's distant relative
B. Antoinette's father
C. Antoinette's mother
D. Antoinette's son

14. Whoexperience mental collapses in "Wide Sargasso Sea"?
A. Antoinette
B. Antoinette's mother
C. Both Antoinette and her mother
D. None of the above

15. What is the name of Antoinette's childhood friend in "Wide Sargasso Sea"?
A. Tia
B. Parul
C. Kavita
D. Harsh

Answers for Self Assessment

1.	A	2.	B	3.	C	4.	A	5.	B
6.	C	7.	D	8.	C	9.	D	10.	A
11.	B	12.	C	13.	A	14.	C	15.	A

Review Questions

1. Discuss the episodes of magic and incantation in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea".

2. Explain the male domination and patriarchal power structure in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea".
3. Discuss the themes of isolation, hunger and madness in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea".
4. Write the character sketch of Mr. Rochester in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea".
5. Write the character sketch of Christophine in the novel "Wide Sargasso Sea".

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Unit 11: Derek Walcott: *Dream on Monkey Mountain*

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11.3 The Theme of the Loss of Identity in the Drama

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Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know the significance of the title
- Discuss the post-colonial elements in the drama
- Know the theme of loss of identity

Introduction

Dream on Monkey Mountain is a play by the Nobel Prize-winning St. Lucian poet and playwright Derek Walcott. It was first published in 1970 with a collection of short plays entitled *Dream on MonkeyMountain and Other Plays*. It was produced and broadcast on NBC in 1970. Produced off-Broadway by the Negro Ensemble Company in 1971, it won an Obie Award that year for "Best Foreign Play".

In a review of the Negro Ensemble production in The New Yorker, the journalist Edith Oliver called the play "a masterpiece" and "a poem in dramatic form or a drama in poetry", noting that "poetry is rare in modern theater." Like most of Walcott's works, the play is set on a Caribbean island.

The plot centres on the black Makak, who despises himself for being black. After being imprisoned for destroying things in a local market, he has a vision in jail of a white goddess, who pushes him to return to Africa. In his dream, Makak dreams of becoming a great warrior in Africa, convincing others to join him, and receiving support from the Ku Klux Klan. Finally, he beheads the white goddess of his dreams, and wakes up free from his obsession with whiteness. Reconciled to his actual life, Makak begins calling himself by his real name (Felix Hobain) and resolves to return home to Monkey Mountain.

11.1 The Significance of the Title of the Drama

The very title of the play "Dream on a Monkey Mountain" by Walcott, is reflective of the aspirations of the people linked with the mountain and Monkey name of the mountain not only suggests relationship with nature but also with the world of animals where the animals are the movers and shakers of life out there. This very quality can be viewed in the protagonist character Makak. He is too named after the animal monkey and has aspiration of freedom and independence

and living the life as a spiritual leader and healer of his people. Makak is poor, haggard and old but has his aspirations as young as a goddess. He dreams about a white goddess who would restore him the powers of his ancients and ancestor: the powers to restore his people to their Africa and to free them of the colonial powers. Through his dream he wishes to return to a tribal past when they were the lions, not Makaks, and the owned their land. He not only dreams this restoration but also desires to heal the wounds, sickness and the poverty of his people.

But in the world of reality these dreams are just dreams and cannot be fulfilled because the real world is filled up with the power of the colonial master and so is undefeatable and secondly, the Africans who want to make money at every cost, may it be even by selling the dreams of a warrior. One such fellow African is Moustique who sells the magical power of Makak by labelling him as the Lion, and the king and spiritual healer. He makes money through this has even bigger plans for making more money and even himself poses to be Makak. But very soon, he is caught up by the police represented through the character of Corporal Lestrade.

Corporal is the watch dog for the colonial master and is supposed to save the lives of the people from the evil people. When he finds out that Makak and Moustique are putting not only their life in danger but also riots could break out in the market place, he gets Makak arrested while Moustique is already killed by the mob. Corporal puts Makak in Jail with other two criminals. But the dream does not stop here. In his dream, Makak wounds Corporal and breaks out of the jail along with other fellow Africans. Makak is declared to be the King of Africa and everyone is supposed to follow him to the Monkey Mountain, even Corporal follows the suit. The dream lets them kill many of the historical, religious, and political figures from the white man's world and establish their own rule in Africa.

But the dream shatters soon and the reality brings Makak back in the same world where he is poor old and week and the goddess of freedom also disappears. He remembers his original name and the place. He tells the police the details of his reality and is allowed to move back to his village because of his old age and poverty. The characters, the language employed and the dramatization of the situation, allows Derek Walcott to reconstruct the world of colonisation of Africa and desire of the colonialized man for his freedom. Walcott has kept the traditions of not only of his country but also those of the techniques of drama established by the Greeks. One such technique in the drama is the inclusion of the chorus which sings about the dream and reality of the black man as compared to the dominant world powers around him which would never let him have his dream to his fill. But Walcott has made it possible through his writing that the dream of the African for their spiritual, political and social freedom keeps on living and passing from generation to generation. Not only the dream lives but also the typical Ancient African culture keeps on living by this drama of Walcott.

11.2 The Post-Colonial Elements in the Drama

Binary Oppositions– The binary opposition is one of the important element of post colonialism. The play gives insights into the post-colonial world where the white colonizer is still considered to be of superior race and the African race to be inferior. The binary opposition of superior/inferior and white/black exists in the play. The moment Lestrade calls Makak and other prisoners as "animals" establishes the superiority of Whites and stereotypes and demeans the existence of Africans to be inferior as well as savages, animals and inhuman. Said in his Orientalism has talk about this binary opposition where the West creates a knowledge about the East by stereotyping them as "sensual", "savages" and "barbaric". This is clearly reflected in the play where Makak and other prisoners are considered to be inhuman and treated as criminals. The name of Makak itself refers to a monkey which many colonial settlers gives a "zoological names" to the colonized people to establish their superiority which also reflects the binary oppositions at play. The idea of stereotyping a black identity to apes is a other aspect of binary opposition as well as racism which many black communities still face today in the post-colonial world. The character Lestrade tells about black identity to be of origin from apes which is associated with Darwin's theory and he uses it to subjugate the colonized people while establishing the civility of white colonizers.

Hybridity – The play also shows hybridity of characters. The main character Makak is of hybrid origin. The hybridity is seen in the character of Makak where he believes himself of having the whiteness in him to establish his superiority and reduce the inferiority complex. It is also seen in the character of Lestrade as well. The play contains hybridity of Western literatures as well where Golding's ***Lord of the Flies***scene is established that reshapes a sense of lost identity to Lestrade. When he encountered Basil, it was an epiphany for him to regain his true identity which is similitude to Simon's encountering a Beelzebub. However, Lestrade also showed the same rousing emotions like Milton's Samson from **Samson Agnosites**after finding himself. Lestrade confesses his mistake and he bowed down to the mother earth of Africa and accepts his true identity. The another western literature that muses in the play is Jean Rhy'sthe Wilde Sargasso Sea where the main protagonist realizes her name is not Bertha but Antoinette Cosway which is similar to Makak realising his own true name as Felix Hobain. This reflects the sense of hybridity in the play from a writing style where Walcott who himself was of hybrid origin embraces both western and African style in his writing.

Identity Crisis – The Post-Colonial world is filled with identity crisis. In the opening of the play, when Corporal Lestrade asked Makak'srace, he replied to him that he was tired of answering that question. This reflects the long colonial subjugation associated with identity. It reflects the identity crisis of Makak. The inferiority complex resides among the colonized settlers because of such representation and subjugation of their identity. Many characters including Makak does not even remember his own real name as he lives in an illusion of the fabricated world constructed by the colonizers for him. This led to inferiority complex in him as he feels subjugated due to his colour and race. This blackness is the metaphor for the identity that is devoid for Makak. It is seen where he has not seen his own self in the mirror and water but has only seen himself from the lens of the colonizers meaning that Makak is living in a world of illusion constructed by the colonizers making him feel inferior about his race and identity. It is also seen Makak also longs for whiteness to establish a sense of authority in the play. It is depicted where he saw a white woman who claims to be a lineage of lions and kings and Corporal Lestrade believes that this illusion is a crazy drive towards whiteness. This reflects the identity crisis in the play where it arises out of colonial subjugation against their identity for a long time and has a serious impact on the mental health making them feel inferior about their race and colour.

Mimicry – The another aspect of post colonialism is mimicry. The post-colonial world also saw many natives who shared an ambivalent relationship with colonizer and colonized. Corporal Lestrade is a mimic man who mimicks the self and identity of the white colonizers. He shares an ambivalent relationship with his own race and white supremacy. He adopted the self of the white colonizers and decides to oppress his own kin by calling them as animals and treated them as sub human beings which is clearly a mimicry of white colonizers. He states that his white man helps him to do that work for him. It means that Lestrade is following what Fanon said about black skin and white masks which he carries in his personality. He has an appearance of a black identity but he wears the masks of a white supremacy to subjugate his own kin and to establish a sense of superior complexity. He adopts the mimicry of white colonizers to reduce his inferior complexity due to the establish knowledge about the black identity and could not break the illusion of it. Hence, he mimics it to mitigate his identity crisis and inferior complexity.

Quest for Home – The idea of home is a mythical and imaginative place for many diasporic writers. The home has become an imaginary place for them as it only resides as a memory but an incomplete memory. Walcott is trying to locate his own home and sense of belonging in the play. The character Makak and Corporal Lestrade is actually in the search and quest for their true identity and a place called home. At the end of the play,Makak realizes his own name as Felix Hobain and Lestrade accepts his black entity and they all goes back to Monkey Mountain which is their true origin. The Monkey Mountain could symbolises the place of Africa.

Decolonization – The idea of decolonization is important in the play where the play seems to follow NgugiWaThiongo Decolonising the Mind. Walcott seems to decolonize his own mind to share the colonized experiences from the white colonizers. He tries to break the illusion or dream of Makak who was an animal but starts to come back to reality and foregrounds his own name and his true identity. He was able to accept his own blackness and identity at the end of the play that

reflects the decolonization process of the mind. It is also reflected in the character of Lestrade who accepts his own blackness and his own identity and he took off his own white masks to embrace his true origin and goes back to Monkey Mountain implying the decolonization of mind.

11.3 The Theme of the Loss of Identity in the Drama

The **literary analysis of themes in Dream on Monkey Mountain** is incomplete without discussing the theme of the loss of identity. It is indeed the basis of all the complexes that borne identity crisis. Everyone is seeking for their identity or running from their identity. If someone is ashamed of their identity, then the other one wants to rule world with their real identity. At the start of the play, Corporal Lestrade asks Makak about his name and race.

'What is your race?'

Makak replies, 'I am tired'.

He further tells three of them that he has not seen his reflection in the last 30 years. While he was sleeping in jail, he dreamed about a white woman who tells -him that he is the King of Africa. It has the inspiration from the spirit of a woman who comes to him a night before. His journey of self-discovery begins in his dream. He saw himself curing an old man when he was dying.

Everyone joins Makak and follows him. In the dream, he is in the jail and attack his jailer to run away. After beating the corporal, he runs away with his fellows Tigre and Souris. Later, the Corporal and Souris joined him in his quest of becoming the King of Africa. After waking up from his dream, he Makak was more aware of his identity, he remembered his name, and was hopeful about his future.

Under the apparent simple plot line are entwined a number of complex key themes related to the issue of identity in a postcolonial world. The opening scene of the play shows the crisis of identity as a result of colonial subjugation. When Corporal Lestrade enquired Makak of his race, he replies, 'I am tired'. This reply is suggestive enough of his fractured identity which is a corollary of long subjugation. Makak wants to bypass the question of race as he wants to take shelter in the realm of oblivion that can only offer him some solace amidst the ossified existence. Colonialism not only plunders wealth but also robs the colonized of his true self. It is therefore an emasculating enterprise too. Colonialism has uprooted Makak from any sense of belonging and creates in him an inferiority complex. He is assigned the name of an animal ('Makak' stands for monkey) and is downgraded in the rank of the Great Chain of Being.

What is most noteworthy is that Makak has internalised his subordinate position and as a result, tries to hide his identity. What is most noteworthy is that Makak has internalised his subordinate position and as a result, tries to hide his identity. Walcott shows in detail how colonialism has fractured the identity of Makak. He loathes his own image. He tells Lestrade that he has not seen self-image in the mirror for thirty years. Moreover, he also refuses to see his reflected image in water: Not a pool of cold water, when I must have drunk, I stir my hands What is most noteworthy is that Makak has internalised his subordinate position and as a result, tries to hide his identity. What is most noteworthy is that Makak has internalised his subordinate position and as a result, tries to hide his identity. Walcott shows in detail how colonialism has fractured the identity of Makak. He loathes his own image. He tells Lestrade that he has not seen self-image in the mirror for thirty years. Moreover, he also refuses to see his reflected image in water: Not a pool of cold water, when I must have drunk, I stir my hands first, to break up my image. (1970:226) Makak sees his own image from the perspective of a white coloniser.

Lestradealso suffers from this kind of complex. He is a mimic man for whom salvation lies in imitating the white world. It is proved by his remark to Souris: I am an instrument of the law, Souris. I got the white man work to do. (1970:279) His desire is representative of the departure syndrome that bedevils the Caribbean society. In this way both Makak and Lestrade are the two sides of the same coin. Both try to escape from an overwhelming feeling of non-entity in different ways.

Dream onMonkey Mountain depictsthe protagonist, FelixHobain, (whom everyone calls Makak including himself) release from his own degraded self-image, dictated bydecades of colonization

and subjugation. Makak also hasforgotten his name and has been lost between the false identities of ―Monkey‖and ―Lion‖ [3]. He indulges in self-loathing rather than indulging in self-love because of the effects of colonization on him. His racial identity is uprooted only tobe replaced by his lost identity after a delirious journey through his unconsciousness.

Summary

- *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a play by the Nobel Prize-winning St. Lucian poet and playwright Derek Walcott.
- The plot centres on the black Makak, who despises himself for being black.
- The very title of the play "Dream on a Monkey Mountain" by Walcott, is reflective of the aspirations of the people linked with the mountain and Monkey name of the mountain not only suggests relationship with nature but also with the world of animals where the animals are the movers and shakers of life out there.
- The post-colonial elements: binary opposition, hybridity, identity crisis, mimicry and quest for home are present in the play.
- Makak indulges in self-loathing rather than indulging in self-love because of the effects of colonization on him.
- The protagonist suffers from loss of identity.
- Makak sees his own image from the perspective of a white coloniser.

Keywords

Post-colonialism, hybridity, mimicry, loss of identity, colonization, quest for home.

Review Questions

1. Write a short note on Derek Walcott.
2. Describe the theme of loss of identity in the drama.
3. Discuss the post-colonial elements in the play*Dream ofMonkey Mountain*.

Further Readings

- "Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain: An Exploration of the West Indian Experience" by J. Edward Chamberlin, which provides a detailed analysis of the play and its themes.
- The West Indian Tragedy: Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain" by Keith J. Cartwright, which offers a critical examination of the play's themes and symbols.
- "Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain: A Play of Exile and Return" by Maria Lauret, which discusses the play in the context of Walcott's broader oeuvre and explores its themes of identity and belonging.

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Unit 12: Derek Walcott: *Dream on Monkey Mountain*

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12.2 Application of the Theory of Homi Bhabha

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Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Discuss marginalization in the play
- Apply theory of HomiBhabha on the text
- Describe the consequences of colonization
- Know the significance of the title of the play

Introduction

Sir Derek Alton Walcott KCSL OBE OCC (23 January 1930 – 17 March 2017) was a Saint Lucian poet and playwright. He received the 1992 Nobel Prize in Literature. His works include the Homeric epic poem *Omeros* (1990), which many critics view "as Walcott's major achievement." In addition to winning the Nobel Prize, Walcott received many literary awards over the course of his career, including an ObieAward in 1971 for his play *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, a Royal Society of Literature Award, the Queen's Medal for Poetry, the inaugural OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the 2010 T. S. Eliot Prize for his book of poetry White Egrets and the Griffin Trust For Excellence in Poetry Lifetime Recognition Award in 2015.

After graduation, Walcott moved to Trinidad in 1953, where he became a critic, teacher and journalist. He founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in 1959 and remained active with its board of directors.

Exploring the Caribbean and its history in a colonialist and post-colonialist context, his collection *In a Green Night: Poems 1948–1960* (1962) attracted international attention. His play Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970) was produced on NBC-TV in the United States the year it was published. Makak is the protagonist in this play; and "Makak"s condition represents the condition of the colonized natives under the oppressive forces of the powerful colonizers". In 1971 it was produced by the Negro Ensemble Company off-Broadway in New York City; it won an Obie Award that year for "Best Foreign Play". The following year, Walcott won an OBE from the British government for his work.

He was hired as a teacher by Boston University in the United States, where he founded the Boston Playwrights' Theatre in 1981. That year he also received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in the United States. Walcott taught literature and writing at Boston University for more than two decades, publishing new books of poetry and plays on a regular basis. Walcott retired from his position at Boston University in 2007. He became friends with other poets, including the Russian expatriate Joseph Brodsky, who lived and worked in the U.S. after being exiled in the 1970s, and the Irishman Seamus Heaney, who also taught in Boston.

Walcott's epic poem *Omeros* (1990), which loosely echoes and refers to characters from the *Iliad*, has been critically praised as his "major achievement." The book received praise from publications such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times Book Review*, which chose *Omeros* as one of its "Best Books of 1990".

Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992, the second Caribbean writer to receive the honour after Saint-John Perse, who was born in Guadeloupe, received the award in 1960. The Nobel committee described Walcott's work as "a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment". He won an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2004.

His later poetry collections include *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), illustrated with copies of his watercolors; *The Prodigal* (2004), and *White Egrets* (2010), which received the T.S. Eliot Prize and the 2011 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature.

Derek Walcott has been a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, In 2008, Walcott gave the first Cola Debrot Lectures In 2009, Walcott began a three-year distinguished scholar-in-residence position at the University of Alberta. In 2010, he became Professor of Poetry at the University of Essex.

As a part of St Lucia's Independence Day celebrations, in February 2016, he became one of the first knights of the Order of Saint Lucia.

Themes

Methodism and spirituality have played a significant role from the beginning in Walcott's work. He commented: "I have never separated the writing of poetry from prayer. I have grown up believing it is a vocation, a religious vocation." Describing his writing process, he wrote: "the body feels it is melting into what it has seen… the 'I' not being important. That is the ecstasy...Ultimately, it's what Yeats says: 'Such a sweetness flows into the breast that we laugh at everything and everything we look upon is blessed.' That's always there. It's a benediction, a transference. It's gratitude, really. The more of that a poet keeps, the more genuine his nature." He also notes, "if one thinks a poem is coming on...you do make a retreat, a withdrawal into some kind of silence that cuts out everything around you. What you're taking on is really not a renewal of your identity but actually a renewal of your anonymity."

Walcott died at his home in Cap Estate, St. Lucia, on 17 March 2017. He was 87. He was given a state funeral on Saturday, 25 March, with a service at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Castries and burial at Morne Fortune.

12.1 The Theme of Marginalization

In the play "Dream on Monkey Mountain" by Derek Walcott, the theme of marginalization is prevalent throughout the work. The central character, Makak, is a marginalized figure who has been ostracized by society due to his mental illness and perceived lack of intelligence. Despite his desire to be accepted and to have a meaningful place in society, Makak is continually marginalized and treated as an outsider. Throughout the play, Makak grapples with his feelings of isolation and exclusion, as he tries to find his place in the world. He is constantly searching for meaning and purpose, but is continually thwarted by the barriers that society places in his path. Despite his efforts, he is unable to fully integrate into mainstream society and is forced to live on the margins, dreaming of a better life. The theme of marginalization is also explored through the character of Moustique, who represents the marginalized and oppressed black population in the play. Moustique is a symbol of the struggles and injustices faced by black people in society, and his

interactions withMakak serve to highlight the ways in which marginalized individuals can come together and support one another in their struggles. Overall, the theme of marginalization in "Dream on Monkey Mountain" serves as a commentary on the ways in which society often excludes and ostracizes those who are different or perceived as being inferior. It highlights the importance of acceptance and understanding, and the need to embrace diversity and inclusivity in order to create a more just and equitable society.

12.2 Application of the Theory of HomiBhabha

Bhabhahas developed his concept of hybridity from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity. (Bhabha 1994; Bhabha 1996) For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonised (the Other) within a singular universal framework, but then fails producing something familiar but new. (Papastergiadis 1997) Bhabha contends that a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges from the interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised, challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity. In this process therefore, there is a simultaneous loss of old identities and creation of new ones.

Homi K. Bhabha'stheory of hybridity suggests that cultural identities are not fixed and stable, but rather are constantly evolving and shaped by the interactions and exchanges between different cultures. Bhabha argues that these interactions and exchanges lead to the creation of new, hybrid cultural identities that combine elements from different cultures in complex and nuanced ways. In the play "Dream on Monkey Mountain" by Derek Walcott, the theme of hybridity is evident in the character of Makak, who embodies a hybrid cultural identity. Makak is of African descent and is deeply connected to the traditions and culture of his ancestors, but he is also heavily influenced by the Western culture that surrounds him. As a result, Makak's identity is a blend of both African and Western cultural elements, reflecting the hybrid nature of cultural identity.

Through the character of Makak, Walcott explores the ways in which hybrid identities can be both a source of strength and a source of vulnerability. Makak's hybrid identity allows him to navigate and navigate between different cultures and worlds, but it also exposes him to discrimination and marginalization. Ultimately, the theme of hybridity in "Dream on Monkey Mountain" serves as a commentary on the complexities and nuances of cultural identity and the ways in which it is shaped by the interactions and exchanges between different cultures.

For the characters on the unnamed Caribbean island in Dream on Monkey Mountain, identity is elusive to the point of crisis. Makak’s journey begins when he stares at his reflection in a water barrel and does not like what he sees. He rejects his existence as a poor, elderly black man, and, over the course of the play, he attempts to find a new identity. When a white apparition tells him that his ancestors were kings in Africa, Makak thrills to this new royal identity infused with power and agency. The play’s figure of authority imposes unfamiliar systems of control on the island, forcing its inhabitants to shed elements of their pre-colonial selves. By forcing language, cultural, idioms, and rituals upon colonized people, the colonizers strip those people of their original identities. For instance, Corporal Lestrade demands that Makak speak English, whereas Makak prefers to speak French—the irony is that both are the languages of colonial power, so the choice is meaningless. Makak can swap one language for another, but all he is doing is swapping one colonizer for another. Post-colonial identity lies between two different selves: the colonized and the colonizer. Makak’s journey is an attempt to resolve this crisis. This is why returning to Africa seems so tantalizing—there, Makak assumes he will regain the unitary identity of his ancestors. This hope proves naïve, as the only thing he can do as an African king is recapitulate the same oppressive systems that victimized him on the island. Ultimately, he returns to his unchanged mountain home with a stronger sense of self and a lack of unrealistic delusions.

12.3 Makak and His Confrontation with the Colonial Rulers

The evident connotation of the term post-colonial is that it attributes to an era coming after the end of colonialism. The remnants of colonialism can still be perceived in the postcolonial period, for colonialism unleashed an immense wound on the psychology, culture and identity of the once conquered people. The current situation of once colonized people is attributed to colonialism which has accorded a set of problems including identity crisis, displacement and mimicry. In this social turmoil the oppressed have lost their native selves.

Edward Said has underlined in his book *Orientalism* (1978) that the entire empire of colonialism stood on the ideology of creating hierarchies and their sustenance by making the native feel ashamed of its own existence. During the colonial age, the Western world created a hierarchy which put Westerners at a way more privileged position to the colonized to separate the two in order to legitimize their superiority over the colonial subjects

Postcolonial discourse usually refers to a mode of resistance against the culture that has colonized the subjects and provided them with a colonial legacy that they are not able to shake off completely. The adverse effects of this legacy can be seen in the emergence of problems like hybridity, identity-crises, displacement and mimicry.

Dream on Monkey Mountain is one of the best-known plays of Derek Walcott. Its first performance was held in 1967, at the Central Library Theatre in Toronto, Canada. Walcott received an Obie Award after its first performance New York City in 1971. It is a one of the most performed plays of Walcott, which is in the form of an allegory, concerning racial and cultural identity. He here gives voice, to his earlier concerns regarding the struggles of Trinidadian peasants. As far as the form of the play is concerned, Walcott has made some significant changes. Here, in a poetic way, he proposes a psychological cultural investigation and the desire for freedom.

Dream on Monkey Mountain can be described as a kind of political allegory of the condition of the blacks both in the postcolonial world in general and in the Caribbean in particular. Blacks are set off from their roots. Makak, the central character of the play, is burning with a desire to return back to Africa as a part of his dream. It is interesting to note the source of the dream. It is described by Makak himself when he tells about a white woman, who also represents the white mask produced by two other characters of the play, Lestrade and Moustique. When Makak sees a vision in the prison of the white Goddessn, Lestrade says, "My Lord, is this rage for whiteness that does drive niggers mad" (Walcott, DOMM 228). Many writers have examined the modes in which oppressive ideologies destabilize personal identity and even sometimes lead to madness. It seems ironic that the source of 'back-to-Africa' idea originates from a white person.

The opening scene of the play is set in a prison. This prison cell symbolises colonial rule.The prologue of the play which introduces us Makak "is itself a ritual, presided over by Lestrade. All present, except the bewildered Makak, know how to play their roles in it, having been taught them by long experience with the colonial code" (Breslinl36). What Makak goes through in the prison is an epitome of the mental tortures caused by colonialism. He is recently arrested for getting drunk and destroying a local cafe for imagining himself to be the King of Africa. Tigre and Souris attempt to contest Lestrade when he arrests Makak. This infuriates The corporal and he calls them equal to animals. Corporal Lestrade, who is a mulatto, becomes a representative of the complicity of certain elements that the black community shares with the colonizers. Makak urges the Corporal to set him free from the prison.

It can be seen that at the very centre of Dream on Monkey Mountain is a search for and acceptance of one's own identity, as at the beginning of the play when Makak is questioned by the Corporal Lestrade about his real name, he does not know much about himself.

12.4 The Significance of the Ending

In the Epilogue, the dream has ended, and Makak is once again in his jail cell. This time, when Lestrade asks him his name, he answers that he is Felix Hobain. He accepts his identity and, when Moustique arrives, Makak and Moustique return happily to Monkey Mountain. Makak discovers at

the end of the play that he can only be free to develop his own identity if he kills the white ghost, freeing himself from Western European culture's constraints.

Summary

- Sir Derek Alton Walcott KCSL OBE OCC (23 January 1930 – 17 March 2017) was a Saint Lucian poet and playwright.
- He received the 1992 Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Derek Walcott received an Obie Award in 1971 for his play *Dream on Monkey Mountain.*
- Methodism and spirituality have played a significant role from the beginning in Walcott's work.
- Throughout the play, Makak grapples with his feelings of isolation and exclusion, as he tries to find his place in the world.
- The theme of marginalization in "Dream on Monkey Mountain" serves as a commentary on the ways in which society often excludes and ostracizes those who are different or perceived as being inferior.
- Through the character of Makak, Walcott explores the ways in which hybrid identities can be both a source of strength and a source of vulnerability.
- Dream on Monkey Mountain can be described as a kind of political allegory of the condition of the blacks both in the postcolonial world in general and in the Caribbean in particular.
- Makakdiscovers at the end of the play that he can only be free to develop his own identity if he kills the white ghost, freeing himself from Western European culture's constraints.

Keywords

Marginalization, colonization, inferiority.

SelfAssessment

1. When did Derek Walcott receive Noel prize?

A. 1976
B. 1992
C. 1947
D. 1981

2. which award was given to Derek Walcott for his drama*Dream on Monkey Mountain?*

A. Obie Award
B. Nobel Prize
C. Literature Award
D. Pulitzer Prize

Review Questions

1. Write a note on the theme of marginalization in the play *Dream on Monkey Mountain.*
2. What is the significance of the ending of the play?
3. Discuss the play *Dream on Monkey Mountain.*
4. Write a short note on the life and works of Derek Walcott.

Further Readings

- "Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain: An Exploration of the West Indian Experience" by J. Edward Chamberlin, which provides a detailed analysis of the play and its themes.
- The West Indian Tragedy: Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain" by Keith J. Cartwright, which offers a critical examination of the play's themes and symbols.
- "Derek Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain: A Play of Exile and Return" by Maria Lauret, which discusses the play in the context of Walcott's broader oeuvre and explores its themes of identity and belonging.

Unit 13: Margaret Eleanor Atwood: *Surfacing*

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Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know the life, works, and achievements of Margaret Eleanor Atwood
- Discuss the significance of the title of Surfacing
- Understand the theme of Surfacing

Introduction

Margaret Eleanor Atwood (born November 18, 1939) is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and inventor. Since 1961, she has published 18 books of poetry, 18 novels, 11 books of non-fiction, nine collections of short fiction, eight children's books, and two graphic novels, and a number of small press editions of both poetry and fiction. Atwood has won numerous awards and honors for her writing, including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the Governor General's Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, Princess of Asturias Awards, and the National Book Critics and PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Awards. A number of her works have been adapted for film and television.

Atwood's works encompass a variety of themes including gender and identity, religion and myth, the power of language, climate change, and "power politics". Many of her poems are inspired by myths and fairy tales which interested her from a very early age.

Atwood is a founder of the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Writers' Trust of Canada. She is also a Senior Fellow of Massey College, Toronto. She is the inventor of the LongPen device and associated technologies that facilitate remote robotic writing of documents.

Early Life

Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the second of three children of Carl Edmund Atwood, an entomologist, and Margaret Dorothy (née Killam), a former dietitian and nutritionist from Woodville, Nova Scotia. Because of her father's research in forest entomology, Atwood spent much of her childhood in the backwoods of northern Quebec, and travelling back and forth between Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto.

She didnot attend sin 1961, Atwood began graduate studies at Radcliffe College of Harvard University, with a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. She obtained a master's degree (MA) from Radcliffe in 1962 and pursued doctoral studies for two years, but did not finish her dissertation, The

English Metaphysical Romachool full-time until she was 12 years old. She became a voracious reader of literature, Dell pocketbook mysteries, Grimms' Fairy Tales, Canadian animal stories, and comic books. She attended Leaside High School in Leaside, Toronto, and graduated in 1957.[9] Atwood began writing plays and poems at the age of 6.

As a child, she also participated in the Brownie program of Girl Guides of Canada. Atwood has written about her experiences in Girl Guides in several of her publications.[11]

Atwood realized she wanted to write professionally when she was 16. In 1957, she began studying at Victoria College in the University of Toronto, where she published poems and articles in Acta Victoriana, the college literary journal, and participated in the sophomore theatrical tradition of The Bob Comedy Revue.[13] Her professors included Jay Macpherson and Northrop Frye. She graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts in English (honours) and minors in philosophy and French.

Personal Life

Atwood has a sister, Ruth Atwood, born in 1951, and a brother who is two years older, Harold Leslie Atwood. She has claimed that 17th-century witchcraft-lynching survivor Mary Webster is her ancestor Webster is the subject of Atwood's poem "Half-Hanged Mary", as well as the subject of Atwood's dedication in her novel The Handmaid's Tale (1985).

Atwood married Jim Polk, an American writer, in 1968, but divorced in 1973. She formed a relationship with fellow novelist Graeme Gibson soon afterward and moved to a farm near Alliston, Ontario, where their daughter, Eleanor Jess Atwood Gibson, was born in 1976.

The family returned to Toronto in 1980.] Atwood and Gibson were together until September 18, 2019, when Gibson died after suffering from dementia. She wrote about Gibson in the poem Dearly and in an accompanying essay on grief and poetry published in The Guardian in 2020. Atwood said about Gibson "He wasn't an egotist, so he wasn't threatened by anything I was doing. He said to our daughter towards the end of his life, 'Your mum would still have been a writer if she hadn't met me, but she wouldn't have had as much fun'".

Although she is an accomplished writer, Atwood says that she is "a terrible speller" who writes both on a computer and by hand.

Career

1960s

Atwood's first book of poetry, Double Persephone, was published as a pamphlet by Hawkshead Press in 1961, winning the E.J. Pratt Medal.] While continuing to write, Atwood was a lecturer in English at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, from 1964 to 1965, Instructor in English at the Sir George Williams University in Montreal from 1967 to 1968, and taught at the University of Alberta from 1969 to 1970. In 1966, The Circle Game was published, winning the Governor General's Award. This collection was followed by three other small press collections of poetry: Kaleidoscopes Baroque: a poem, Cranbrook Academy of Art (1965); Talismans for Children, Cranbrook Academy of Art (1965); and Speeches for Doctor Frankenstein, Cranbrook Academy of Art (1966); as well as, The Animals in That Country (1968). Atwood's first novel, The Edible Woman, was published in 1969. As a social satire of North American consumerism, many critics have often cited the novel as an early example of the feminist concerns found in many of Atwood's works.

1970s

Atwood taught at York University in Toronto from 1971 to 1972 and was a writer in residence at the University of Toronto during the 1972/1973 academic year. Atwood published six collections of poetry over the course of the decade: The Journals of Susanna Moodie (1970), Procedures for Underground (1970), Power Politics (1971), You Are Happy (1974), Selected Poems 1965–1975 (1976), and Two-Headed Poems (1978). Atwood also published three novels during this time: Surfacing (1972); Lady Oracle (1976); and Life Before Man (1979), which was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. Surfacing, Lady Oracle, and Life Before Man, like The Edible Woman, explore identity and social constructions of gender as they relate to topics such as nationhood and sexual politics. In particular, Surfacing, along with her first non-fiction monograph, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (1972), helped establish Atwood as an important and emerging voice in Canadian literature. In 1977 Atwood published her first short story collection, Dancing Girls, which was the winner of the St. Lawrence Award for Fiction and the award of The Periodical Distributors of Canada for Short Fiction.

By 1976, there was such interest in Atwood, her works, and her life that Maclean's declared her to be "Canada's most gossiped-about writer."

1980s

Atwood's literary reputation continued to rise in the 1980s with the publication of Bodily Harm (1981); The Handmaid's Tale (1985), winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award and 1985 Governor General's Award and finalist for the 1986 Booker Prize; and Cat's Eye (1988), finalist for both the 1988 Governor General's Award and the 1989 Booker Prize. Despite her distaste for literary labels, Atwood has since conceded to referring to The Handmaid's Tale as a work of science fiction or, more accurately, speculative fiction. As she has repeatedly noted, "There's a precedent in real life for everything in the book. I decided not to put anything in that somebody somewhere hadn't already done."

While reviewers and critics have been tempted to read autobiographical elements of Atwood's life in her work, particularly *Cat's Eye*, in general Atwood resists the desire of critics to read too closely for an author's life in their writing. Filmmaker Michael Rubbo's Margaret Atwood: Once in August (1984) details the filmmaker's frustration in uncovering autobiographical evidence and inspiration in Atwood's works.

During the 1980s, Atwood continued to teach, serving as the MFA Honorary Chair the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, 1985; the Berg Professor of English, New York University, 1986; Writer-in-Residence, Macquarie University, Australia, 1987; and Writer-in-Residence, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas, 1989. Regarding her stints with teaching, she has noted, "Success for me meant no longer having to teach at university."

1990s

Atwood's reputation as a writer continued to grow with the publication of the novels The Robber Bride (1993), finalist for the 1994 Governor General's Award and shortlisted for the James Tiptree Jr. Award,] and Alias Grace (1996), winner of the 1996 Giller Prize, finalist for the 1996 Booker Prize, finalist for the 1996 Governor General's Award, and shortlisted for the 1997 Orange Prize for Fiction. Although vastly different in context and form, both novels use female characters to question good and evil and morality through their portrayal of female villains. As Atwood noted about The Robber Bride, "I'm not making a case for evil behavior, but unless you have some women characters portrayed as evil characters, you're not playing with a full range." The Robber Bride takes place in contemporary Toronto, while Alias Grace is a work of historical fiction detailing the 1843 murders of Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery. Atwood had previously written the 1974 CBC made-for-TV film The Servant Girl, about the life of Grace Marks, the young servant who, along with James McDermott, was convicted of the crime. Atwood continued her poetry contributions by publishing Snake Woman in 1999 for the Women's Literature journal Kalliope.

2000s

Novels

Atwood published her tenth novel, The Blind Assassin, to critical acclaim, winning both the Booker Prize and the Hammett Prize in 2000. *The Blind Assassin* was also nominated for the Governor General's Award in 2000, Orange Prize for Fiction, and the International Dublin Literary Award in 2002. In 2001, Atwood was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame.

Atwood followed this success with the publication of Oryx and Crake in 2003, the first novel in a series that also includes The Year of the Flood (2009) and MaddAddam (2013), which would collectively come to be known as the MaddAddam Trilogy. The apocalyptic vision in the MaddAddam Trilogy engages themes of genetic modification, pharmaceutical and corporate control, and man-made disaster. As a work of speculative fiction, Atwood notes of the technology in *Oryx and Crake*, "I think, for the first time in human history, we see where we might go. We can see far enough into the future to know that we can't go on the way we've been going forever without inventing, possibly, a lot of new and different things." She later cautions in the acknowledgements to *MaddAddam*, "Although *MaddAddam* is a work of fiction, it does not include any technologies or bio-beings that do not already exist, are not under construction or are not possible in theory."

In 2005, Atwood published the novella The Penelopiad as part of the Canongate Myth Series. The story is a retelling of The Odyssey from the perspective of Penelope and a chorus of the twelve maids murdered at the end of the original tale. *The Penelopiad* was given a theatrical production in 2007.

In 2016, Atwood published the novel *Hag-Seed*, a modern-day retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as part of Penguin Random House's Hogarth Shakespeare Series.

On November 28, 2018, Atwood announced that she would publish *The Testaments*, a sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*, in September 2019. The novel features three female narrators and takes place fifteen years after the character Offred's final scene in *The Handmaid's Tale*. The book was announced as the joint winner of the 2019 Booker Prize on October 14, 2019.

Non-fiction

In 2008, Atwood published *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*, a collection of five lectures delivered as part of the Massey Lectures from October 12 to November 1, 2008. The book was released in anticipation of the lectures, which were also recorded and broadcast on CBC Radio One's *Ideas*.

Chamber opera

In March 2008, Atwood accepted a chamber opera commission. Commissioned by City Opera of Vancouver, Pauline is set in Vancouver in March 1913 during the final days of the life of Canadian writer and performer Pauline Johnson. Pauline, composed by Tobin Stokes with libretto by Atwood, premiered on May 23, 2014, at Vancouver's York Theatre.

Graphic fiction

In 2016, Atwood began writing the superhero comic book series *Angel Catbird*, with co-creator and illustrator Johnnie Christmas. The series protagonist, scientist StrigFeleedus, is victim of an accidental mutation that leaves him with the body parts and powers of both a cat and a bird. As with her other works, Atwood notes of the series, "The kind of speculative fiction about the future that I write is always based on things that are in process right now. So it's not that I imagine them, it's that I notice that people are working on them and I take it a few steps further down the road. So it doesn't come out of nowhere, it comes out of real life."

Future Library Project

With her novel *Scribbler Moon*, Atwood is the first contributor to the Future Library project. The work, completed in 2015, was ceremonially handed over to the project on May 27 of the same year. The book will be held by the project until its eventual publishing in 2114. She thinks that readers will probably need a paleo-anthropologist to translate some parts of her story. In an interview with the *Guardian* newspaper, Atwood said, "There's something magical about it. It's like *Sleeping Beauty*. The texts are going to slumber for 100 years and then they'll wake up, come to life again. It's a fairytale length of time. She slept for 100 years."

Invention of the LongPen

In early 2004, while on the paperback tour in Denver for her novel *Oryx and Crake*, Atwood conceived the concept of a remote robotic writing technology, what would later be known as the LongPen, that would enable a person to remotely write in ink anywhere in the world via tablet PC and the Internet, thus allowing her to conduct her book tours without being physically present. She quickly founded a company, Unotchit Inc., to develop, produce and distribute this technology. By 2011, the company shifted its market focus into business and legal transactions and was producing a range of products, for a variety of remote writing applications, based on the LongPen technologies. In 2013, the company renamed itself to Syngrafii Inc. In 2021, it is cloud based and offers Electronic signature-technology. As of May 2021, Atwood is still co-founder and a director of Syngrafii Inc. and holder of various patents related to the LongPen and related technology.

Poetry

In November 2020 Atwood published Dearly, a collection of poems exploring absences and endings, ageing and retrospection, and gifts and renewals. The central poem, Dearly, was also published in The Guardian newspaper along with an essay exploring the passing of time, grief, and how a poem belongs to the reader; this is accompanied by an audio recording of Atwood reading the poem on the newspaper's website.

Recurring Themes and Cultural Context

Atwood's contributions to the theorizing of Canadian identity have garnered attention both in Canada and internationally. Her principal work of literary criticism, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, is considered somewhat outdated, but remains a standard introduction to Canadian literature in Canadian studies programs internationally. Writer and academic Joseph

Private has criticized the continued reprinting of Survival by Anansi Press as a view-narrowing disservice to students of Canadian literature.

In *Survival*, Atwood postulates that Canadian literature, and by extension Canadian identity, is characterized by the symbol of survival. This symbol is expressed in the omnipresent use of "victim positions" in Canadian literature. These positions represent a scale of self-consciousness and self-actualization for the victim in the "victor/victim" relationship. The "victor" in these scenarios may be other humans, nature, the wilderness or other external and internal factors which oppress the victim. Atwood's *Survival* bears the influence of Northrop Frye's theory of garrison mentality; Atwood uses Frye's concept of Canada's des ire to wall itself off from outside influence as a critical tool to analyze Canadian literature.According to her theories in works such as *Survival* and her exploration of similar themes in her fiction, Atwood considers Canadian literature as the expression of Canadian identity. According to this literature, Canadian identity has been defined by a fear of nature, by settler history, and by unquestioned adherence to the community. In an interview with the Scottish critic Bill Findlay in 1979, Atwood discussed the relationship of Canadian writers and writing to the 'Imperial Cultures' of America and Britain.

Atwood's contribution to the theorizing of Canada is not limited to her non-fiction works. Several of her works, including *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, *Alias Grace*, *The Blind Assassin* and *Surfacing*, are examples of what postmodern literary theorist Linda Hutcheon calls "historiographic metafiction". In such works, Atwood explicitly explores the relation of history and narrative and the processes of creating history.

Among her contributions to Canadian literature, Atwood is a founding trustee of the Griffin PoetryPrize, as well as a founder of the Writers' Trust of Canada, a non-profit literary organization that seeks to encourage Canada's writing community.

Feminism

Atwood's work has been of interest to feminist literary critics, despite Atwood's unwillingness at times to apply the label feminist to her works. Starting with the publication of her first novel, The Edible Woman, Atwood asserted, "I don't consider it feminism; I just consider it social realism." Despite her rejection of the label at times, critics have analyzed the sexual politics, use of myth and fairytale, and gendered relationships in her work through the lens of feminism. In 2017, she clarified her discomfort with the label feminism by stating, "I always want to know what people mean by that word [feminism]. Some people mean it quite negatively, other people mean it very positively, some people mean it in a broad sense, other people mean it in a more specific sense. Therefore, in order to answer the question, you have to ask the person what they mean." Speaking to The Guardian, she said "For instance, some feminists have historically been against lipstick and letting transgender women into women's washrooms. Those are not positions I have agreed with", a position she repeated to The Irish Times. In an interview with Penguin Books, Atwood stated that the driving question throughout her writing of The Handmaid's Tale was "If you were going to shove women back into the home and deprive them of all of these gains that they thought they had made, how would you do it?", but related this question to totalitarianism, not feminism.

In January 2018, Atwood penned the op-ed "Am I a Bad Feminist?" for The Globe and Mail. The piece was in response to social media backlash related to Atwood's signature on a 2016 petition calling for an independent investigation into the firing of Steven Galloway, a former University of British Columbia professor accused of sexual harassment and assault by a student. While feminist critics denounced Atwood for her support of Galloway, Atwood asserts that her signature was in support of due process in the legal system. She has been criticized for her comments surrounding the #MeToo movement, particularly that it is a "symptom of a broken legal system."

In 2018, following a partnership between Hulu's adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale* and women's rights organisation Equality Now, Atwood was honored at their 2018 Make Equality Reality Gala. In her acceptance speech she said:

I am, of course, not a real activist—I'm simply a writer without a job who is frequently asked to speak about subjects that would get people with jobs fired if they themselves spoke. You, however, at Equality Now are real activists. I hope people will give Equality Now lots and lots of money, today, so they can write equal laws, enact equal laws and see that equal laws are implemented. That way, in time, all girls may be able to grow up believing that there are no avenues that are closed to them simply because they are girls.

In 2019, Atwood partnered with Equality Now for the release of *The Testaments*.

Speculative and Science Fiction

Atwood has resisted the suggestion that *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* are science fiction, suggesting to *The Guardian* in 2003 that they are speculative fiction instead: "Science fiction has monsters and spaceships; speculative fiction could really happen." She told the Book of the Month Club: "*Oryx and Crake* is a speculative fiction, not a science fiction proper. It contains no intergalactic space travel, no teleportation, no Martians." On *BBC Breakfast*,she explained that science fiction, as opposed to what she herself wrote, was "talking squids in outer space." The latter phrase particularly rankled advocates of science fiction and frequently recurs when her writing is discussed.

In 2005, Atwood said that she does at times write social science fiction and that *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* can be designated as such. She clarified her meaning on the difference between speculative and science fiction, admitting that others use the terms interchangeably: "For me, the science fiction label belongs on books with things in them that we can't yet do ... speculative fiction means a work that employs the means already to hand and that takes place on Planet Earth." She said that science fiction narratives give a writer the ability to explore themes in ways that realistic fiction cannot.

Atwood further clarified her definitions of terms in 2011, stating in response to a discussion with Ursula K. Le Guin that: "what Le Guin means by 'science fiction' is what I mean by 'speculative fiction', and what she means by 'fantasy' would include what I mean by 'science fiction'." She added that genre borders were increasingly fluid, and that all forms of "SF" might be placed under a common larger umbrella.

Animal rights

Atwood repeatedly makes observations about the relationship of humans to animals in her works. A large portion of the dystopia Atwood creates in *Oryx and Crake* rests upon the genetic modification and alteration of animals and humans, resulting in hybrids such as pigoons, rakunks, wolvogs, and Crakers, which function to raise questions on the limits and ethics of science and technology, as well as questions on what it means to be human.

In *Surfacing*, one character remarks about eating animals: "The animals die that we may live, they are substitute people ... And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ-flesh resurrecting inside us, granting us life." Some characters in her books link sexual oppression to meat-eating and consequently give up meat-eating. In *The Edible Woman*, Atwood's character Marian identifies with hunted animals and cries after hearing her fiancé's experience of hunting and eviscerating a rabbit. Marian stops eating meat but then later returns to it.

In *Cat's Eye*, the narrator recognizes the similarity between a turkey and a baby. She looks at "the turkey, which resembles a trussed, headless baby. It has thrown off its disguise as a meal and has revealed itself to me for what it is, a large dead bird." In Atwood's *Surfacing*, a dead heron represents purposeless killing and prompts thoughts about other senseless deaths.

Atwood is a pescetarian. In a 2009 interview she stated that "I shouldn't use the term vegetarian because I'm allowing myself gastropods, crustaceans and the occasional fish. Nothing with fur or feathers though".

Political involvement

Atwood has indicated in an interview that she considers herself a Red Tory in what she sees as the historical sense of the term, saying that "The Tories were the ones who believed that those in power had a responsibility to the community, that money should not be the measure of all things." Atwood also stated on Twitter that she is a monarchist.In the 2008 federal election, she attended a rally for the Bloc Québécois, a Quebec separatist party, because of her support for their position on the arts, and stated that she would vote for the party if she lived in Quebec and the choice was between the Bloc and the Conservatives. In an editorial in The Globe and Mail, she urged Canadians to vote for any other party other than the Conservatives to prevent them gaining a majority.

Atwood has strong views on environmental issues, and she and Graeme Gibson were the joint honorary presidents of the Rare Bird Club within BirdLife International. Atwood celebrated her 70th birthday at a gala dinner at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. She stated that she had chosen to attend the event because the city has been home to one of Canada's most ambitious environmental reclamation programs: "When people ask if there's hope (for the environment), I say, if Sudbury can do it, so can you. Having been a symbol of desolation, it's become a symbol of hope." Atwood has been chair of the Writers' Union of Canada and helped to found the Canadian English-Speaking chapter of PEN International, a group originally started to free politically imprisoned writers. She held the position of PEN Canada president in the mid-1980s and was the

2017 recipient of the PEN Centre USA's Lifetime Achievement Award.Despite calls for a boycott by Gazan students, Atwood visited Israel and accepted the $1,000,000 Dan David Prize along with Indian author Amitav Ghosh at Tel Aviv University in May 2010. Atwood commented that "we don't do cultural boycotts."

In her dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), all the developments take place near Boston in the United States, now known as Gilead, while Canada is portrayed as the only hope for an escape. To some this reflects her status of being "in the vanguard of Canadian anti-Americanism of the 1960s and 1970s".[120] Critics have seen the mistreated Handmaid as Canada. During the debate in 1987 over a free-trade agreement between Canada and the United States, Atwood spoke out against the deal and wrote an essay opposing it.[122] She said that the 2016 United States presidential election led to an increase in sales of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Amazon reported that *The Handmaid's Tale* was the most-read book of 2017.

Activism

In 2018, she signed an appeal of the American PEN Center in defense of Ukrainian director Oleg Sentsov, a political prisoner in Russia.

In July 2020, Atwood was one of the 153 signers of the "Harper's Letter" (also known as "A Letter on Justice and Open Debate") that expressed concern that "the free exchange of information and ideas, the lifeblood of a liberal society, is daily becoming more constricted."

On February 24, 2022, Atwood briefly covered the war in Ukraine at the time of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and published a link to the state aid fund on Twitter. She continues to publish information about the war in Ukraine on the social network.

Adaptations

The novel Surfacing (1972) was adapted into a 1981 film, written by Bernard Gordon and directed by Claude Jutra. The film received poor reviews and suffers from making "little attempt to find cinematic equivalents for the admittedly difficult subjective and poetic dimensions of the novel."

The novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) has been adapted several times. A 1990 film, directed by Volker Schlöndorff, with a screenplay by Harold Pinter, received mixed reviews. A musical adaptation resulted in the 2000 opera, written by PoulRuders, with a libretto by Paul Bentley. It premiered at the Royal Danish Opera in 2000, and was staged in 2003 at London's English National Opera and the Minnesota Opera.[134] Boston Lyric Opera mounted a production in May 2019. A television series by Bruce Miller began airing on the streaming service Hulu in 2017. The first season of the show earned eight Emmys in 2017, including Outstanding Drama Series. Season two premiered on April 25, 2018, and it was announced on May 2, 2018, that Hulu had renewed the series for a third season.Atwood appears in a cameo in the first episode as one of the Aunts at the Red Center. In 2019, a graphic novel based on this book and with the same title was published by Renée Nault, ISBN 9780224101936.

In 2003, six of Atwood's short stories were adapted by Shaftesbury Films for the anthology television series *The Atwood Stories*.

Atwood's 2008 Massey Lectures were adapted into the documentary Payback (2012), by director Jennifer Baichwal. Commentary by Atwood and others such as economist Raj Patel, ecologist William Reese, and religious scholar Karen Armstrong, are woven into various stories that explore the concepts of debt and payback, including an Armenian blood feud, agricultural working conditions, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The novel *Alias Grace*(1996) was adapted into a six-part 2017 miniseries directed by Mary Harron and adapted by Sarah Polley. It premiered on CBC on September 25, 2017, and the full series was released on Netflix on November 3, 2017. Atwood makes a cameo in the fourth episode of the series as a disapproving churchgoer.

In the Wake of the Flood (released in October 2010), a documentary film by the Canadian director Ron Mann, followed Atwood on the unusual book tour for her novel *The Year of the Flood* (2009). During this innovative book tour, Atwood created a theatrical version of her novel, with performers borrowed from the local areas she was visiting. The documentary is described as "a fly-on-the-wall film vérité."

Atwood's children's book *Wandering Wenda and Widow Wallop's WundergroundWashery* (2011) was adapted into the children's television series *The Wide World of Wandering Wenda*, broadcast on CBC beginning in the spring of 2017. Aimed at early readers, the animated series follows Wenda and her friends as they navigate different adventures using words, sounds, and language.

Director Darren Aronofsky had been slated to direct an adaption of the *MaddAddam* trilogy for HBO, but it was revealed in October 2016 that HBO had dropped the plan from its schedule. In January 2018, it was announced that Paramount Television and Anonymous Content had bought the rights to the trilogy and would be moving forward without Aronofsky.

13.1 Achievements of the Writer

Awards and Honors

Atwood holds numerous honorary degrees from various institutions, including The Sorbonne, NUI Galway as well as Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Awards

- Governor General's Award, 1966, 1985
- Companion of the Order of Canada, 1981
- Guggenheim fellowship, 1981
- Los Angeles Times Fiction Award, 1986
- American Humanist Association Humanist of the Year, 1987
- Nebula Award, 1986 and Prometheus Award, 1987 nominations, both science fiction awards.
- Arthur C. Clarke Award for best Science Fiction, 1987
- Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1988
- Canadian Booksellers Association Author of the Year, 1989
- Outstanding Canadian Award – Armenian Community Centre of Toronto, 1989
- Order of Ontario, 1990
- Trillium Book Award, 1991, 1993, 1995
- Government of France's Chevalier dansl'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, 1994
- Helmerich Award, 1999, by the Tulsa Library Trust.
- Booker Prize, 2000, 2019
- Kenyon Review Award for Literary Achievement, 2007
- Prince of Asturias Award for Literature, 2008
- Fellow Royal Society of Literature, 2010
- Nelly Sachs Prize, Germany, 2010
- Dan David Prize, Israel, 2010
- Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, Canada, 2012
- Los Angeles Times Book Prize "Innovator's Award", 2012
- Gold medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, 2015
- Golden Wreath of Struga Poetry Evenings, Macedonia, 2016
- Franz Kafka Prize, Czech Republic, 2017
- Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, Germany, 2017
- Companion of Honour, 2019
- Joint winner of the Booker Prize, 2019
- Dayton Literary Peace Prize, 2020
- British Academy President's Medal, 2020
- Emerson-Thoreau Medal (2020)
- Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Hitchens Prize (2022)

Honorary Degrees

- Trent University, 1973
- Queen's University, 1974

- Concordia University, 1979
- Smith College, 1982
- University of Toronto, 1983
- University of Waterloo, 1985
- University of Guelph, 1985
- Mount Holyoke College, 1985
- Victoria College, 1987
- Université de Montréal, 1991
- University of Leeds, 1994
- McMaster University, 1996
- Lakehead University, 1998
- University of Oxford, 1998
- Algoma University, 2001
- University of Cambridge, 2001
- Dartmouth College, 2004
- Harvard University, 2004
- Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2005
- National University of Ireland, Galway, 2011
- Ryerson University, 2012
- Royal Military College of Canada (LLD), November 16, 2012
- University of Athens, 2013
- University of Edinburgh, 2014
- Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2017

13.2 Significance of the Title

Surfacing takes its title from its central metaphor, dramatizing a woman's passage from a precarious sense of self through madness towards a fuller identity. The novel is a powerfully poetic and political exploration of Canadian consciousness, personal and social, defined against a metaphorically "American" state of mind. To be "American" is to be violently depersonalized, disembodied, without a language, a past or a relation with nature. The woman and 3 friends go to her father's isolated cottage in northern Québec where, after a few days, relationships deteriorate and sexuality becomes a currency to bargain with. The woman's search for her missing father ends with the discovery of his drowned body, precipitating her descent into temporary, healing madness before she surfaces with a less "American," saner vision.

13.3 Theme of Alienation

The Total Alienation of Women

Atwood uses the narrator's near-constant feeling of alienation to comment on the alienation of all women. The narrator feels abandoned by her parents because of the disappearance of her father and the detachment of her mother. She finds men especially alienating because of the way they control women through religion, marriage, birth control, sex, language, and birth. She depicts the way that men view relationships as a war, with women as the spoils. The narrator also describes her alienation as systematic, highlighting the way that children learn gender roles early on in life. The result of the narrator's alienation is madness and complete withdrawal. The narrator remains unnamed, making her a universal figure and suggesting that all women are in some way alienated.

The Alienation and Domination of Women

The narrator's greatest conflict comes from feeling alienated from her patriarchal society, which emphasizes the role of men over that of women. She even feels isolated from her boyfriend, who she can't decide if she loves or trusts, and her friends, who she realizes she knows nothing about. The narrator almost feels like she's an outsider looking into a world she doesn't understand or want

to be a part of. The more time she spends with her friends, the more she realizes marriage—and life inside the patriarchy in general—terrifies her.

She watches as Anna is oppressed by her abusive husband, who traps her in a marriage characterized by emotional abuse, infidelity, and violent sex. Anna accepts his actions as the norm, never rebelling against or leaving him when he mistreats her. On the outside, their marriage looks happy and healthy, but the narrator soon realizes what she thought was romance is merely control and manipulation.

On a personal level, the narrator's society has alienated her from herself as well as others. The narrator doesn't seem to have any control over her memories or sense of reality. Her stories don't quite blend when she talks about her past with her husband and child. It's almost as though she has been told so many different things, she doesn't know how to separate fact from fiction anymore. The narrator's false memories of her husband and child have been used to distance herself from the guilt of the abortion and affair. But the narrator's complete acceptance of the lies as truth shows how little control she has over her own identity.

13.4 Application of the Theory of Hybridity of Homi K Bhabha

Surfacing:

The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work ofHomi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (see mimicry and ambivalence). Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994:37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space,which for Bhabhamakes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity'of cultures untenable. Bhabha claims that this ambivalence—this duality that presents a split in the identity of the colonized other—allows for beings who are a hybrid of their own cultural identity and the colonizer's cultural identity. Surfacing engages with various other oppositions and dualities as well— "American"/Canadian, english/French, settler/indigene, and civilization/wilderness—that underlie Canada's history of colonial oppression. As the wolf-man desires, "reparation" is what the text seeks for the damage done via the establishment of colonial and national boundaries, as well as the hierarchical binary opposition between male and female. As the narrator recognizes, "there had to be a good kind and a bad kind of everything" (44), and this dualism establishes, she notes, the need for the "good" to save the world from the "bad": "men think they can do it with guns, women with their bodies, love conquers all, conquerors love all, mirages raised by words" (193). The realization that "words" raise the "mirages" or untruths of such categories and are responsible for the narrative histories that justify colonial oppression is countered by the narrator's rejection of words, names, and language. "I no longer have a name," as she states after her "vision quest"/breakdown at the end of the novel (198). But such a rejection is unsustainable. Thus, the narrator knows that she must at some point return from the border country, that she "can't stay here forever," that there is "no total salvation," and that even within her unborn child, "word furrows potential already" (220, 221, 223). language—words—it seems, will always force us to take a side, to narrate, assign names, and categorize.

The theme of hybridity is evident in the character of the narrator, who embodies a hybrid cultural identity. The narrator is a young woman of mixed European and Native American descent, and her identity is shaped by the complex interplay between these two cultures. As a result, the narrator's identity is a blend of both European and Native American cultural elements, reflecting the hybrid nature of cultural identity. The narrator's hybrid identity is further complicated by her experiences growing up in a predominantly white society, which have left her feeling disconnected from both her European and Native American heritage. As she embarks on a journey to reconnect with her roots, the narrator grapples with her own sense of identity and belonging, and begins to explore the ways in which her hybrid identity shapes her experiences and perceptions of the world around her.

Summary

Margaret Eleanor Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and inventor.

Atwood has won numerous awards and honors for her writing, including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the Governor General's Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, Princess of

Asturias Awards, and the National Book Critics and PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Awards. A number of her works have been adapted for film and television.

Atwood's work has been of interest to feminist literary critics, despite Atwood's unwillingness at times to apply the label *feminist* to her works.

In 2005, Atwood said that she does at times write social science fiction and that *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* can be designated as such.

Atwood repeatedly makes observations about the relationship of humans to animals in her works.

She held the position of PEN Canada president in the mid-1980s and was the 2017 recipient of the PEN Center USA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

On February 24, 2022, Atwood briefly covered the war in Ukraine at the time of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and published a link to the state aid fund on Twitter.

The novel *Surfacing* (1972) was adapted into a 1981 film, written by Bernard Gordon and directed by Claude Jutra.

Surfacing takes its title from its central metaphor, dramatizing a woman's passage from a precarious sense of self through madness towards a fuller identity.

The main theme of the novel is total alienation of women.

In the **novel** Atwood shows a serious concern with women's destiny in a male dominated world.

SelfAssessment

1. Margaret Eleanor Atwood is a …… poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and inventor.

A. Indian
B. American
C. Canadian
D. African

2. Atwood uses the narrator's near-constant feeling of alienation to comment on the alienation of all …….

A. Men
B. Animals
C. Women
D. Saints

3. The novel *Surfacing* (1972) was adapted into a 1981 film, written by …….

A. Govind
B. Bernard Gordon
C. (c) John Lily
D. (d) Thomas Atwood

4. Anna is a……. of the narrator.

A. Sister
B. (b)Cousin
C. (c) Friend
D. (d) Teacher

Keywords

Alienation: The state or experience of being alienated.

Protagonist: *The narrator feels emotionally numb*, isolated by the numerous roles she is supposed to play in her life.

Review Questions

1. Write a note on life and works of Margaret Atwood.
2. What is the significance of the title?
3. What is the main theme of the novel?

Further Readings

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Unit 14: Margaret Eleanor Atwood: *Surfacing*

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Objectives

After reading this unit students will be able to:

- Know about the post-colonial elements in the novel
- Know about the theme of feminism
- Know the role of Nature
- Discuss the plot summary

Introduction

Surfacing (1972), Margaret Atwood's second novel, was the first to bring her widespread, international acclaim. The novel is about an unnamed female protagonist, an illustrator of fairy tales, whose search for her missing father leads her to make several important, but disturbing discoveries about herself.

14.1 Post-Colonial Elements in Surfacing

Surfacing is Atwood's second novel. It is divided into three parts. The first part has eight chapters (from one to eight), the second part has eleven chapters from (nine to nineteen), and the third part has eight chapters (from twenty to twenty-seven). Surfacing deals with protagonist's two weeks actions. Atwood does not bring up the protagonist's name but she drives to psychological breakdown due to her unwillingness of observing the social outlooks which are forced on women. This non-existence of name hints at serious problems of individuality and of communication. The unnamed protagonist and narrator of the novel have some strong trends towards separation, anti-Americanism, and introspective. The unnamed protagonist suggests the lack of real identity and it denotes that she does not belong in her own culture. Atwood portraits the alienation from end to end searching of the narrator's missing father in a distant island in Quebec along with her boyfriend, Joe and her other friends, David and Anna. She expresses sufferings, socially isolated, and distrustful of love through the deep psychological and emotional revolution of the narrator. So, the narrator ultimately moves like a mad and lives like an animal. But she appears as a more rational being on the island. Atwood composes thoroughly the narrator's unfiltered thoughts and observations in Surfacing. The first part of the novel deals with the incidents of the narrator's search of her missing father, a botanist, when they spent their summer. The narrator leaves the city and travels to the Canadian wilderness to find her father. He may possibly dead. David is a

cinematographer; Anna is his passive girlfriend like a doll; and Joe, the narrator's hairy lover; and an unsatisfied potter. While they travel towards north direction, the narrator suggests that the three of them are in the erroneous place or she may be in the wrong place. Due to her separation, she also considers her homeland as a foreign country and then she supplements that she does not know the way to reach her father. It looks clear that she has become separated from her parents and she does not attend her mother's funeral in the past. One more reason for her alienation from them is the unpleasant Americans. She records the changes of Americans who have paved roads, a new motel, a concrete bridge, and other constructions threaten the transparency of her recollections. She regrets bringing new technology, huge pollution, and cruel violence. These are slowly the causes them to turn towards northward. It reflects the domination of America. The narrator narrates the story of her husband and a child, drowned brother, and her aborted baby. The baby may consider with one of the twins. It does not have adequate maturity. Atwood creates the character of two babies which refers to two countries: Canada and America. The author depicts her American experience as: There was a covered bridge here once, but it was too far. There was a covered bridge here once, but it was too far north to be quaint. They tore it down three years before I left, to improve the dam, and replaced it with the concrete bridge which is here now, enormous, monumental, dwarfing the village. It's the dam that controls the lake: sixty years ago they raised the lake level so that whenever they wanted to flush the logs down the narrow outflow river to the mill they would have enough water power. But they don't do much logging here anymore. A few men work on railway maintenance, one freight train a day; … (12) The second part of the novel depicts the narrator's return to the divided self. The narrator comes to know that David and Anna have a mutual vicious relationship. This relationship is attempted by David to capture on film, in that way Anna is as an object rather than a person. The narrator has believed that David is also in lack of love with her and vice versa. Like the Americans, David is an exploiter. Ironically, the real Canadians who wish to improve her father's island possessions, and he wants to flood the area. In fact, part of David's problem is not an original attack on the Americans and he himself becomes Americanized. The narrator notices her father's drawings and a number of scrapbooks those belonged to her mother, brother, and her. She reads her scrapbook. "I searched through it carefully, looking for something I could recognize as myself, where no drawings at all, where I had come from or gone wrong; but there were no drawings at all, just illustrations cut from magazines and pasted in (Atwood, 72). These two i.e. her father's drawing book and their scrapbook lead her to the cliff where she faiths to find the Native American paintings and clues about her father's fate. The vision radically alters her, setting her apart from her companions who have turned against the gods and yet will torture her for deviation. She marks but her choice is understood ironically as inhuman. Part two concludes with the narrator's decision to engage her with another language that the language does not associate with the principal culture because she reminds herself that her nation is a border country. It is an area to meet French and English-speaking people. The last part of the novel starts with the narrator who is being drenched by Joe. She has already been defined as more animal than David or Anna. The father projected in her childish picture of the moon-mother and horned man. While their amalgamation influence strengthens the conventional gender roles that she has already rejected, the narrator's description of their connection is barren of feeling. He is only a worth of modernizing the two shares separated by her involvement in the abortion. The narrator protects herself when the others leave, turns the capturing reflect the wall, rejects her marriage ring and clothes, leaves the cabin, and enters her parents' world. Language interrupts as she breaks down and then she perceives parents and returns to nature. She realizes the ghosts have been banished and she is free. At the end of the novel, she states that the most important thing is to reject to be a victim but she must confirm whether she goes to Joe or not. "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that, I can do nothing. I have recent, give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone. A lie which was always more disastrous than the truth would have been" (Atwood, 150). If she goes, her depiction of him as half-formed suggests that she will be the creator and shaper but not he.

Throughout the novel, Atwood demands a woman's conservative social and sexual role. Surfacing traces on the health risks related with hormonal contraception, abortion, the idea of contraception as a male creation, the power received in gravidity, the social inferences of makeup, the hypothetically false ideal of the wedding, the idea of a natural woman, and the inner mechanism that men employ to control over women. Atwood makes the unnamed narrator feel isolation by social forces that cast her in a particular gender role that in complete withdrawal. As such, Atwood grants a frank criticism of the sexual and social norms enforced upon women. Finally, the protagonist of the novel fights with the forces that conquer her. At the end of the novel, she overcomes confidence and a sagacity of freedom.

14.2 The Theme of Feminism

Feminism in *Surfacing*

The prolific writer Margaret Atwood (1939) is one of the most famous and talented feminist writer of Post Modern Canadian Fiction. Surfacing (1972) is an extremely complex work which lends itself to several interpretations one has to go over the text several time to get the real meaning. It is a novel about 'feminism' and 'self-discovery'. Surfacing deals with the conflicts between 'self & society' and conflict between 'individual awareness' & National consciousness. In her novels one finds the 'Feminism' and woman's suffering. As a feminist writer her aim is to explore woman's inner psyche, her conflicts and search for identification. Through her writing she wants to demonstrate and highlights the terrible gap existing between man and woman. In her novel the protagonists attempts to be assertive.

Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* 1972 deals with feminism, Identity of self-hood, and Identity of womanhood. It is a novel of self-realization, but it also possesses an element of feminism. At the end of the novel there is sanity, a real understanding of reality.

Heroine of the novel Surfacing is unnamed. She is an unsuccessful artist in the city of Toronto who has left her husband and family long ago. During her city life, she entered an empty marriage and emotion numbing abortion and divorce. After that she returns to her home with her three companion Anna, narrator's friend and a model also, David, Anna's husband and a film maker also, Joe, David'sfriend, a camera man and narrator's lover also. The world from which narrator returns, she expresses in such words:

"It is not perfect, not heaven but neither is it the hell of madness." Purpose of narrator's returns to her home ground is to find out her missing father. She wants to find out what has happened with her father. He was alive or dead. Narrator was worshiped her father as a logical and scientific man. She was very devoted to her father. Narrator remarks her parents' attitude toward her. Narrator remembers that she had always depended on her father's rational explanations. Her mother's silence had been a mystery to her. At the end of part one the memory of her brother's drawing.

"After she'd told the story I asked our mother where he

would have gone if she hadn't saved him. She said she

didn't know. My father, explained everything but my

mother never did, which only convinced me that she had

the answer but wouldn't tell."

Mr.Paul, whose is her father's best friend, informed narrator that her father is reported to have vanished mysteriously. Narrator has to enquire about her father. She likes and trusts her friends, but they hadn't accompanied her on this errand of finding her father,

"I like them, I trust them, I can't think of anyone else

I like better, but right now I wish they were not here.

Though they're necessary: David's and Anna's car was the only way…….But my reason for being here embarrasses them, they don't understand it. They all disowned their parents long ago, the way you are supposed to: Joe never mentions his mother and father."

Narrator's friend treats the trip as a break from city life and holidays while narrator is very serious about her missing father and will discover something. Narrator is physically mutilated rather she is half dead. The journey revised the memory of her unhappy past. Narrator thinks about her father in chapter three and said:

"If he's safe I don't want to see him. There is no point, they never forgave me, they didn't understand the divorce; I don't think they even understand the marriage and leaving my husband and child, that was the unpardonable sin; I admit I was stupid, stupidity is the same as evil if you judge by the results and I didn't have any excuses."

The narrator is convinced that her parents never forgave her for either her divorce or leaving her child. The mystery of her father's disappearance is becoming a 'tangled maze' for her. Narrator wouldn't want to be alone that place. While in the company of her friends, the narrator reflects on her own brief marriage, which was not actually a marriage because it destroyed their relationship. Narrator's group departs on a search of a trail. Narrator thinks that:

"I see now the impossibility of searching the island for him, and even then they could miss him, dead or alive, accident or suicide or murder, or if for some unfathomable reason he's chosen this absence and is hiding, they'd never find him."

The physical journey now turns into a physical search for her father. The narrator continues to look for clues to her father's whereabouts and she thinks of other possibilities, strangest of all is, he might be hiding somewhere in the island. The search on the trail becomes difficult and the abandon it. Narrator's fear of her father is still evident and her fear seems to be directed not only at her father but for herself. In the chapter ten suddenly Joe proposes narrator to marry him. Narrator is shocked and cries not to laugh at the suddenness of the proposal and refuses to his proposal after that Narrator begins to tell him about her marriage and her child.

The memory of her wedding that follows is very strange. When the ceremony was over, her husband behaved as if she were invalid, not a bride. Art teacher asked narrator if she was feeling better and she could hardly stand because her legs were shaking. He said: I know it's tough, out it's better this way. At night she goes into one of the bedrooms of the cabin and discovers something that she felt were out of place in that remote area: a photo album, some unused wedding presents of a childhood rhyme sums up narrator's view of herself as a victim; "Nobody loves me Everybody hates me I'm going to the garden to eat worms."

In chapter-12 it is found that Mr Paul, her father's friend, seemed certain that her father was dead. Thinks of this she doubts her theory about his hiding in the forest. Narrator thinks perhaps the CIA had done away with him to get the land. Narrator becomes sure that her father must have gone totally mad. Narrator has proof of her father's sanity and therefore of his probable death. She is sure now that he is not a madman lurking in the woods,

"Crazy people can come back, from wherever they go to take refuse, but dead people can't, they are prohibited."

After rejecting the Joe's proposal, Joe and Narrator discuss in detail something regarding their uncertain future. All of a sudden, she offers Joe, to move out of the city apartment and said; "He did not love me, it was an idea of himself he loves and he wanted me to join him……. I didn't matter, so I didn't have to care."

Narrator believes that Joe does love her, and that is the reason he wants to marry her. Narrator's comments on Joe's response to her refusal of his proposal and the discussion of their relationship are revealing. Joe is very unhappy because of the rejection of his marriage proposal.

Narrator saw Anna without make up and says 'May be he {David} won't notice it', At this Anna says, 'he will notice…. he wants me to look like a young chick all the time'. Anna is extremely upset over it. She reveals to the narrator sordid details about their marriage. David has a set of rules if she breaks them she is punished. So narrator suggests a divorce, Anna explains that she loves him, even though she thinks he'd like her to die.

The narrator still hasn't found out what happened to her father. As narrator goes down to the shore, she overhears an argument between David and Anna. She looks better and also happy but at this moment, David is trying to talk her into taking her bathing suit off so that Joe can take some shots of naked her for movie, they are making a movie called 'Random sample' David was telling her, "Come on, take it off…. It won't hurt you, we need a naked lady…. you'll go in beside the dead bird, it is your chance for stardom, you've always wanted fame."

This was the pose which was taken by Joe, against Anna's desire and this is the loss of Ann's identity. The narrator wants to stop the fight but she doesn't. Both Anna and David become very angry, David threatens to throw her into the lake if she doesn't cooperate. Finally, Anna gives to take off her bathing suit and dives into the water while Joe films her. Anna jumped into the lake. Narrator thinks that David is like her.

"We are the ones that don't know how to love, there is something missing in us, we were born that way."

Narrator asked David why he forced Anna to humiliate herself {that too in front of Joe}, David tells her that Anna is devious and unfaithful. She is stupid, according to David, "She goes with other man, she thinks she can get away with it, but she is too dumb, every time I find out; I can smell it on her…. God knows that I'm not jealous…. But she is devious, I can't stand that."

Narrator has had an abortion; it is a shock for the readers. Earlier she has told that she was married, had a child and left the child with her husband when they divorced Narrator comes to the realization that I could have said, no to the abortion, but I'm a killer, "I thought, whatever it is part

of myself or a separate creature, I killed it. It was not a child but it could have been one, I didn't allow it."

Narrator wanted to escape the moral responsibility for the death of her child. It was easy for the narrator to present herself as the victim of a broken marriage and killer of her child. Narrator thinks that she could not allow it. In chapter-17 David and Anna tell her that her father has been found by some Americans fisherman. His body was unrecognizable, but Mr. Paul identified the cloths as her father's. The narrator is suspicious of the information, when she asks them where they found the body they tell her it was near the cliff where she was diving. The narrator doesn't believe them. Even though her friend avoids her because of the news of her father's death, the narrator is convinced that, "Nothing has died, everything is alive, everything is waiting to become alive."

After finding narrator's father body, her reaction is very strange, she feels suspicious. She is convinced that they are lying and the report of his death is a trap designed to hurt her.

In the chapter 20 we find that Joe is uneasy. After the encounter with Anna and the news of the narrator's father death, Joe is not sure how to approach her. He thinks she must be in pain and tries not to awake her up.

"He thinks I'm in pain, he wants to evade it. He bends

himself away from me, but I stroke him, moving my

hand over his body, he is startled because I am awake.

After a minute he turns to me."

They are making love outside, Narrator wanted to feel her womb again with the help of Joe. She says to Joe, "I! get pregnant." During the union with Joe, Narrator feels that her aborted child is surfacing within her,*"I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, for giving me, rising from the lake with it has been present for long."*

Everybody seems to be sure that the narrator and Joe's relationship has been saved.

"By screwing Joe She's brought us back together saving the world, everyone wants to; men think they can do it with guns, women with their bodies, love conquers all, conquerors love all, Marriages raised by words."

Narrator's friend returns back at the city of Toronto. Narrator is looking for not only the truth about the death of her father, but also the truth about herself. Her quest is dangerous, difficult and confusing. She feels that the power has left her and without it, she is without protection. She knows she must remain there all alone in the cabin, but she is not at all clear of her next step. She destroys the glasses, plates, books, blankets and clothes. When nothing is left intact and the fire is only smouldering. I leave, carrying one of the wounded blankets with me."walking to the lake, she lies down in water and remove her clothes. She is hungry; she gathered some vegetable from the garden and eats them".

Narrator wants to make contact in some way with her parents. She burns everything connected with civilization, drawing, photographs, maps etc. she baptizes herself in water like fire. Her quest is clearly a visionary one, and she must search for the power of the gods, the ancient's Indian gods of nature, through a ritual of personal purification. All alone on the island, the narrator is awoken suddenly the next day by the sound of power boat. She runs into the woods to hide. She thinks it might be the police or possibly tourists, she even wonders if they are American invaders.

"They cannot be trusted. They'll mistakes me for a human being, a naked woman wrapped in a blanket….

They won't be able to tell what I really am. But if they

guesses my true form, identity, they will shoot me… and

hang me up by the feet from a tree."

Unnamed narrator thinks that her mother transformed into a bird, and she recognized that her father has been transformed in to a fish. Narrator witnessed her mother turning into a bird and she sees her father turning into a fish. Both of her parents have become embodiment of nature, taking on shapes of animals and birds. The end of her visionary quest is signalled by the narrator discovering that the foot prints she thoughts of her father's turn out to be her own. Narrator dreams of her parents that they have been gone and never comeback. The next morning when she wakes, she realizes,

"I know they have gone finally, back into the earth, the

air, the water, wherever they were when I summoned

them. I am the only one left alive on this island."

Narrator is pretty sure that her parents will never appear to her again. She cannot stay there on the island forever. She pretended to be a victim of a failed marriage.

"The above all, to refuse to be a victim, unless I can do that can do nothing. I have to recant, give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone…. with drawing is no longer possible and the alternative is death."

Narrator gets ready to re-enter life by putting her clothes on. She wonders about the baby she is carrying. If she is pregnant. She feels it is her duty to feed and take care of herself so that she will be able to deliver a healthy baby. Lost in thought she sees a boat arrive with Paul and Joe in it Joe gets out of the boat and he calls her. He has returned {leaving David and Ann} especially for her. He won't wait much longer.

But right now he waits. The lake is quiet; the trees surround me, asking and giving 'nothing'.

The novel ends without an ending what the narrator will actually do afterwards. But the ending is full of hope, hope that is based on realistic expectations and an acceptance that life is not perfect. Narrator thinks that a new inner self as well as a creation, represents her "possible" future with Joe, who returns again to "rescue" her;*"I watch him, my love for him useless as a third eye or a possibility. If I go with him we will have to talk, wooden houses as absolute, we can no longer live in spurious peace by avoiding each other."*

Narrator is a commercial artist and every once in a while she recollects that she would have become a great artist, if she had not listened to what her former lover used to tell her,'there have never been any important woman artist.' Thus her mind was filled with this view that he was right, there never has been any. Narrator's Art Teachers, who is a married man, determined to press her artistic talent and feminism because he cannot accept her. She would be superior then him. Finally, the art teacher played a trick on her by concealing his marital status and gave her a wedding ring and convinced her for marriage. At last she agrees and becomes pregnant. She aborted the child under the pressure of her art teacher. The journey revised the memory of her unhappy past and a painful relationship with her art teacher who destroys her life. Loss of her father becomes the loss of herself. Narrator is physically mutilated rather she is half dead. She does not want to marry Joe because she is already frustrated by her own first marriage and also by the relation of Anna and David.

Surfacing has been interpreted variously as a novel of self-discovery as a blue-print for revolution as an anti-colonial novel and finally as a feminist novel. Surfacing deals with the conflicts between self & society which broadened into a conflict between individual awareness and national consciousness. In this novel we find feminism through myth the search for her missing father. Whole novel based on the narrator's attempt to search for her missing father which becomes a symbolic representation of feminism. Atwood brings the condition of the Canadian society to the light along with the problem of the multicultural society like Canada. It highlights the cultural predicament in Canada, where one cultural tries to dominate the other. American culture dominated Canada. Americans are evil. Canadian's language, fashion and values are all imitative, borrowed by Americans. When narrator returns. She discovers that whole Canada is full of violence by Americans. In Canada people are even worse than animals.

Atwood's protagonist is a young modern woman, who not only struggles but is an adventurous to break the old structure of the life and find a new order. The narrator reflects the torture sensibility of a woman who is not ready to compromise with the male dominated society and is looking for an escape from this human society.

The narrator is seeing her home ground exploited and destroyed by the American. All American may be called as a 'Happy Killer' Americans operation is seen in the victimization on animals which is similar of man. The killer of her heron for sport is merely to kill and proved their power even on human being. Narrator rejects humanities, seeking the primitivism and return to nature. Jhon Moss says,*"She must produce as an animal be only an animal then she can become a human."*

The grim realities of life make her modern woman, more independent and adventurous and she refuses to be trapped and victim. She becomes physically and spiritually reborn.

Atwood's nameless protagonist is a heart boiled feminist, who thinks nothing but of separating from her husband and child that shackled her freedom and individuality. At the end of the novel, she rejects the human society and turns to primitive world. Narrator in surfacing plans to be assertive and a bold lady to face all obstacles with courage. This characteristic has a positive effect on readers also. Women today struggle for justice.

14.3 The Role of Nature

Colonialism and patriarchy are seen as power structures that exploit. In Canada, colonial exploitation is seen as a kind of exploitation of both Nature and women. Colonial power structures have gone deep into the collective unconsciousness of Canada and have become metaphor for feminine and nature exploitation for women writers in that country. This gives rise to Eco-feminism. Eco-feminism or ecological feminism is a term coined in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne. It is a philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinking and the belief that the social mentality that leads to the domination and oppression of women is directly connected to the social mentality that leads to the abuse of the natural environment. Joyce Nelson says, ―Eco-feminism bridges the gap between ecology and feminism: strands of analysis which have existed side by side over past decades without necessarily intertwining. By making explicit the connection between a misogynist society and a society which has exploited mother earth to the point of environmental crisis, Eco-feminism has helped to highlight the deep splits in patriarchal paradigm. Eco-feminist theory links the oppression of women with the oppression of nature. More specifically, ―ecological feminism is the position that there are important connections―historical, symbolic, and theoretical― between the domination of women and the domination of nature, an understanding which is crucial to both feminism and environmental ethics. (warren,.p.235) Eco-feminism is dealt in Margaret Atwood's novel Surfacing (1972). Margaret Atwood is a leading novelist of Canada. She is best known for her feminist novels around the world. Surfacing is one of the best novels of Atwood which projects the story of an invisibly visible character without name in form of narrator of the story. The title of the novel is very significant because it reveals the efforts of an individual 's self-exploration which undergoes many phases of physical troubles and mental traumas. All the efforts of an individual in the novel for self-exploration clearly come up on the surface in midst of the nature from deep conflict between self and society and gives a new power of rethinking and insight to the nameless heroine of the novel for further process of life. The protagonist grows up in a masculine world where it was worse for a girl to ask questions than for a boy. If a boy asked a question the other boys would make derisive sucking noises with their mouths but if a girl asked one the other girls would say ―Think you 're so great‖ in the washroom afterwards. Thus growing up in a culture saturated with male bias, women remain reconciled to their own inferiority. Margaret Atwood draws attention to the fact that ―the world is masculine on the whole; those who fashioned it ruled it, and still dominate it today, are men. ‖ (Beauvoir, p.557) In Surfacing the narrator of the story remains nameless throughout the novel. Commenting on the namelessness of the heroine Nancy A. Walker says that the narrator ―lacks a clearly defined ―self that can be named. Being nameless the protagonist says to her friend Anna, ―I no longer have a name. I tried for all those years to be civilized but I'm not and I'm though pretending.‖ (Atwood, p.162) It can be said that by depriving her protagonist of a name, Margaret Atwood has been able to suggest that Surfacing is not a story of a particular woman but of the millions of women all over the world who may identify themselves with her. The protagonist loves her art teacher who uses all his skill to seduce her. He gave a wedding ring and almost succeeds in creating the image of himself as her husband. When she is pregnant, he uses all tricks to abort the child. For him it is ―simple like getting a wart removed. (Atwood,138) The protagonist discovers that after marriage women's exploitation, oppression and victimization gets sharpened. According to her marriage is nothing but a surrendering of values and distortion of the identity of a woman. Thus the protagonist's journey into the interior provides her, ―a means for tapping emotions that would otherwise remain inexpressible, and reveals aspects of her personality hitherto hidden.(Stewart,p. 156) In an interview Margaret Atwood says, ―It seemed to me that getting married would be a kind of death.‖(Valerie, p.16) According to Margaret Atwood, marriage should follow love. A marriage which is not based on mutual love is meaningless. The narrator says she was fool to enter into the bond of marriage. But in reality she never got married. Her lover was a ―middle aged‖, ―second hand‖ and ―selfish‖ man. He has refused to marry her because he is already married. The narrator feels shattered when he shows the photographs of his wife and children, ―they had names, he said I should be mature. ‖ (Atwood, p.143) She is betrayed by selfish lover but says, ―for him I could have been anyone but for me he was unique, the first, that's where I learned. I worshiped him...I kept scraps of his handwriting like saints' relics... (Atwood, p.142) The narrator cannot forget the misery abortion has caused her. She says: ―I couldn't accept it, that mutilation, ruin I'd made. (Atwood, p.137) The unnatural act of her abortion and the continual struggle for her to feel comfortable with words and language illustrate the extent to which society or man oppressed and consumed the surface. Both empowering and dominating nature of her ex-lover shows, ―The unborn child was my husband's, he imposed it on me, all the time it was growing in me I felt like an incubator. He measured everything he would let me eat, he was feeding it on me, he wanted a replica of himself. (Atwood, p.28) Margaret Atwood is emphasizing the fact that men exploit the

bodies of women for their needs. They have controlled the process of childbirth which nature has assigned only to women. Men want women to remain powerless victim. She refuses Joe's marriage proposal, —The finality; and he'd got the order wrong, he'd never asked whether I loved him, which was supposed to come first. I would have been prepared for that. (Atwood, p.80) Joe does not realize the need for it because men except women to be absolutely passive and also because they think marriage is a woman's destiny. The relationship between the protagonist and Joe, offers an interesting insight into male-female dichotomy. The protagonist's acceptance of the partnership is almost fatalistic. She realizes that for Joe sexual need is primary and he wants to dominate and control her. She perceives a killer and victimizer in him. We can notice the split between the narrator's feminine self that is peace and harmony in married life and her feminist self which suggests Anna to walk out of marriage instead of suffering. Her imaginary divorce caused her tremendous pain and suffering. Remembering her parent's reaction on her divorce she says: —They never forgave me, they didn't understand and divorce, I don't think they even understood the marriage, which wasn't surprising since I didn't understand it myself. What upset them was the way I did it, so suddenly, and then running off and leaving my husband and child, my attractive full-colour magazine illustrations, suitable for framing. ‖ (Atwood, p.23) Margaret Atwood's —Surfacing takes woman as an existential condition, the condition of being powerless and manipulable. (Jaidev, p.54) Since power is centralized in the hands of man, they feel nothing wrong in destroying her dignity or creativity. According to them, a woman has no right to have a baby without a husband. When the pregnancy of the protagonist concluded not in childbirth but in abortion she feels emptied, amputated. Margaret Atwood displays a superb, penetrating awareness of the traumatic experiences of abortion in the life of sensitive woman. Sushila Singh, an exponent of feminism in India thinks that, —the trauma of abortion has never been dealt with such an extraordinary understanding before in fiction‖. The protagonist undergoes emotional and artistic death at the hands of her teacher. It is a —planted death in her‖. As Malashri Lal says, —...the pain of aborting life unhinges the minds to a degree that it creates an alternate truth to the event. The protagonist suffers from a guilt complex and in the end of the story, she decides to conceive a baby and resolved that, —this time I won't let them. (Atwood, p.187) The narrator wants to prove that the process of childbirth is women's power not men's and a woman can deliver the baby the natural way. She says: —This time I will do it myself.... The baby will slip out easily as an egg, a kitten and I'll lick it off and bite the cord, the blood retiring to the ground where it belongs; the moon will be full, pulling. In the morning I will be able to see it: it will be covered with shining fur, a God. (Atwood, p.156) After her abortion, the protagonist comes to develop deep sympathy for the flora and fauna of the Quebec Island. She finds that the beauty of Nature is being destroyed by the Americans. The relationship between nature and Americans is relationship of exploitation and the entire landscape has been mutilated, raped: —Further in the trees they didn't cut before, the flood are marooned, broken and grey white tipped on their sides, their giant contorted roots bleached and skinless; on the sodden trunks are colonies of plants, feeding on disintegration; laurel, sun-dew the insect eater, its toe nail- sized leaves sticky with red hairs. Out of the leaf nests the flowers rise, pure white, flesh of gnats and midges petals now, metamorphosis. (Atwood, p.161) Within Surfacing, power and domination directly oppress both the feminine world and the natural world. From the human driven need to control the dam to the destruction of older trees. The protagonist looks with disgust on the disrespect of her companions and others towards the natural world. When she sees a dead heron, obviously killed by a human and on display to reveal the killer's ego, she is sickened and becomes more sickened when David wants to film it because it looks suitable for a film titles —Random Samples. She opposes to eating animals, saying she had no right to it and even suggests that killing a fish is worse than starting a war because there are always reason for killing a living creatures. Eco-feminists argue that two very defined, contradictory, and dualistic worlds exist in the patriarchal society the feminine and the masculine; on the one hand, the feminine principle represents Mother Nature, the body, irrationality, emotion and mysticism. On the other hand, the masculine principle represents rationality logic, separation from nature, the head, intellectualism, language and concrete reality. The protagonist tries to re-unite these two dualities: —The trouble is all in the knob at the top of our bodies. I'm not against the head or the body either: only the neck that creates the illusion that they are separate.... If the head extended directly into the shoulders like a worm's or a frog's without that constriction, that lie, they wouldn't be able to look down at their bodies and move them around as if they were robots or puppets; they would have to realize that if the head is detached from the body both of them will die.‖ (Atwood, p.75) The surface struggles with the notion that the head (a masculine element) should be remotely separated from the body (a feminine element). In order for each to prosper to the fullest extent, they must work together. The narrator, in the last few pages, sees the natural world as her equal, refuses to fall into the same patriarchal trap that initially destroyed her, and reclaims her ability to trust. Though she does not return to society, she does so as a changed person. She realizes, —that human beings are not radically separate from nature: that the fulfilment of our humanity is profoundly

linked with learning to appreciate the nature within us and without‖ (Atwood, p.43) standing there, with, ―the trees [surrounding her]...asking and giving nothing‖, she has embraced the eco-feminist ideal. Narrator's journey ends off discovering about herself. She discovers about herself and her relation with the world. She explores the power-politics in interpersonal relationship and relates the women's crisis of identity not only to the patriarchal structures of power and domination but also to the women's passivity and complicity in the power structures that subject and subjugate them. Despite her fear of the consequences, her search for her missing father and her search for self increasingly offers her the power to resist the oppression inherent in their relationship and to reassess her own need. Margaret Atwood seems to be questioning the existing power politics, the traditional notions of male superiority, and the mutilation of women by men. She is trying to assert that women can refuse victimization and can gain transcendence from the male defined world and can hope to breathe freely in a world defined by them. Emma Parker says: ―Her rejection of and return to [nature] society is reflected by what she eats. When she rejects culture and retreats into the wilderness to become a ―natural woman, she gives up eating processed food. Such food is contaminated in the same way that society is contaminated by patriarchal ideology. Both are unnatural constructed man made and both threaten to poison her. Instead, the narrator eats only the raw food that nature provides. Surfacing represents the feminine consciousness and shows a woman's struggle to free herself. Her association with the people and Nature raises her consciousness of victimization of woman. When her feminist consciousness reaches its climax, the protagonist makes ready the ground for revolt against exploitation oppression. As Carol Christ says, narrator awakens, ―from a male-defined world, to the greater terror and risk, and also the great potential healing and joy, of a world defined by the heroine's own feeling and judgment. In order to attain her identity she feels, she must avoid every association with the ―metal killer society and go back into the remotest forest. In course of this impassioned, desperate search she takes her plunge literally in the ancient lake, mentally in the memory of her parents and mystically in the vision of their continued existence in Nature. She also tries to attain some unknown but ancient wisdom, which might have been behind the rock paintings. At the end she reverses the mirror in order ―not to see myself but to see, and alone resumes her journey which finally brings her through extreme hardship to the symbolic plunge and to resurface—this time with the defiance never to be a victim any more. The protagonist moves from struggling with the oppression and domination of the male world to associating with various feminine principles and motifs to eventually embracing and returning to the natural world as an equal, unassuming member. Margaret Atwood shows men's misuse and women's use of nature in Surfacing. Women's association with fertility and men's with environment abuse specifically as a metaphor of the violation of women by men.

14.4 The Plot Structure of the Novel

Missing Parents

The story is told by an unnamed female narrator who grew up in a town near the border of Quebec. Before the action of the story begins, the narrator's mother has already passed away from disease. The narrator's memories of growing up, of her parents and brother, and of her young adult life emerge as flashbacks throughout the novel.

After the narrator's father disappears, her friends David and Anna, a married couple, drive her north to her childhood home. Joe, the narrator's boyfriend, accompanies her as well. Her friends intend to fish for a few days and take video footage for their movie, Random Samples, while she tries to find out what happened to her father. When they get to her hometown, David, Anna, and Joe have a few drinks at a bar while the narrator visits an older couple, Paul and Madame, who are the closest people her family had to friends. Paul is unable to provide any additional information, so the four friends hire Evans, a man from town, to take them by boat to her parents' cabin. The cabin sits on a small island in the middle of a large lake adjacent to the town.

The four arrive at the isolated cabin and unpack. The narrator takes the lead in gathering vegetables from the garden and making dinner. The next morning, the narrator rises early to find Anna putting on her makeup in front of an old mirror. They eat breakfast and go out to search for signs of the narrator's father. It quickly becomes apparent they are not going to find him by random searches. Later the narrator finds a stack of papers. Among them are strange drawings made by her father with what appear to be random words or letters scribbled on them. The narrator becomes worried her father might have gone insane.

Memories and Mystery

During the first hours of staying at the cabin, the narrator revisits memories. She thinks of her parents and brother, of her own failed marriage, and of her child who now lives with her ex. She

also thinks about whether or not she loves Joe, and she realizes she doesn't feel love for him. She doesn't feel much emotion at all—a fact that worries her with increasing urgency. She knows she needs to find out why she can't seem to feel anything. So as she is solving the mystery of where her father is, she is also trying to solve the mystery of her own lack of emotion.

The next day Evans comes to retrieve them, but David has decided he'd like to stay a week and do some more fishing, and the others go along with this plan. It makes the narrator uneasy to have them stay. She thinks her father may be insane and still nearby. But staying gives the narrator an opportunity to look for clues to her father's disappearance, weed the garden, and try to resolve some of her personal relationship issues. Through flashbacks, the narrator reveals greater detail about her wedding and giving birth to her child. These details are unpleasant and disturbing, and they do not seem to quite fit together correctly. She recognizes there are gaps in her memories.

Living in close quarters with David and Anna gives the narrator a chance to examine their relationship. This observation reveals a dark side to the marriage. David does not treat Anna well, and he looks for excuses to humiliate her. He takes lovers and then boasts to Anna about them.

Below the Surface

One day when the narrator is looking through the stack of her father's papers again, she finds evidence that they are not insane drawings but tracings of ancient rock paintings he had been researching. She decides to visit the site of the paintings since this is the only lead she has. The four go by canoe to the place the rock painting is supposed to be, but they do not find one. After this failure the narrator decides to check another possible location. This one is underwater because of changes in water levels.

She canoes to the location and dives down, looking for the rock painting. Although she does not find one, she finds something else: a suppressed memory. She realizes her memory of giving birth was really a memory of having an abortion. Her "husband" was really just a man she'd had an affair with who convinced her to get the abortion. When these painful memories surface, the narrator spirals into a psychotic, delusional state.

When word comes that her father's dead body has been found by some fishermen, her state worsens. When it is time for them to leave the island, she hides, and the others must leave without her. After they leave, the narrator lives as an animal for several days, sleeping in a lair outside and eating foraged food. She believes she can summon her parents back from the dead. She has delusions there are rules to obey and sacrifices to make in order for her parents to come back. She believes she is pregnant again, with Joe's baby, and the baby is a god. She hallucinates seeing her mother, then her father.

Even though she has broken from reality, she seems to be processing her grief over losing her parents and giving up a pregnancy. Eventually she emerges from this psychotic state, somewhat healed from her pain. She looks in the mirror and sees she is just herself, a natural woman. When Joe comes back to the island to look for her, she watches him from the woods. She realizes she trusts him, and she might even come to love him.

Surfacing Plot

Introduction

The narrator returns to her island childhood home.

Rising Action

She searches for clues to her father's disappearance.

She finds mysterious, nonsensical drawings her father made.

She is plagued by painful but disjointed memories.

Her boyfriend, Joe, proposes marriage, but she refuses.

She learns her father's drawings show old rock paintings.

She searches unsuccessfully for a rock painting.

She goes diving to find an underwater rock painting.

Climax

A painful suppressed memory suddenly surfaces in her mind.

Falling Action

She sinks into delusion. Her father's body is found.

She stays alone on the island, living as an animal.

Resolution

She returns to sanity, ready to move on from her grief.

Summary

The protagonist of the novel fights with the forces that conquer her. At the end of the novel, she overcomes confidence and a sagacity of freedom.

The unnamed protagonist suggests the lack of real identity and it denotes that she does not belong in her own culture.

This non-existence of name hints at serious problems of individuality and of communication.

Atwood brings the condition of the Canadian society to the light along with the problem of the multicultural society like Canada.

Colonialism and patriarchy are seen as power structures that exploit.

The protagonist moves from struggling with the oppression and domination of the male world to associating with various feminine principles and motifs to eventually embracing and returning to the natural world as an equal, unassuming member.

Margaret Atwood shows men's misuse and women's use of nature in *Surfacing*.

Keywords

Post- colonialism, Feminism, Nature.

SelfAssessment

1. When was the novel Surfacing published?

A. 1972
B. 1955
C. 1987
D. 2021

2. What is the Joe's relationship with the Narrator?

A. Husband
B. Lover
C. Neighbour
D. Cousin

3. When was Margaret Atwood born?

A. 1939
B. 1976
C. 1947
D. 2000

Review Questions

1. Explain the post-colonial elements in the novel.
2. What is the nature of David and Anna's relationship?

3. Discuss the elements of feminism in the novel*Surfacing*.

Further Readings

- Atwood, Margaret. "Surfacing". Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd, 1972.
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