Introduction to Indian Writing In English

DEENG112

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LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY

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CONTENT

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Notes

Unit 01: Night of the Scorpion by Nissim Ezekiel

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Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To present typical Indian society and the temperament of villagers
- To point out superstitious nature of Indian people
- To present a contrast between superstitious and scientific approach
- To portray the highly esteemed Indian mother and her dedicated feeling for her children.
- To employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writers
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illlustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers

Introduction

Nissim Ezekiel is generally regarded as the Father of Post-Independence Indian Verse in English. He was a prolific author, playwright, critic, broadcaster, and social commentator. He was born into a Jewish family on December 24, 1924. His father was a botany professor, and his mother was the head of her own school. Since childhood, Ezekiel has studied poets such as T.S. Eliot, Y.B. Yeats, and Ezra Pound, and has continued to do so. Many of these poets' influence could be seen in his early works. Nissim Ezekiel served as a picture frame company's general manager and advertisement copywriter. From 1964 to 1966, he was the Times of India's Art Critic, and from 1966 to 1967, he was the Editor of The Poetry India. He launched the literary monthly the *Imprint* as the co-founder. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983. In 1988, he received another civil honour, Padma Shri for his contribution to the Indian Writing in English. After a prolonged illness, he passed away on 9 January 2004 in Mumbai. Nissim Ezekiel made a great contribution to the field of Indian English poetry. Some of his major works are:

- Time To Change (1952)
- Sixty Poems (1953)
- Night of the Scorpion (1953)
- The Third (1959)
- The Unfinished Man (1960)
- The Exact Name (1965)
- Hymns In Darkness (1976)
- *Latter-Day Psalms (1982)*
- *Collected Poems 1952-88 (1989)*

1.1 Subject Matter

Nissim Ezekiel, one of India's leading modern poets, has written a touching poem. The poet depicts the selfless love of a mother who has been stung by a scorpion in this poem. He used imagery related to the senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing to depict the motherly affections. Despite the fact that the scorpion poisoned her foot, she is grateful to God that the scorpion chose her and spared her children. The poet stands powerless as a bystander and shares his emotions. He also makes a point regarding Indian society, where superstitions are still prevalent:

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Text of the Poem THE NIGHT OF THE SCORPION

I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.
Parting with his poison – flash
of diabolic tail in the dark room –
he risked the rain again.
The peasants came like swarms of flies
and buzzed the name of God a hundred times
to paralyse the Evil One.
With candles and with lanterns
throwing giant scorpion shadows
on the mud-baked walls
they searched for him: he was not found.
They clicked their tongues.
With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's
blood, they said.
May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth
be burned away tonight, they said.
May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of all evil
balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh
of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
they said, and they sat around
on the floor with my mother in the centre,
the peace of understanding on each face.
More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,
more insects, and the endless rain.
My mother twisted through and through,
groaning on a mat.
My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing,
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.
He even poured a little paraffin
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.
I watched the flame feeding on my mother.
I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an
incantation.
After twenty hours
it lost its sting.
My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children.

The poem "The Night of the Scorpion" has two possible interpretations. Next, the poet explains how the narrator's mother is attacked by a scorpion on a rainy day and the resulting sequence of events. Second, through a simple event, the poem depicts Indian ethos, superstitions, and cultural richness, and symbolises traditional Indian motherhood, which depicts her sacrifice and love for her children. The poet tells the storey of his mother being bitten by a scorpion when he was a child. He believes that the scorpion was forced into the house by ten hours of continuous rain, where it crawled under a sack of rice. When his mother walked into the dimly lit room, the scorpio screamed. He believes that the scorpion was forced into the house by ten hours of continuous rain, where it crawled under a sack of rice. The scorpion parted the poison into his mother's toe and vanished when she entered the dark room. The news spread throughout the village, and peasants flocked to the poet's house in large numbers, resembling "swarms of flies," buzzing God's name a hundred times in prayer to stop the scorpion's movements. They claimed that the scorpion's every action would irritate the mother,

and that the poison would spread through her blood. The villagers searched their home with candles and lanterns in an attempt to paralyse the evil scorpion, but he vanished. As a group of villagers gathered in the house, the poet noticed that the shadows they cast on the wall resembled a scorpion. The villagers prayed that the scorpion would stop and that the sins of mother's previous birth would be washed away that night, or that her sufferings would relieve her next birth's misfortunes. They said that in this unreal universe, the quantities of evil could be balanced this way. They dubbed the universe unreal because everything in it is fleeting, and births and deaths occur in a loop. They also prayed to God to purify her body with the poison. They sat in a circle around the mother, who was writhing in agony. There was a feeling of peace, and they believed she was nearing the end of her life. The situation was rapidly deteriorating as more neighbours entered the house with candles and lanterns, the number of insects increased, and the rain began. The poet's father was a sceptic and rationalist who experimented with powders, mixtures, and herbs in order to cure his mother. However, since it was such a difficult situation, he often sought prayers and blessings. He poured paraffin on the bitten toe and set it on fire. The priest, who had also arrived on the scene, was conducting religious rituals to counteract the poison. After twenty hours, the sting was completely gone. After being healed, the mother thanked God that the scorpion chose her and spared her children.

The place of Ezekiel in Indian poetry is very distinct.

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish actor, playwright, writer, and art critic who lived from December 24, 1924 to January 9, 2004. He was a pivotal figure in postcolonial India's literary history, especially in terms of Indian English literature. In 1983, the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, honoured him with the Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection "Latter-Day Psalms." Because of his- Ezekiel is widely known and admired as one of the most notable and accomplished Indian English language poets of the twentieth century.

- subtle, restrained, and well-crafted diction
- engaging with everyday themes
- demonstrating cognitive depth
- a rational, unsentimental sensibility

Through his poetry, Ezekiel enriched and developed Indian English language poetry.

- modernist methods and inventions
- expanding beyond solely mystical and orientalist themes to include a broader spectrum of issues and interests, such as everyday family events, human anguish, and cynical social introspection

Ezekiel employs Indian English to mimic the voices of others, especially when satirising those voices and their points of view. Many contemporary scholars considered Ezekiel's English to be a degraded form of the English language. It didn't merit much literary or scholarly acclaim. Ezekiel, on the other hand, popularised Indian English through poems such as

- "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.,"
- "Ganga,"
- "Soap," and one of his most well-known:
- "Night of the Scorpion."

Night of the Scorpion is a 47-line free verse poem with eight stanzas. The metre is mixed and there is no rhyme system. Some people consider the scorpion to be an evil force that brings suffering, misery, and even death. The desperate creature stings the woman and flees out into the forest, hence the use of the term diabolic. Peasants are considered to be superstitious, old-fashioned, and even illiterate. They have not progressed in their philosophy or society. In that regard, the parent, on the other hand, is the polar opposite. He is a logical, reductive individual who is unimpressed by peasants and their behaviour.

He ends up placing paraffin on the mother's toe and lighting it on fire. The mother twists in pain all night, but eventually triumphs and escapes the scorpion's venom. She couldn't say anything for the whole time. Only groans came out of her mouth before the pain subsided and the relief she felt gave her the ability to put her feelings into words. 'Thank goodness it was her and not her children who got stung,' she said.

Notes

In post-colonial writings, Ezekiel's contribution is important. When it comes to Indian English, questions of class and economic standing arise. Despite the fact that English is India's official language, its use is restricted to the upper crust. They are the only ones who can afford an English education. Ezekiel speaks in Indian English, a dialect of the English language in which several verb conjugations and word order choices are derived from the speaker's native tongue. It enters the realm of serious and scholarly literature. As a result, Indian English gains prestige and exposure among those who have never heard it before. Ezekiel did not regard Indian English as a "autonomous linguistic body," nor did he regard it as a "ethnic language."

More specifically, he saw his Indian identity as distinct from the manner in which he communicated in English. He was quintessentially Indian, despite the fact that he was an English professor. Such research is needed in India, where, as a result of the rising post-colonial usage of English, an increasing number of people from historically non-English-speaking Indian communities have begun to use English. They speak it as their first language and only use a "Indian" language as a [second] language.

However, since English is their second language, some people just have a rudimentary understanding of the language. How they connect with one another has taken on a life of its own.

As a result, Indian English, like Australian or American English, needs to be respected as a distinct dialect. They are regarded as valid in the same way that British English is. Because of the dialect it is synonymous with, it is incorrect and even somewhat prejudiced to regard Indian English as inferior to American English. Look for

- K. Ramanujan,
- R. Parthasarathy,
- Gieve Patel,
- Jayant Mahapatra,
- Dom Moraes,
- Kamala Das,
- Keki N. Daruwalla,
- Arvind Krishna Mehrotra,
- Shiv K. Kumar,
- Arun Kolatkar,
- Dilip Chitre,

and others in Indian Writing in English to get a glimpse of postcolonial writings.

Summary

The scorpion vanished from the scene, and villagers arrived after hearing about the deadly sting. To explain the people's number and actions, Ezekiel uses the metaphor "like swarms of flies." They 'buzzed the name of God' constantly, he claims, with the onomatopoeia allowing us to 'hear' the continuous noise they made. In line ten, the scorpion is depicted as the devil once more: 'the Wicked One.' We can imagine the child's terror as he watched the peasants' lanterns cast 'giant scorpion shadows' on his home's walls. The poet uses onomatopoeia once more as he states that these people 'clicked their tongues' when looking for the scorpion. They were convinced that once they claimed that the scorpion's poison' moved in mother's blood' as it moved. Line eighteen is the first of a fourteen-line segment that recounts the peasants' wise words spoken in the hope of the woman's survival. Five of the lines begin with 'May...' and are strong examples of the villagers' religious beliefs. They allude to the woman's past and future lives, as well as the forgiveness of sins, the lessening of evil, and the expectation that the poison will 'purify' her flesh and spirit. They surrounded Ezekiel's mother, and Ezekiel saw 'the peace of understanding' in their facial expressions. Ezekiel repeats the phrase 'More' four times in lines 32 and 33.

He makes the first clear reference to his mother's pain in line 34, saying that she was 'twisted through and through' and groaning in pain. The poet then moves on to his father's reaction, who was a "sceptic and rationalist" rather than a religious or superstitious man. Due to his desperation, the man resorted to 'every curse and blessing' along with various herbal concoctions on this occasion. Ezekiel explains in depth how his father set fire to the scorpion-bitten toe.

Notes

As a boy, it must have had a profound influence on the poet, as he explains how he "saw the flame feeding on my mother," personifying the flames. After that, Ezekiel saw and listened to a 'holy man' perform such rituals to 'tame' the poison. The poison lost its sting the next night, and the mother breathed a sigh of relief after twenty hours of pain.

The first forty-five lines form one continuous stanza, telling the storey from beginning to end, and are followed by a brief three-line stanza in which the poet remembers his mother's frightening and traumatic experience. She just said a few words about it, thanking God and expressing her gratitude for the scorpion's decision to bite her and spar with her.

This was the unconditional, selfless love of a mother who adored and adored her children. These words stayed with Ezekiel throughout his life. It's interesting to note that the author tells the storey from the viewpoint of an outsider in this poem. He was not a part of the situation like the other adults who were taking part in it. This helps him to relate the peasants' and his father's acts and words while remaining distant from them. It's a look into the behaviour of a small group in rural India, where everyone becomes interested in the misery of one family or a mother, and everyone gathers to witness the event and offer prayers, justifications, and suggestions, among other things.

It must have seemed to the poet as a child that there was a large crowd of people present, and the night must have seemed endless. His analogy of the peasants to "swarms of bees" implies that they would have preferred to leave the family alone and comfortable.

General Characteristics:

Major Thematic Concerns:

01. Original Verse
02. Storytelling
03. Conventional usage of Metaphor
04. Juxtaposition
05. Classical Allusion
06. Borrowing from other cultures and languages
07. A Story with Several Narrative Points
08. Isolation
09. Belieflessness
10. Life Criticism
11. Complexity and variety are two of the most important things to consider.
12. Breakdown of social expectations and cultural certainties is one of the thematic characteristics.
13. Dislocation of meaning and sense from their original context

Let's take a look at the themes and characteristics listed above in light of the text. The poem 'Night of the Scorpion' contains a lot of complexity. In certain respects, the poem's title is misleading. It makes us think we're in for a scary and dramatic storey with a scorpion at the middle. In reality, the poem is about how different people respond to the scorpion's sting, rather than the scorpion itself. The first stanza of the same poem does the same thing in the line

"After twenty hours it lost its sting."

This line can be interpreted in two ways: the most popular interpretation is that it stops hurting after 20 hours, despite

"both curse and blessing."

Another theory is that the mother died after twenty hours of pain because she was unable to feel anything. However, these lines are misleading and trigger mental conflict, exposing Ezekiel's complexity. That is, it is the manifestation of modernity.

One of the most famous characteristics of modernity is free verse. In free verse, the poem "Night of the Scorpion" is composed. There is no rhyme scheme, standard pattern of rhymes, or line lengths in this form of poetry. Night of the Scorpion's lines go like this:

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"I remember the night my mother was stung by a scorpion.
Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice."

Since modern poets have a propensity to separate themselves from society, we can see in Nissim Ezekiel's poetry that he wants to isolate himself or live separately from others. When his mother was stung by a scorpion and the people around their house gathered in 'Night of the Scorpion,' he may have wanted them to leave by saying,

"More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, more insects, and the endless rain.

My mother twisted through and through, groaning on a mat."

The poem's structure is very different. Let us look at it.

The poem's form is rather ad hoc, with lines of different lengths and no rhyme scheme. The poem's second stanza, which concludes the poem, stands out for its brevity and emphasizes the mother's words and their effect on the son.

Illustrations are precise.

In this poem, Nissim Ezekiel describes a childhood memory. The poet uses images that can be interpreted by our senses to express his message. Seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, and touching are the five senses. It is called imagery when a poet creates an image to activate these senses. It can be characterised as the linguistic representation of an experience.

Though visual imagery is most commonly associated with poetry, it may also reflect a sound, a scent, a touch, or a feeling or sensation. The poet has used a variety of imagery in this poem, including:

- 'a scorpion creeping under a bag of rice'
- 'peasants descended like swarms of flies'
- Sound Imagery
- "They clicked their tongues a hundred times"
- "They buzzed the name of God a hundred times"
- 'the scent of candles'
- 'the smell of burning oil in the lanterns'
- a scorpion biting the mother;
- the father pouring paraffin on the toe;
- the fire of the flame on the toe
- 'fear,' 'pain,' 'anxiety,' 'concern,"relief,' 'fear,' 'pain,' 'anxiety,' 'concern,"relief,' 'fear' (in the end).

S's figures

Figurative Language is one of the major concerns of the writer. Let us see them now:

Individualization

- "diabolic tail" (the tail has been identified as "diabolic");
- "flame feeding on my mother" (the mother has been personified as "fire");
- "The peasants arrived like swarms of flies" (peasants have been compared to "flies").
- "Parting with his poison"
- "diabolic tail in the dark room"
- "risked the rain"
- "poison purify"
- a scorpion biting the mother;
- the father pouring paraffin on the toe;
- the fire of the flame on the toe
- 'fear,'
- 'pain,'
- 'anxiety,'

- 'concern,
- "relief,'
- 'fear,'
- 'pain,'
- 'anxiety,'
- 'concern,
- "relief,'
- 'fear' (in the end).

And the list goes on:

India's rural and urban areas are very differently portrayed in the poem.

The poetry of Ezekiel is a critique of creation. He is best known for his witty observations on contemporary India, which he often writes in an exaggerated Indian English, such as the overuse of the present continuous tense. As a critic of his day, he expresses his age's superstitions in his poetry. When his mother was stung by a Scorpion in 'Night of the Scorpion,' the neighbours flocked to her hut to give advice and assistance. They said that the never-ending agony would "burn away" her previous birth's sins, reducing her misery in the next. These are some of the most popular superstitions and beliefs in the general public.

And, as we can see, her neighbours tried to support her, and her husband tried "both curse and blessing," but time proved to be the greatest healer:

"it lost its sting after twenty hours."

Modern poets are usually aware of the problems that exist in society and seek to bring these issues to light. As a result, he attempts to depict the problems of culture, nation, and the world in his poetry. He seems to be much more concerned not only with the problems of his own country, but also with the problems of the entire world.

The elite British English speakers consider Indian English to be rural, but the poet uses Indian English and regional terms on purpose. He wants to split Indians into two groups: those who speak British English in cities and those who speak Indian English in rural areas. He likes to compose his poetry in contemporary Indian English, which reveals his modernity. The following characteristics of Indian English can be found in his writing:

A) **Unusual Progressive Form**:
While Indians use progressive form to express themselves, some grammarians claim that some words cannot be used in progressive form. However, he has used the following words to express the progressive form:

I am a proponent of nonviolence and tolerance (The Patriot)

Simply put, I don't get it... (Source: The Patriot)

Standing and comprehension have been given progressive names here.

B) **Double Verb:**
No other English poet, native or non-native, has used double verbs in their poetry. Why is the world fighting? writes Ezekiel (The Patriot)
In terms of both content and style, we can conclude that Nissim's poems are true modern poems. Let's look at a couple of examples from the poem "Night of the Scorpion." The poem is represented as an evocative contrast of haziness and light.
The darkness is defined by the night, the scorpion, the poisonous material, and the pain. Expectation and regeneration are also hampered by the constant rain. Candles, candles, neighbours, and, eventually, the mother's recovery all talk to light. The poem can also be viewed as a sign of both goodness and insidiousness. The villagers are likened to

"swarms of bees" by Ezekiel (line 8).

He uses an insect illustration to illustrate people's reactions to an invertebrate's sting, which is very striking. In the next chapter, he expands on the simile:

'they buzzed the name of God' (line 9).

Notes

What does Ezekiel's attitude toward his neighbours mean from the fly metaphor? The candles and lanterns of the neighbours build different portrayal.

We know the scorpion has already escaped, but are these photos of the people? (Because a scorpion has eight legs, the shadow of a small group of people standing together might resemble one.) If that's the case, what does this say about Ezekiel's attitude toward his neighbours? The neighbours'

"peace of understanding" (line 31)

contrasts with the mother's

"twisted... groaning on a mat" (line 35).

It's ironic that they've reached an understanding amid her distress. The scorpion is seen

'Parting with his poison' (line 5),

Ezekiel's father attempts

'herb and hybrid' (line 38),

and Ezekiel sees

'flame feeding' (line 38).

Make a list of other examples of alliteration and see if you can understand why they're successful. We hear the villagers' prayers and incantations because there is a lot of repetition. To dramatise the scene, Ezekiel uses direct voice, 'May...', and the echoed 'they said' acts as a chorus: In classical Greek drama, a cast of characters who observe but do not participate in the action. The chorus is a part of a song that is repeated on a regular basis.

Key words/ Glossary

Diabolic - terrible, extremely bad or annoying

Paralyse – to make something unable to feel or move

Lanterns - a lamp in a transparent case,

often a metal case with glass sides that has a handle,

so that you can carry it outside

Groan – to make long deep sound because of pain etc.

Sceptic - a person who usually doubts that claims or statements are true,

especially those that other people believe in

Rationalist - a person who believes that all behaviour, opinions, etc. should be based on reason rather than on emotions or religious beliefs

Hybrid - something that is the product of mixing two or more different things

Paraffin - a type of oil obtained from petroleum and used as a fuel for heat and light

To tame - to make something easy to control

Incantation - special words that are spoken or sung to have a magic effect; the act of speaking

or singing these words.

Self-Evaluation/Self-Assessment

Q.1. Read the following excerpt and respond to the following questions:

"I recall the night my mother...," says the first line.

He took a chance on the rain once more." Line number seven.

i. To whom is "he" referring?

The scorpion is referred to as "he."

ii. What drew him into the house? Where did he take refuge?

He entered the house in search of safety and shelter from the storm. He took shelter under a rice bag.

iii. What makes the poet call his tail diabolic?

Answer: The poet's mother was severely harmed by the scorpion's tail bite. As a consequence, he refers to its tail as diabolic or devilish.

Q.2. Read the following excerpt and answer the following questions:

Line 15: "They clicked their tongues... be burning away tonight, they said." Line twenty-first.

i. Who are "they" in the excerpt above?

Answer: The villagers are referred to as "they" in the above excerpt.

ii. What did "they" blame for the mother's pain?

They blamed the mother's sufferings on her sins from a previous life.

They said that her current misery would burn away her previous birth's sins.

iii. Why did "they" insist on him remaining motionless?

Answer: They assumed that the poison in the mother's blood travelled at the same speed as the scorpion. As a result, they desired the scorpion to remain motionless.

Q.3. Read the following extract and answer the following questions:

"May the poison purify your flesh.... the harmony of understanding on each face," writes line 27. 31st line

i. How did the poison get into the body of the mother?

The scorpion stung the mother on her toe, and the poison reached her body as a result.

ii. What did the villagers think the poison would accomplish?

Answer: The villagers hoped that the poison would rid the mother's body of her passion and desire.

iii. Clarification of the term "peace of mind"

Answer: While the villagers were saddened to see the mother suffer, they found comfort in the knowledge that it was benefiting both her body and spirit.

Q.4.Read the following extract and answer the following questions:

Line 36: "My dad, sceptic, rationalist... put a match to the bitten toe" 40th line.

i. Why did a "sceptical, rationalist" attempt every curse, blessing, and so on? What is it demonstrating?

While the poet's father was a sceptic and rationalist, he was too distraught about his mother's plight to think rationally. As a result, he did whatever someone said would help ease the mother's pain and suffering. It demonstrates that, during a crisis, humans would do everything suggested to them in order to help them solve the crisis.

ii. Why did the father pour some paraffin and light it with a match?

Answer: The tyrant

Q.5. Read the following extract and answer the following questions:

"I saw the flame feed on my mother... it lost its sting," says line 41. 45th line.

i. Who am I in this situation?

Ans. "I" refers to the author, who is also the poem's narrator.

ii. What does the poet associate with "the flame"?

Ans. "The flame" most likely conjures up images of a funeral, or the burning or cremation of a deceased person in accordance with funeral rites. The dead body is thrown into the flames here. The poet is possibly reminded of pyre flames by the mother's burning toe.

iii. When did the mother start to feel better?

Answer: The poison fin died after twenty hours of misery.

Q.6. Examine the theme of the poem "Night of the Scorpion".

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Answer: The theme of the poem is presented through an incident in which the poet's mother is bitten by a scorpion on a rainy night. The villagers on hearing of this unfortunate event come to see her, praying to god and giving all kinds of justifications for her suffering. With their prayers and words they try to console the victim. The victim's husband who is otherwise a sceptic and a rationalist also gives in to every curse and blessing. The poem describes a critical situation which arises unexpectedly; the peasants of the village are always willing to help one another. Common villagers show their simplicity and sympathy; though they are not of much help, and give in to superstitions and false beliefs, they try to help out. The father, though a sceptic and rationalist in normal circumstances, yet in this moment of crisis, he gives in to the villagers' advice. The mother bears the pain and suffering for twenty hours, wriggling in pain and when she recovers, she is thankful to the god that she was bitten and the scorpion has spared her children, this brings out the maternal feelings of a mother for her children.

Q.7. Show the different qualities in the poet's father and mother that are brought out in the poem.

Answer: The father is logical and scientific in his thinking and does not believe in superstitions and blind beliefs. Yet when his wife is bitten by the scorpion he is anything but logical. He tries out every curse and blessing, every possible antidote. He summons the holy man to perform his rites and even pours paraffin on the bitten toe and ignites it. The mother suffers the bite of the scorpion. She groans and moans on the mat wriggling in pain. As soon as the poison loses its effect she thanks god for sparing her children. She symbolizes motherhood and like a typical Indian mother is selfless in her love for her children.

Q.8. Answer the following questions referring to the line "After twenty hours it lost its sting"

i. Explain 'It lost its sting'

Answer: The poison stopped spreading and the pain reduced in the mother's toe.

ii. How did the villagers see something positive in the scorpion's attack?

Answer: The peasants believed that the suffering would cleanse some of her sins of the previous birth or the next birth. With her suffering the balance of evil in this world would be reduced. It would cleanse her soul and kill the spirit of desire which is the root cause of suffering in the world.

Review Questions

Q.1. What had driven the scorpion to the poet's home?

a) Fear

b) Rain

c) Sun

d) Poison

Q.2. Why did he return to the rain outside?

a) He could see in the lightening

b) He was chased away

c) He liked the rain

d) He parted poison and went away

Q.3. What did the villagers do when they heard of the scorpion sting?

a) They were indifferent

b) They visited the temple

c) They flocked to the poet's house

d) They went in search of the scorpion

Q.4. The peasants came like swarms of flies. The figure of speech is

a) Metaphor

b) Simile

c) Personification

Notes

d) Alliteration

Q.5. The sting of the scorpion is…

a) painful and can cause death

b) a blessing of God

c) a sin of previous birth

d) momentary and requires no medication

Q.6. What assessment of the father's character have you made by reading the poem?

a) He is detached and cruel

b) He is harsh but effective

c) He is concerned but helpless

d) He is a holy man and very pious

Q.7. A sceptic is a person who…

a) doubts everything

b) believes everything

c) always thinks of God

d) removes curses

Q.8. The mother thanks God because the scorpion

a) stung her

b) spared her children

c) went away

d) did not poison her

Answers of Review Questions

1	b	2	d	3	c	4	b
5	a	6	c	7	a	8	b

Q.9. Explore the theme of good and evil in *the Night of the Scorpion*

Q.10. The peasants in 'Night of the Scorpion' are ignorant, but their hearts are full of love and compassion - Comment.

Q.11. Write an essay on the lifestyle of rural people in India

Further/Suggested Readings

- http://www.4shared.com/video/qkd8ezhi/gcse_english__night_of_the_sco.html
- http://www.allpoetry.com/poem/8592075-Night_of_the_Scorpion-by-Nissim_Ezekiel
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Unit 02 – Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To compare the thematic contexts with the content prescribed
- To present typical Indian society and the temperament of semi-urban people
- To employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writers
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers
- To point out orthodox nature of Indian people

Introduction

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish actor, playwright, writer, and art critic who lived from December 24, 1924 to January 9, 2004. He was a pivotal figure in postcolonial India's literary history, especially in terms of Indian English literature. In 1983, the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, honoured him with the Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection "Latter-Day Psalms." Nissim Ezekiel is generally regarded as the Father of Post-Independence Indian Verse in English. He was a prolific author, playwright, critic, broadcaster, and social commentator. He was born into a Jewish family on December 24, 1924.

2.1 Subject Matter

Nissim Ezekiel, one of India's leading modern poets, has written a moving poem. The poet explains the Indian attitude toward women in this poem. He used imagery related to the senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing to depict the female reaction. Even though the speech is littered with grammatical errors, Pushpa expresses gratitude to all. The poet remains an impartial observer in this scene. He also makes a point about Indian society, where superstitions are still prevalent.

Text of the Poem

Friends,
our dear sister
is departing for foreign
in two three days,
and
we are meeting today
to wish her bon voyage.
You are all knowing, friends,
What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa.
I don't mean only external sweetness
but internal sweetness.

Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling
even for no reason but simply because

she is feeling.

Miss Pushpa is coming
from very high family.

Her father was renowned advocate
in Bulsar or Surat,

I am not remembering now which place.
Surat? Ah, yes,
once only I stayed in Surat
with family members
of my uncle's very old friend-
his wife was cooking nicely…
that was long time ago.

Coming back to Miss Pushpa
she is most popular lady
with men also and ladies also.
Whenever I asked her to do anything,
she was saying, 'Just now only
I will do it.' That is showing
good spirit. I am always
appreciating the good spirit.
Pushpa Miss is never saying no.

Whatever I or anybody is asking
she is always saying yes,
and today she is going
to improve her prospect
and we are wishing her bon voyage.
Now I ask other speakers to speak
and afterwards Miss Pushpa
will do summing up.

(The poem ends here)

Craftsmanship of this poem is immense that is poetic. Nissim Ezekiel wrote a humorous poem called Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S. In the poem Farewell Party for Miss Pushpa T.S., Nissim Ezekiel mocks such Indian practices, rituals, and etiquette. It's written as a dramatic monologue. The poem is written in free verse, as is characteristic of contemporary poetry. In an Indian sense, the speaker represents all speakers. He communicates his thoughts and feelings through free and broken language. Literal translation is mocked by the poet. For example, the literal translation of a vernacular phrase is

"two three days."

Another example of literal translation is

"with men and ladies even,"

which is an inappropriate collocation in a vernacular literal translation that is very expressive.

Another strategy for exposing satire is to stop using indefinite posts. The indefinite article "a" is absent from phrases like

"very high family"

and

"renowned advocate."

The expression should be something like "a well-known spokesperson" or "a really high family." Miss Pushpa is made fun of, and she makes fun of others. 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T. S.' is a social satire on a speech given on an occasion where everybody praises the person's good natured, friendly, and sacrificial attitude, as well as leadership qualities. In "Babu Angrezi," he explains Miss Pushpa's internal as well as external beauty. The speaker's identity has not been revealed by Nissim Ezekiel.

We don't know whether the speaker is male or female. By concealing the speaker's name, Nissim Ezekiel exposes the errors of all Indians. The poem pokes fun at the way we speak English right from the first stanza. Miss Pushpa will leave in

"two three days"

rather than

"two or three days,"

according to the speaker in the first stanza. Instead of describing Miss Pushpa as a sweet and gentle lady, the speaker describes her as both internal and externally sweet. Instead of saying that Miss Pushpa has a good appearance, the speaker says that she is

"smiling and smiling even for no reason."

The speaker says that she comes from a long line of women in her culture.

Instead of saying that Miss Pushpa has a good appearance, the speaker says that she is

"smiling and smiling even for no reason."

The speaker identifies herself as coming from a "high family," which is a slang word for "rich family." The speaker's digression when debating Surat reflects Indianism. He recalls going to Surat to stay with one of his uncle's friends in the past. When the speaker tries to suggest that Miss Pushpa will do stuff in minutes, he makes the mistake of saying, "Only now only I can do." Finally, the poem ends with a parody of an Indian voice.

It's a spoof of Indian educated people's demeanour. The poem as a whole is funny. We are amused by the speaker's speech. Irony, ambiguous voice, literal translation, present progressive tense, and Babu English are all used in the poem as parodies.

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish actor, playwright, writer, and art critic who lived from December 24, 1924 to January 9, 2004. He was a pivotal figure in postcolonial India's literary history, especially in terms of Indian English literature.

In 1983, the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, honoured him with the Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection "Latter-Day Psalms." Because of his

- subtle, restrained, and well-crafted syntax
- dealing with popular and ordinary themes
- manifesting cognitive depth
- an unsentimental practical sensibility,

Ezekiel is widely recognised and admired as one of the most prominent and accomplished Indian English language poets of the twentieth century.

Ezekiel's modernist inventions and techniques enriched and developed Indian English language poetry.

- expanding beyond solely theological and orientalist topics
- covering a broader spectrum of issues and concerns
- modernist methods and inventions
- expanding beyond solely mystical and orientalist themes to include a broader spectrum of issues and interests, such as everyday family events, human anguish, and cynical social introspection.

Let us now talk about Imagery and Symbolism visible in the poem "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S." by Nissim Ezekiel. It is a sarcastic and humorous poem about how some semi-educated Indians speak English. The poem gives the reader an insight into Indian culture and the people who live there. To comprehend the theme of “Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.,” one must first be acquainted with Ezekiel and the dialect in which the poem was composed. The monologue "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S." is part of the poem "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S." The speaker mentions at the start of the work that Miss Pushpa is leaving for a different country and that she is a sweet girl.

He goes on to say that the woman is from a famous family, but then gets distracted by his own memories. After a brief digression, the speaker says that Miss Pushpa is a well-known woman who is always willing to support others. The speaker asks the others at the party to make their own speeches about the party's honoree at the end of the poem. Let's take a closer look at the line-by-line definition to gain a better understanding of the poem's Imagery and Symbolism.

When it comes to Indian English, questions of class and economic standing arise. Despite the fact that English is India's official language, its use is restricted to the upper crust. They are the only ones who can afford an English education.

Ezekiel speaks in Indian English, a dialect of the English language in which several verb conjugations and word order choices are derived from the speaker's native tongue. It enters the field of serious and scholarly literature. As a result, Indian English gains prestige and exposure among those who have never heard it before. Ezekiel did not consider Indian English to be a "autonomous linguistic body" or a serious language or dialect worth learning. More specifically, he saw his Indian identity as distinct from the manner in which he communicated in English. He was quintessentially Indian, despite the fact that he was an English professor. Such research is needed in India, where the population is growing at an alarming rate.

He was quintessentially Indian, despite the fact that he was an English professor. Such research is needed in India, where, as a result of the rising post-colonial usage of English, an increasing number of people from historically non-English-speaking Indian communities have begun to use English. They speak it as their first language and only use a "Indian" language as a [second] language.

Summary

'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S. is an Indian poem written by an Indian writer with a sublime love for the Indian soil and its customary human occasions of everyday Indian life. A significant number of Indians are illiterate and superstitious in general. They are straightforward, adoring, and cute in any situation. They do everything they can to save the casualty from dying. Whatever the case may be, they are not successful. The poem 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.' by Nissim Ezekiel is a personal account of the poet's childhood memories. She was unable to intervene once his speech began, and she was reduced to a bystander. He explains that Pushpa treats all with compassion.

The first 45 lines form one continuous stanza that recounts the occurrence from beginning to end, followed by a brief three-line stanza in which the poet reflects on her experience. She only mentioned it briefly, thanking everyone and expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to work here. This was the selfless, limitless work that suggested a great deal of respect and appreciation for her coworkers. These words stayed with Ezekiel throughout his life. It's important to note that the author tells the storey from the perspective of an outsider in this poem. He was not a part of the situation like the other adults who were taking part in it. This helps him to relate the listeners' actions and words while staying disconnected from them. It's a look into the behaviour of a small group in rural India, where everyone becomes interested in one family, even at work, and everyone gathers to witness the event and offer prayers, justifications, and suggestions. As an observer, it must have seemed to the poet that there was a wide crowd of people. His analogy of the colleague implies that she would have preferred to leave the job in peace and comfort.

Themes of major concern are need to be looked upon now. The main theme of "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S." is human foibles, or character flaws, rather than the loss of a mate. This is a common theme in Ezekiel's works, according to Dominic. The poem takes a sarcastic look at how certain Indians speak English, which the poet probably employed to make an Indian reader laugh at himself.

The poem exploits the present continuous tense and utilises Indian-inspired turns of phrase and syntax, such as when Ezekiel writes,

"Whatever I or anyone asks/ She is always saying yes."

If the reader infers that the speaker's audience at the farewell party is unaware that his English is grammatically wrong, the poem even hints at dramatic irony. This poem is sometimes referred to as a satire or parody of Indian English. As a humorous reconstruction of a specific variety of Indian English, it shows the idiolectical features of the brand of English used by Gujarati speakers. It's really "the speaker's satiric self-revelation."

"Language exposes the speaker's mind and social context," writes Bruce King,

"and clichés, triteness, and unintentional puns are among the instruments used to suggest irony, pretence, minimal opportunities, and confusion."

Notice the Indianness of the poem's title, as well as the use of initials at the end of the word, which is a very Indian practise in both speech and writing. Even the term "goodbye party" seems to be an Indian rip-off of "birthday party"! The following are some words and phrases that conjure up different symbols and images in the Indian mind:

'dear sister',

'departing for',

'two thru days',

'we are meeting today',

'Pushpa is not only a woman of pleasant exterior but also of many sweet qualities of head and heart',

'Pushpa always puts on a smiling face which shows that she is emotional by nature',

'very high family',

'renowned advocate',

'Surat? Ah yes',

'family members',

'family friend',

'family matter',

'that was long time ago',

'Popular lady with men also, and ladies also',

'Just now only I will do it',

'Pushpa Miss' etc.

The poem 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.' is full of complexity. In certain respects, the poem's title is misleading. It gives the feeling that we are about to attend a death funeral, with a dramatic storey taking centre stage. In reality, the poem is about how different people respond to the Pushpa rather than the Pushpa himself. Another possibility is that Pushpa died and was unable to feel anything. However, these lines are misleading and trigger mental conflict, revealing Ezekiel's complexity. That is, it is the manifestation of modernity.

One of the most famous characteristics of modernity is free verse. In free verse, the poem 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.' is composed. There is no rhyme scheme, standard pattern of rhymes, or line lengths in this form of poetry. Since modern poets have a propensity to separate themselves from society, we can see in Nissim Ezekiel's poetry that he wants to isolate himself or live separately from others. As the people in their office gathered for the Farewell Party for Miss Pushpa T.S., she may have wished their departure.

The poem's structure need to be looked upon now. The poem's form is rather ad hoc, with lines of different lengths and no rhyme scheme. The poem's second stanza draws attention to its brevity and stresses the speaker's words and their influence on the audience.

Let us take now Illustrations. In this poem, Nissim Ezekiel describes a childhood memory. The poet uses symbols that can be interpreted by our senses to express his message. Seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, and touching are the five senses. It is called imagery when a poet creates an image to activate these senses. It can be described as the linguistic representation of an experience. Though visual imagery is most commonly associated with poetry, it can also be used to represent a sound.

Though visual imagery is most commonly associated with poetry, it may also reflect a sound, a scent, a touch, or a feeling or sensation. The poet has used a number of imagery in this poem, including:

1. Visualization

2. Imagery in sound

3. Imagery of Scent

4. Experiential Learning

5. Internal Feeling Number

Figurative Language includes:

1. Individualization

2. Alliteration

3. Simile

India's rural and urban areas are one of the major concerns in the poetry of Ezekiel as a critique of creation. He is best known for his witty observations on contemporary India, which he often writes in an exaggerated Indian English, such as the overuse of the present continuous tense. As a critic of his day, he expresses his age's superstitions in his poetry. These are the ancient superstitions and beliefs of common people, as seen in 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.'. And, as we can see, the speaker tried to be appreciative of her, but speech always appears to be violent.

Modern poets are usually aware of the problems that exist in society and attempt to bring these issues to light. As a result, he attempts to depict the issues in his poetry. He seems to be much more concerned not only with the problems of his own country, but also with the problems of the entire world. The elite British English speakers consider Indian English to be rural, but the poet uses Indian English and regional terms on purpose. He wants to divide Indians into two groups: those who speak British English in cities and those who speak Indian English in rural areas. He tends to compose his poetry in contemporary Indian English, which shows his modernity. The following characteristics of Indian English can be found in his writing:

A) Fascinating Progressive Form:

Indians use the progressive form to express themselves, but some grammarians agree that some words should not be used in the progressive form. However, he has used the following words to express the progressive form:

I am standing for peace and non violence (The Patriot)
I am simply not understanding... (The Patriot)

Standing and comprehension have been given progressive names here.

B) Double Verb: No other English poet, native or non-native, has used double verbs in their poetry. Ezekiel says:

Why world is fighting fighting (The Patriot)

In terms of both content and style, we can conclude that Nissim's poems are true modern poems. Consider the poem 'Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.' as an example. The poem is represented as an evocative contrast of haziness and light. Make a list of other examples of alliteration and see if you can understand why they're successful. We hear the speaker's prayers and incantations because there is a lot of repetition. The echoed 'they said' is like a chorus: a group of characters in classical Greek drama who comment on the action but do not take part in it. Ezekiel uses direct speech, 'May...' to dramatise the scene. The chorus is a portion of a song that is repeated on a regular basis.

Key words/ Glossary

Bon voyage - Used to express farewell and good wishes to a departing traveller

Rationalist - a person who believes that all behaviour, opinions, etc. should be based on reason rather than on emotions or religious beliefs

Hybrid - something that is the product of mixing two or more different things

To tame - to make something easy to control

Incantation - special words that are spoken or sung to have a magic effect; the act of speaking or singing these words.

Diabolic - terrible, extremely bad or annoying

Paralyse – to make something unable to feel or move

Lanterns - a lamp in a transparent case,

often a metal case with glass sides that has a handle,

so that you can carry it outside

Groan – to make long deep sound because of pain etc.

Sceptic - a person who usually doubts that claims or statements are true,

especially those that other people believe in

Rationalist - a person who believes that all behaviour, opinions, etc. should be based on reason rather than on emotions or religious beliefs

Hybrid - something that is the product of mixing two or more different things

Paraffin - a type of oil obtained from petroleum and used as a fuel for heat and light

To tame - to make something easy to control

Incantation - special words that are spoken or sung to have a magic effect; the act of speaking

or singing these words.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

Question 1: What was the purpose of the gathering? Who do you believe is speaking?

Answer: The crowd had gathered for Miss Pushpa T.S.'s farewell party. Here, the poet is the one who talks.

Question 2: What do you think of Miss Pushpa T.S, according to the speaker?

Answer: Miss Pushpa T.S, her family history, and her smiling face come to mind as the speaker responds. She is not only a well-known woman, but also a good person.

Question 3: Read the following lines and respond to the following questions:

I don't mean only external sweetness but internal sweetness. Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling, Even for no reason but simply because She is feeling.

(a) Who is the person speaking?

Answer: The poet is the one who talks.

(b) What does the speaker mean by external and internal sweetness, in your opinion?

Answer: External and internal sweetness refers to Miss Pushpa T.S's inner beauty as well as her outwardly pleasing personality.

(c) In these lines, what fact listed by the speaker is likely to offend someone?

Answer: The poet insulted someone by making a joke about Miss Pushpa's life and reasons for leaving for a foreign country.

(d): Read the lines and respond to the following questions:

Surat? Ah, yes, Once only I stayed in Surat With family members Of my uncles' very old friend Her wife was cooking nicely That was long time ago.

(a) What is the significance of the speaker's mention of Surat?

Answer: Surat refers to Miss Pushpa's and her parents' hometown.

(b) To whom is he speaking?

Answer: The poet is addressing Miss Pushpa's father, a well-known Surat lawyer.

(c) Is there any meaning to these lines in the sense in which they are spoken?

Answer: Yes, these lines are significant to her family history and where she comes from.

(d) What information does this passage disclose about the speaker?

Answer: These lines express the poet's intense feelings and emotions toward Miss Pushpa and her family.

Question 5: From the speaker's address, what characteristics of Miss Pushpa T.S. are apparent?

Miss Pushpa T.S. is a lovely lady with a kind heart. Miss Pushpa T.S. is a lovely lady who always has a smile on her face. She has a friendly disposition and comes from a well-known family. She is cheerful and well-liked by the general public. She is really ambitious and never says no to anything. Miss Pushpa T.S. shares these attributes, as demonstrated by the speaker's address.

Question 6: In the poem, what makes you laugh?

Answer: The poet uses Miss Pushpa's explanation to establish humour in his poem. Miss Pushpa, he says, is sweet not only on the outside but also on the inside. She smiles incessantly for no particular

reason. Furthermore, forgetting creates a slightly humorous circumstance in which the poet becomes confused between the two. Furthermore, the poet's recollection of his visit to Surat not only changes the attention from Miss Pushpa to poet, but also makes one smile at how he has brought a minor incident into conversation.

Question 7: Describe the poem's main concept.

The core concept of the poem is to illustrate Miss Pushpa T.S.'s character. She is relocating to another country in order to better her prospects. She is a lovely lady who wears a perpetual smile on her lips. She is well-liked by the public because she beams even though there is no justification for it. She is a happy person who is always eager to support others. Her preparation, spirit, and pleasing smile are valued by the poet. The core theme of this poem is to emphasise her uniqueness.

Review Questions

1. Respond to the questions below.

I. Why had so many people gathered? Who do you believe is speaking?

II. What does Miss Pushpa TS mean to the speaker?

Answer:. The crowd had gathered for Miss Pushpa's farewell party. Here, the poet is the one who talks.

Answer: The speaker remembers Miss Pushpa TS, her family history, and her cheerful disposition. She is not only a well-known woman, but also a decent person.

2. Respond to these questions using the context as a guide.

I'm not talking about external sweetness; I'm talking about internal sweetness.

Miss Pushpa smiles and smiles, seemingly for no reason other than to express how she feels.

a. Who is the person speaking?

b. What do you think the speaker means when he says "internal and external"?

c. In these lines, what fact listed by the speaker is likely to offend someone? The poet is the author, according to answer a.

d. External and internal sweetness refers to Miss Pushpa's inner beauty as well as her outwardly pleasing personality.

e. The poet insulted someone by making a remark about Miss Pushpa's life and motivations for leaving for foreign lands.

Oh, yes, I once stayed in Surat with the family of my uncles' very old friend, whose wife was preparing delicious food.

That was quite some time ago.

a. What is the meaning of the speaker's mention of Surat?

b. To whom is he speaking?

c. Is there any meaning to these lines in the sense in which they are spoken?

d. What knowledge does this passage disclose about the speaker?

Responses

a. Surat refers to Miss Pushpa's and her parents' hometown.

b. The poet is addressing Miss Pushpa's father, a well-known lawyer in Surat.

c. Indeed, these lines are significant to her family history and where she comes from.

d. These lines convey the poet's strong feelings and emotions toward Miss Pushpa and her family.

Further/Suggested Readings

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- *Collected Poems 1952-88 (1989)*

Unit 03 – Swami and Friends by R.K. Narayan

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To impart to the student basic knowledge about the life, personality and works of R.K. Narayan, a prominent Indian writer in English.
- Employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writer R.K. Narayan
- To compare the thematic contexts with the content prescribed
- To present typical Indian society and the temperament of semi-urban people
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers
- To point out post colonial dimensions in Indian people

Introduction

The details about R.K. Narayan's life, such as his family, education, and marital life, are covered in this module. It also defines Narayan's inner self, which was modest, sensitive, and compassionate. The module also discusses R.K. Narayan's passion for writing, his struggles to become a well-known artist, and the awards he has received for his prolific writing. In My Days, Narayan describes a house he designed in Yadavgiri, Mysore, as a "writing retreat." As he admits in My Days, he split his time between two homes: one at Laxmipuram, where he could enjoy his family's business, and the other at Yadavgiri, where he could return to his books and journals. As a result, Narayan's study, which he described as a "bay-room with eight windows affording me (him) a view in every direction" at Yadavgiri, is the most important room in the house.

Following Narayan's death, his family started making plans to demolish the house in Yadavgiri. The house was declared a piece of national heritage and demolition was prohibited after a Mysore daily brought it to the attention of the Mysore Urban Development Authority. The government paid 24 million rupees for the property and set aside 3.45 million rupees for its reconstruction. Soon after, the government started work on the house's renovation.

According to Dr. C. G. Betsurmath, Commissioner of Mysore City Corporation, "the restored house will be converted into a museum, similar to Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, which draws visitors from all over the world." The following statement by conservation architect RajnishWattas, a self-confessed fan of R. K. Narayan, is particularly noteworthy: "the need is to 'restore' – not 'renovate'." As a result, every attempt is being made to preserve the original home, its ambience, and sound as they were during R. K. Narayan's time.

The study table on which R.K. Narayan used to write, the sofa on which he often sat, his belongings such as his clothes, three pairs of spectacles, books that he owned and those written by him, medals (Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan), awards, recognitions, and honorary degrees, and some rare photographs of R.K. Narayan and his familiy are among the memorabilia housed in the museum. The museum has plaques that briefly describe different aspects of R.K. Narayan's life, such as his work as a writer, a friend, a husband and father, and so on.

Each plaque has its own tale to tell, such as

'A Marvel Storyteller,'

'The Soul of Malgudi,'
'Awards and Honours,'
'I am causing you trouble,'
'Remembering R.K. Narayan,' and
'R.K. Narayan: Restoring the House of One of India's Most Beloved Authors,'
to name a few.
The quotes written by R.K.Narayan that have been hung on the walls are an interesting feature of this house. Each of these musings reveals the complexity and strength of the writer's thinking and feeling, compelling the reader to pause and contemplate them in the peace and quiet of the house. The following are some of R.K. Narayan's quotes:

> "But there is this peculiarity about heat: it appears to affect only those that think of it."
> "Do you realize how few ever really understand how fortunate they are in their circumstances?"
> "You become writer by writing. It is a yoga."
> "Life is about making right things and going on."

Subject Matter

R.K. Narayan was born on October 10, 1906, in Purasawalkam, Madras, as Rasipuram KrishnaswamyIyer Narayanswami (now Chennai). For the purposes of print, the name Rasipuram KrishnaswamyIyer Narayanswami was shortened to Narayan at the request of Graham Greene, R.K. Narayan's literary friend and the publisher, Hamish Hamilton. Narayan spent his first fifteen years of life in Chennai with his grandmother, Ammani. The home atmosphere was an eclectic mix that influenced the child's growth and development in a variety of ways, as well as providing Narayan, the writer, with a wide range of material to work with in his writings.
N. Ram, Editor of Frontline and one of Narayan's "constant friends," says that as a child, his maternal grandmother instilled in him folk tales, a fluent storytelling heritage, and an enthusiasm for Carnatic music. Seshachalam's younger brother, on the other hand, will provide the future writer with a wealth of character content. In 1921, Narayan moved to Mysore, where he spent the majority of his life before moving to Madras in his final decade.
The move from Madras to Mysore was a watershed moment in Narayan's life, especially in terms of his development as a writer. R.V. KrishnaswamiIyer, Narayan's father, was the headmaster of Maharaja's Collegiate High School in Mysore, and Gnanambal, his mother, was a lady with a kind heart and wide outlook, and "a very rare spirit, plain-dealing, transparent, and completely committed to truth-telling," in the words of Narayan himself. If Narayan's mother was responsible for the instillation of morality and simplicity in him, his father's academic career instilled in him the habit of extensive reading. Narayan was introduced to English literature and the London literary scene by regular and simple access to the library of the school where his father was the headmaster.
Narayan was accepted into Mysore's Maharaja's College, where he studied English, History, Economics, Political Science, and Tamil. He began his career as a teacher in a government school after completing his B.A. However, teaching was not Narayan's true calling, and he left to pursue writing as a full-time occupation. According to N. Ram, the year 1930 was significant in Narayan's development as a writer because it was in this year that Malgudi, the fictional locale that serves as the setting for almost all of his works, was created.
While writing on the day of Vijayadashmi, Narayan imagined a small railway station. Malgudi was born when its name "seemed to hurl into view." Narayan married Rajam in 1934 and they had a happy marriage. Hema, the couple's daughter, was born in 1936. Rajam died of typhoid in 1939, leaving Narayan and Hema behind. Narayan remained faithful to Rajam and raised Hema on his own, never considering remarriage. The most devastating blow to Narayan came when Hema died of cancer in 1994. The rest of Narayan's life was spent in Madras with his son-in-law Chandru, granddaughter, and great-grandchildren.

Summary

Long walks, long and hearty chats with family and friends, a cup of coffee, rice and curd, and a keen observation of people and things around him – R.K. Narayan was a simple man with simple pleasures of life. He enjoyed spending time with his extended family, which included his mother, Gnanambal, his brothers and their wives, as well as his nieces and nephews. Even though he didn't have anything to buy for himself at the store, he made sure to bring small gifts for his nieces and

nephews, such as plastic toys, clothing, jewellery, chocolates, and so on. Playing with children at home and narrating stories to them was one of his favourite pastimes.

It's no surprise that R.K. Narayan was profoundly affected by the untimely death of Hema, his daughter, despite his best efforts to hide it behind a veneer of stoicity.

"He seemed remarkably calm and collected, but later confessed that he was broken inside,"

N. Ram, a close friend, says. He didn't want to see the body because he wanted to keep the memory of spending so much time with her the night before."

As he regained his calm, Narayan tried to make sense of the situation by saying, "We're all in line, but she (Hema) jumped the line." Nonetheless, as a caring father who wished to immortalise his daughter's memory, Narayan dedicated his fifteenth and final book, Grandmother, to her.

R.K. Narayan was a gentle soul who felt other people's suffering as keenly as he felt his own. When veteran photographer T.S. Satyan expressed his dissatisfaction with numerous rejections of his submissions by editors, R.K. Narayan could immediately relate, and in his simple and unassuming manner said, "It's all part of the fun. I've had my fair share of 'Editor regrets.'" Furthermore: "Don't get discouraged. It is not easy to work as a freelancer. Progress will come your way if you stick with it with commitment." T.S Satyan observed that Narayan "moved with unselfconscious ease with people from all strata of society" and that he "moved with unselfconscious ease with people from all strata of society-hawkers, attorneys and their assistants, printers, shopkeepers, teachers, and professors."

R.K. Narayan was essentially and first and foremost a benevolent human being, unaware of his own genius, achievement, or social and economic standing. R.K. Narayan's simple simplicity can be seen in the fact that, despite having friends all over the world and a large circle of influence, his tastes and pleasures remained rooted in his hometown. T.S Satyan tells about a time in Narayan's life when he goes to a New York cafeteria and orders coffee. When the server asks him, "Black or white?" he is taken aback.

However, Narayan insists that he wants it brown, not black or white, as that is the colour of 'honest coffee' produced in south India. Narayan's relationship with people he referred to as his "constant friends" was a remarkable part of his life. In one of his interviews, N. Ram mentions that R.K. Narayan

"valued friendship above all else."

In today's world, when relationships have progressively lost their meaning and importance in the lives of many, Narayan's own words on friendship, that he believes in friendship as a theme and that just friendship by itself is an achievement, are extremely important. Over long periods of time, Narayan's friendships remained strong.

Narayan's own partnerships have lasted for a long time.

M.S. Subbulakshmi, who has known Narayan since the 1930s, and

her husband, Sadasivam,

M. N. Srinivas, the sociologist,

Veena Doreswamy Iyengar, from whom Narayan learned music,

Sarad Singh, who introduced Narayan to JawaharLal Nehru and Indira Gandhi,

Natwar Singh,

C.N. Narsimhan, and

Graham Greene, the British.

Narayan's path to success was fraught with challenges and failures. When Narayan finished his first book, *Swami and Friends* (1935), he couldn't find a publisher or a readership for it. Narayan had a difficult time because there was no existing organised publishing industry. He also mailed the novel's manuscript to one of his nearest friends, Krishna Raghavendra Purna, who was stationed overseas. Purna, too, was unable to get it released. Narayan begged Purna to throw the manuscript into the Thames because he was desperate. (Finally, Purna presented the manuscript to Graham Greene, who assisted in its publication.)

Narayan never wavered in his determination to be nothing if not a novelist, and

> "he approached it (writing) with commitment, modesty, freedom, honesty, and, finally, strong literary success." During the early years, his inner directedness kept him going."

Narayan was a perfectionist who would rewrite his work until it was perfect. Rewriting a work was a churning process that allowed Narayan to get rid of the unnecessary and keep only what was imbued with his deep conviction. In his autobiography, the author writes:

> "I began to find that as the sentences were rewritten, they gained new strength and finality, and that the real, final version could only appear between the original lines and then again in the jumble of rewritten lines, and above and below them. Overall, it was a good experience..."

Narayan's art of writing was essential to his life. A man who enjoyed the simple pleasures of life had a preference for notebooks or diaries brought to him by his friend Ram from England or Holland,

which served his passion for writing. Writing was more than a means of subsistence for R.K. Narayan.

It was his religion; it was the way by which he could articulate anything he thought and felt; it was the one thing that kept him emotionally and mentally afloat until his last breath. The following event, as related by N. Ram, exemplifies R.K. Narayan's reverent relationship with writing. N.Ram claims that Narayan asked him if he could bring him a diary just hours before he went on ventilator, and Ram said yes. N.Ram notes that Narayan was just thinking about writing until the very last moment.

It's no surprise that R.K. Narayan, a committed, conscientious, and versatile journalist, has earned numerous national and international awards. One of his major achievements is the large national and foreign readership of his works, as well as the translation of his works into the world's major languages. In 1964, Narayan was awarded the Padma Bhushan, and in 2000, the Padma Vibhushan. He has also been nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature on many occasions. For his novel, The Guide, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961, the National Citizen's Award in 1961, the Taraknath Das Foundation Distinguished Award in 1982, the Arthur Christopher Award in 1980, and the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1980.

In 1981, Narayan was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters as an honorary member. Several universities, including the University of Mysore (1976), Delhi University (1973), and the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom (1967), bestowed honorary doctorates on Narayan in recognition of his literary excellence and contribution. In 1989, Narayan was elected to the Indian Parliament's upper house for his contribution to Indian literature. R.K. Narayan was a prolific author who wrote in a variety of genres. The following is a list of the works:

Fiction:

- *Swami and Friends (1935)*
- *The Bachelor of Arts (1937)*
- *The Dark Room (1938)*
- *The English Teacher (1945)*
- *Mr Sampath (1948)*
- *The Financial Expert (1952)*
- *Waiting for the Mahatma (1955)*
- *The Guide (1958)*
- *The Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961)*
- *The Vendor of Sweets (1967)*
- *The Painter of Signs (1977)*
- *A Tiger for Malgudi (1983)*
- *Talkative Man (1986)*
- *The World of Nagaraj (1990)*
- *Grandmother's Tale (1992)*

Non-Fiction:

- Next Sunday (1960)

- My Dateless Diary (1960)
- My Days (1974)
- Reluctant Guru (1974)
- The Emerald Route (1980)
- A Writer's Nightmare (1988)
- A Story Teller's World (1989)
- The Writerly Life (2002)
- Mysore (1944)

Mythology:

- Gods, Demons and others (1964)
- The Ramayana (1973)
- The Mahabharata (1978)

Short Story Collections:

- Malgudi Days (1942)
- An Astrologer's Day and other stories (1947)
- Lawley Road and other stories (1956)
- A Horse and Two Goats (1970)
- Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories (1985)
- The Grandmother's Tale and Selected Stories (1994)

In the world of English literature, India became a force to be reckoned with around the middle of the twentieth century. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan were three major Indian-born authors who helped put India on the map of English literature. Above all, R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) must be mentioned because it was his work that officially introduced Indian English Literature to the world as we know it. The book Development of Maritime Laws in 17th Century England was Narayan's first publication. He went on to write Swami and Friends, a novel set in the fictional town of Malgudi. After getting married and working as a reporter for The Justice, he met Graham Greene after getting married and working as a reporter for the newspaper The Justice. Graham assisted Narayan in the publication of Swami and Friends, as well as other works such as The Bachelor of Arts and The Dark Room. His books have often dealt with social issues, ranging from school corporal punishment to male injustice in marriages. Following the death of his wife, he wrote The English Teacher, a book that expressed his sorrow. The piece ended up being part of an unintended trio that also included Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts.

His works are mostly autobiographical, with various names for characters and a storey set in the fictional town of Malgudi. Malgudi Days was the title of his collection of short stories. The Financial Expert is considered Narayan's magnum opus, followed by Waiting for the Mahatma, a fictional account of the Indian independence movement. Michigan State University and later the Viking Press published his writings. It was during this period that he wrote The Guide, which earned him the Sahitya Academy Award. The storey was also adapted into a film, for which he received the Filmfare Award for Best Story. The Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan, as well as the AC Benson Medal and membership in the American Academy of Arts

and Letters, were bestowed upon him. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize many times but never received it.

Narayan, who is regarded as one of the top three Indian novelists in English, is known for his remarkable ability to tell stories about unforgettable characters with tiny oddities and eccentricities, as well as his wit. Political problems and high philosophy are seldom addressed in Narayan's fiction. He writes about the fictional town of Malgudi and its residents, as well as their daily lives, with grace and humour. The comic vision of Narayan is ironic.

His all-encompassing irony, which involves the specific social context in which his men and women operate, as well as the existential truth centred on their unique experiences. With English literary idiom, Narayan evokes a peculiar diction of extraordinary freshness and rare creativity.

Among the Indo-Anglian novelists, Narayan is the most objective. Narayan's approach to his subject matter reflected this objectivity. In most Indo-Anglian novels, a variety of characters and events are woven around the young hero and heroine, and the storey concludes happily. Narayan, on the other hand, takes a very different approach.

Narayan begins with a character and scenario in mind, and the storey follows what he sees as the logical progression of that premise. It means no happy ending, no engagement, and no standardised hero.

The hero in Swami and Friends is a young boy who does nothing brave, honourable, or adventurous. Chandran, the protagonist of The Bachelor of Arts, is a typical college student. The heroes of Narayan are not your typical heroes. Since the action in Narayan's stories logically stems from characters like accidence and coincidence, abrupt reversals of fortune have no place in the plot.

Narayan paints an image of life that is untouched by drastic efforts. His stories are entirely dictated by the logic of the scenario or the character. Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts, Narayan's first two novels, demonstrate this point. The core theme in both novels is the development of emotional maturity, which is accompanied by a crisis. Some of his novels feature characters who, regardless of the repercussions, aspire to achieve their absurd goals and aspirations. Others, despite the challenges, obligations, and limitations imposed by family ties and a strict social code, aspire to achieve their goals and dreams, despite the obstacles, obligations, and limitations imposed by a strict social code.

Key words/ Glossary

Fount – the place where something important comes from
Transition – process or period of changing from one state to another
Locale – a place where something happens
Conjugal – connected with marriage
Demolition – to pull or knock down a building
Ambience – the character and atmosphere of a place
Memorabilia – things that people collect because they once belonged to a famous person, or because they are connected with a particular important place, event or activity
Succinctly – expressed clearly and in a few words
Ponder – to think about something carefully for a period of time
Veteran – a person who has a lot of experience in a particular area or activity
Legendary – very famous and talked about a lot by people, especially in a way that shows admiration
Manuscript – a copy of a book, piece of music, etc. before it has been printed
Perfectionist – a person who likes to do things perfectly and is not satisfied with anything less
Penchant – a special liking for something
Prolific – (of an artist) producing many works

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

Q.1. In the name R.K. Narayan, what does R. stand for?
A.1.
i) Rama
ii) **Rasipuram**
iii) Ratnagiri
iv) Reddy

Q.2. Where was R.K. Narayan born?

A.2.
i) **Purasawalkam, Madras**
ii) Calcutta
iii) Mysore
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.3. Which home of R.K. Narayan has been converted into a museum?
A.3.
i) **Yadavgiri, Mysore**
ii) Madras
iii) Laxmipuram
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.4. In which year was Padma Bhishan conferred upon R.K. Narayan.
A.4.
i) 1965
ii) 2000
iii) **1964**
iv) 1960

Q.5. Name the international university that conferred honorary doctorate upon R.K. Narayan.
A.5.
i) **University of Leeds**
ii) University of Cambridge
iii) University of Oxford
iv) University of Lancanshire

Q.6. Which of the following is a work of fiction of Narayan?
A.6.
i) My Days
ii) The Ramayana
iii) Malgudi Days
iv) **The Guide**

Q.7. Which of the following is the work of mythology of R.K. Narayan.
A.7.
i) **Gods, Demons and others**
ii) A Tiger for Malgudi
iii) The Reluctant Guru
iv) The Man-Eater of Malgudi

Q.8. Which of the following is the short story collection of R.K. Narayan.
A.8.
i) The Guide
ii) **Malgudi Days**
iii) The Dark Room
iv) A Story Teller's World

Q.9. Who was the international author who got R.K. Narayan's novel *Swami and Friends* published?
A.9.
i) **Graham Greene**
ii) N. Ram
iii) E.M. Forster
iv) T.S. Satyan

Q.10. Who was R.K. Narayan's friend who was the editor of *Frontline*?
A.10.
i) T.S. Satyan
ii) **N.Ram**
iii) R. Purna

iv) Chandru

Review Questions

1) What evidence do you have that R.K. Narayan was a plain, sensitive, and compassionate man?
2) How did the members of R.K. Narayan's family and the atmosphere in which he grew up affect his education?
3) How would you characterise R.K. Narayan, the author?
4) What are the awards and honours that R.K. Narayan has received?

Further/Suggested Readings

- http://www.rigzin.freeservers.com/rknarayan.htm#book
- http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1914/19140670.htm
- http://inwww.rediff.com/news/2001/may/15spec.htm
- http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1811/18110040.htm
- My visit to *R.K. Narayan museum* at Yadavgiri, Mysore
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VukssWa9C8
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- "R K Narayan". The Daily Telegraph. London. 14 May 2001. Archived from the original on 26 July 2013. Retrieved 25 July 2009.
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- George, Rosemary Marangoly (2013), Indian English and the Fiction of National Literature, Cambridge University Press, p. 144, ISBN 978-1-107-04000-7 Quote: "S. Radhakrishnan was the first "Fellow of the Akademi" to be given this title in 1968 after he left the service of both the government and the Akademi. ... Mulk Raj Anand was the first Indian English writer to be inducted in 1989 and R. K. Narayan the second Indian writer working in English to be inducted in 1994."
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Unit 04: Swami and Friends by R. K. Narayan

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To evaluate the historical context in reference to the Indian subcontinent
- To impart to the student basic knowledge about the life, personality and works of R.K. Narayan, a prominent Indian writer in English.
- Employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writer R.K. Narayan
- To compare the thematic contexts with the content prescribed
- To point out post colonial dimensions in Indian people
- To present typical Indian society and the temperament of semi-urban people
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers

Introduction

On October 10, 1906, in Purasawalkam, Madras, Narayan was born as Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Iyer Narayanswami (now Chennai). For the purposes of print, the name Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Iyer Narayanswami was shortened to Narayan at the request of Graham Greene, R.K. Narayan's literary friend and the publisher, Hamish Hamilton. Narayan spent his first fifteen years of life in Chennai with his grandmother, Ammani. The home atmosphere was an eclectic mix that influenced the child's growth and development in a variety of ways, as well as providing Narayan, the writer, with a wide range of material to work with in his writings.

N. Ram, Editor of Frontline and one of Narayan's "constant friends," says that as a child, his maternal grandmother instilled in him folk tales, a fluent storytelling heritage, and an enthusiasm for Carnatic music. Seshachalam's younger brother, on the other hand, will provide the future writer with a wealth of character content. In 1921, Narayan moved to Mysore, where he spent the majority of his life before moving to Madras in his final decade. The move from Madras to Mysore was a watershed moment in Narayan's life, especially in terms of his development as a writer. R.V. KrishnaswamiIyer, Narayan's father, was the headmaster of Maharaja's Collegiate High School. Mysore School Gnanambal, his mother, was a lady with a kind heart and a broad outlook, and

"a very rare spirit, plain-dealing, transparent, and completely dedicated to truth-telling,"

in the words of Narayan himself. If Narayan's mother was responsible for the instillation of morality and simplicity in him, his father's academic career instilled in him the habit of extensive reading. Narayan was introduced to English literature and the London literary scene by regular and simple access to the library of the school where his father was the headmaster.

Narayan was accepted into Mysore's Maharaja's College, where he studied English, History, Economics, Political Science, and Tamil. He began his career as a teacher in a government school after completing his B.A. However, teaching was not Narayan's true calling, and he left to pursue writing as a full-time occupation. According to N. Ram, the year 1930 was significant in Narayan's development as a writer because it was in this year that Malgudi, the fictional locale that appears in almost all of his works, was born. While writing on the day of Vijayadashmi, Narayan imagined a small railway station. Malgudi was born when its name "seemed to hurl into view."

Narayan married Rajam in 1934 and they had a happy marriage. Hema, the couple's daughter, was born in 1936. Rajam died of typhoid in 1939, leaving Narayan and Hema behind. Narayan remained

faithful to Rajam and raised Hema on his own, never considering remarriage. The most devastating blow to Narayan came when Hema died of cancer in 1994. The rest of Narayan's life was spent in Madras with his son-in-law Chandru, granddaughter, and great-grandchildren.

4.1 Subject Matter

This unit focuses on information about R.K. Narayan's life, including his family, education, and marital life. It also defines Narayan's inner self, which was modest, sensitive, and compassionate. The module also discusses R.K. Narayan's passion for writing, his struggles to become a well-known artist, and the awards he has received for his prolific writing. In My Days, Narayan describes a house he designed in Yadavgiri, Mysore, as a "writing retreat." As he admits in My Days, he split his time between two homes: one at Laxmipuram, where he could enjoy his family's business, and the other at Yadavgiri, where he could return to his books and journals. As a result, Narayan's study, which he described as a

> "bay-room with eight windows affording me (him) a view in every direction"

at Yadavgiri, is the most important room in the house. Following Narayan's death, his family started making plans to demolish the house in Yadavgiri. The house was declared a piece of national heritage and demolition was prohibited after a Mysore daily brought it to the attention of the Mysore Urban Development Authority. The government paid 24 million rupees for the property and set aside 3.45 million rupees for its reconstruction. Soon after, the government started work on the house's renovation.

According to Dr. C. G. Betsurmath, Commissioner of Mysore City Corporation,

> "the restored house will be converted into a museum, similar to Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, which draws visitors from all over the world."

The following statement by conservation architect RajnishWattas, a self-confessed fan of R. K. Narayan, is particularly noteworthy: “the need is to ‘restore' – not ‘renovate'.” As a result, every attempt is being made to preserve the original home, its ambience, and sound as they were during R. K. Narayan's time.

The study table on which R.K. Narayan used to write, the sofa on which he often sat, his belongings such as his clothes, three pairs of spectacles, books that he owned and those written by him, medals (Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan), awards, recognitions, and honorary degrees, and some rare photographs of R.K. Narayan and his familiy are among the memorabilia housed in the museum. The museum has plaques that briefly describe different aspects of R.K. Narayan's life, such as his work as a writer, a friend, a husband and father, and so on. - of these plaques tells a different storey under its own heading: 'A Marvel Storyteller,' 'The Soul of Malgudi,' and so on. To name a few, there's 'Awards and Honours,' 'I'm causing you trouble,' 'Remembering R.K. Narayan,' and 'R.K. Narayan: Restoring the House of One of India's Most Beloved Authors.'

The quotes written by R.K.Narayan that have been hung on the walls are an interesting feature of this house. Each of these musings reveals the complexity and strength of the writer's thinking and feeling, compelling the reader to pause and contemplate them in the peace and quiet of the house. The following are some of R.K. Narayan's quotes:

“But there is this peculiarity about heat: it appears to affect only those that think of it.”

“Do you realize how few ever really understand how fortunate they are in their circumstances?”

“You become writer by writing. It is a yoga.”

“Life is about making right things and going on.”

Summary

Narayan's path to success was fraught with challenges and failures. When Narayan finished his first book, *Swami and Friends* (1935), he couldn't find a publisher or a readership for it. Narayan had a difficult time because there was no existing organised publishing industry. He also mailed the novel's manuscript to one of his nearest friends, Krishna Raghavendra Purna, who was stationed overseas. Purna, too, was unable to get it released. Narayan begged Purna to throw the manuscript into the Thames because he was desperate. (Finally, Purna presented the manuscript to Graham Greene, who assisted in its publication.) Narayan never wavered in his determination to be nothing if not a novelist, and

> "he approached it (writing) with commitment, modesty, freedom, honesty, and, finally, strong literary success. During the early years, his inner directedness kept him going.”

Narayan was a perfectionist who would rewrite his work until it was perfect. Rewriting a work was a churning process that allowed Narayan to get rid of the unnecessary and keep only what was imbued with his deep conviction.

> "I started to find that the sentences gained a new intensity and finality while being rewritten," the author writes in his autobiography and the real, final version could only be found between the original lines, then in the jumble of rewritten lines that formed above and below them. Overall, it was a good experience..."

Narayan's art of writing was essential to his life. A man who enjoyed the simple pleasures of life had a preference for notebooks or diaries brought to him by his friend Ram from England or Holland, which served his passion for writing. Writing was more than a means of subsistence for R.K. Narayan. He lived by it; it was the way by which he could articulate all he thought and felt the one thing that kept him going emotionally and mentally until he died. The following event, as related by N. Ram, exemplifies R.K. Narayan's reverent relationship with writing. N.Ram claims that Narayan asked him if he could bring him a diary just hours before he went on ventilator, and Ram said yes. N.Ram observes that Narayan was only thinking about writing until the very last moment.

It's no surprise that R.K. Narayan, a committed, conscientious, and versatile journalist, has earned numerous national and international awards. One of his major achievements is the large national and foreign readership of his works, as well as the translation of his works into the world's major languages. In 1964, Narayan was awarded the Padma Bhushan, and in 2000, the Padma Vibhushan. He has also been nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature on many occasions. For his novel, The Guide, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961, the National Citizen's Awards in 1961, the Taraknath Das Foundation Distinguished Award in 1982, the Arthur Christopher Award in 1980, and the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1987.

In 1981, Narayan was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters as an honorary member. Several universities, including the University of Mysore (1976), Delhi University (1973), and the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom (1967), bestowed honorary doctorates on Narayan in recognition of his literary excellence and contribution. In 1989, Narayan was elected to the Indian Parliament's upper house for his contribution to Indian literature. R.K. Narayan was a prolific author who wrote in a variety of genres. Narayan was a simple man who enjoyed the simple things in life– long walks, hearty chats with family and friends, a cup of coffee, rice and curd, and a keen awareness of people and things around him. He enjoyed spending time with his extended family, which included his mother, Gnanambal, his brothers and their wives, as well as his nieces and nephews. Even though he didn't have anything to buy for himself at the store, he made sure to bring small gifts for his nieces and nephews, such as plastic toys, clothing, jewellery, chocolates, and so on. Playing with children at home and narrating stories to them was one of his favourite pastimes.

It's no surprise that R.K. Narayan was profoundly affected by the untimely death of Hema, his daughter, despite his best efforts to hide it behind a veneer of stoicity.

> "He seemed remarkably calm and collected, but later confessed that he was broken inside, N. Ram, a close friend, says. He didn't want to see the body because he wanted to keep the memory of spending so much time with her the night before."

As he regained his calm, Narayan tried to make sense of the situation by saying,

> "We're all in line, but she (Hema) jumped the line."

Nonetheless, as a caring father who wished to immortalise her daughter's memory, Grandmother's Story, Narayan's fifteenth and final book, was dedicated to Hema, who had died of cancer. R.K. Narayan was a gentle soul who felt other people's suffering as keenly as he felt his own. When veteran photographer T.S. Satyan expressed his dissatisfaction with numerous rejections of his submissions by editors, R.K. Narayan could immediately relate, and in his simple and unassuming manner said,

> "It's all part of the fun. I've had my fair share of 'Editor regrets.'"

Furthermore:

> "Don't get discouraged. It is not easy to work as a freelancer. Progress will come your way if you stick with it with commitment."

T.S Satyan wrote,

> "Narayan moved with unselfconscious ease with people from all strata of society - hawkers, lawyers and their clerks, printers, shopkeepers, students and professors."

R.K. Narayan was essentially and first and foremost a benevolent human being, unaware of his own genius, achievement, or social and economic standing. R.K. Narayan's simple simplicity can be seen in the fact that, despite having friends all over the world and a large circle of influence, his tastes and pleasures remained rooted in his hometown. T.S Satyan tells the storey.

Narayan visits a New York cafeteria and orders coffee, according to an anecdote from his childhood. When the server asks him,

"Black or white?"

he is taken aback. However, Narayan insists that he wants it brown, not black or white, as that is the colour of 'honest coffee' produced in south India. Narayan's relationship with people he referred to as his

"constant friends"

was a remarkable part of his life. In one of his interviews, N. Ram mentions that R.K. Narayan

"valued friendship above all else."

In today's sense, Narayan's own words on friendship, that he believes in friendship as a theme and that friendship is an achievement in and of itself, are extremely important.

When many people's relationships have progressively lost their worth and meaning in their lives. Narayan's own partnerships have lasted for a long time.

M.S. Subbulakshmi, who has known Narayan since the 1930s, and her husband,
Sadasivam, M. N. Srinivas, the sociologist,
Veena Doreswamy Iyengar, from whom Narayan learned music,
Sarad Singh, who introduced Narayan to JawaharLal Nehru and Indira Gandhi,
Natwar Singh,
C.N. Narsimhan, and
Graham Greene, the British writer with whom Narayan's friendship was called 'legendary' by N. Ram.

The pressures and complexities of British colonial rule over India: Swami and Friends is set in a fictional town in South India around 1930 and is characterised by the pressures and complexities of British colonial rule over India. While the plot of the book revolves around common childhood trials and tribulations, the protagonist's and his friends' personal experiences are coloured by their political background, even though they have little understanding of it. R.K. Narayan reveals the pervasiveness and subtlety of this political structure's influence by analysing British colonial rule through the prism of an average boy's relatable childhood.

Swami's storey demonstrates that colonial rule has an influence on every aspect of Indian life during this time period, and that no one's personal life can be completely isolated from colonialism's profound, often conflicting effects. The lighthearted conflicts of the book's first chapters emphasise Narayan's argument that colonialism can be found also in children's innocent misadventures, even though it seems to them to be amusing, insignificant, or even impressive. As Swami and his classmates attend scripture class with Mr. Ebenezer, their fanatical Christian teacher, Narayan discusses colonialism for the first time in the book's first chapter.

Students love the class because of the "stirring pictures" they imagine based on Biblical stories, according to Narayan. Swami and his friends regard the Christianity placed on them at the mission school as a source of idle amusement rather than a danger or anything to seriously consider. Swami, on the other hand, quickly notices how Ebenezer's Christian teachings disagree with his Hindu values and protests against him. The class loves seeing their teacher get scolded by the Mission School Headmaster, and Swami is actually glad to avoid punishment as a result of this confrontation.

Swami is preoccupied with childish issues like impressing his friends and satisfying his father even in this direct confrontation, and colonialism remains a backdrop that affects Swami without occupying much of his attention. Swami, Mani, and their new classmate Rajam's blossoming friendship exemplifies how the young boys take established power structures for granted. While Mani and Rajam initially plan to war, their hostility quickly turns to mutual admiration, and the boys are unconcerned about their initial dependence on violent dominance to solve their problems. Swami is shocked to learn that Rajam's father is the Police Superintendent.

He is awestruck and ecstatic to be associated with such force, revealing his childish inability to evaluate the worth and authority of the powers that be. However, as Swami's storey progresses, the political background in which he finds himself gradually intrudes on his private understanding of his life. Swami starts to take acts that seem to be political on the surface, but he still perceives events through a personal, self-centered lens. Narayan again fuses the personal and the political by combining Swami's still-childish perspective with large-scale political events, demonstrating the difficulty of separating them, especially in the sense of colonialism.

Swami, Mani, and Rajam offer themselves a taste of control by intimidating a young boy named Karuppan and claiming to be

"the Government Police out to catch humbugs like you."

The three boys make unreasonable demands and scare the boy, but they don't seem to consider the consequences of their acts. Swami and his colleagues, it seems, develop an unconscious urge to act out the injustice they have endured. Swami and Mani unwittingly participate in a public demonstration against English oppression of Indian peasants shortly after, and become emotionally attached to the cause immediately.

Swami

"decides to boycott English products"

and burns his own cap

"in the hope of saving the world."

Swami's emotional reaction to the idea of English oppression is evident at this point, but he is unable to link the feeling with his own behaviour in general. Swami gets caught up in a school boycott the next day, and he takes part actively in the increasingly dangerous affair, but he's more concerned with the fun he's having than with the political implications of his actions, as when he notices happily that

"there were several glass panes untouched yet."

Swami only notices Rajam's father

"grimly ticking off seconds before giving orders for massacre"

when he sees him

"grimly ticking off seconds before giving orders for massacre."

that he becomes conscious of the political tensions that exist in his own life. Swami had

"unconsciously become defiant (rebellious)"

as a result of his new experience of resistance, according to Narayan. Swami runs away from the Mission School as a result of this subconscious transformation, renouncing for the first time a significant element of colonial injustice in his own life. Despite the fact that Swami and his friends gain some political awareness in the novel, colonial power continues to shape their lives in ways that are mostly invisible to them.

Narayan vividly depicts this fact through the boys' experiences forming a cricket team. Narayan shows that people living under colonialism sometimes have little choice but to tolerate—and often even embrace—the cultures of their colonisers by demonstrating the prominent and complicated role that a quintessentially English practise plays in the lives of the friends. While Swami, Mani, and Rajam are initially enthusiastic about forming a cricket team, they quickly learn that the logistics are more difficult than they expected, with Swami particularly concerned about government registration and taxes. Rajam has

"a momentary sympathy for Gandhi; no wonder he was dead against the government"

while reflecting on these difficulties. Narayan humorously points out the coercive role of the government in every Indian's life, no matter how minor it might seem, by equating the boys' seemingly minor problems with Gandhi's opposition to the government. The cricket team is formed as a way for Swami and Rajam to mend their relationship after their disagreement about what Rajam refers to as Swami's "political activities," but the cricket team is ultimately responsible for Swami and Rajam's breakup when Rajam is unable to forgive Swami for missing the match.

Through using the game to unite and separate the protagonists of the novel, Narayan shows how vulnerable the characters are to English influence, even as they dedicate themselves to an English sport with apparent independence. Swami and his friends' personal goals and relationships are influenced by political powers even during their leisure time, showing that no private life can be completely free of politics in the form of a colonised state. Mr. Ebenezar, the scripture master, is the polar opposite of Christ, an angry fanatic who mocks the natives' faith when trying to teach Christianity—Where did he derive this example from Christ?

Swami, the only Brahmin boy at the school (this is a reference to the caste or varna in Hinduism from which priests are chosen, and it appears to be the highest), asks questions (showing resistance to the teacher's teachings), and is physically abused by the teacher. Rajam represents a super colonial force, as shown by his material wealth, which includes living in a bungalow, and his behaviour, which is oppressive and controlling, as well as the way he treats servants. Since he's seen his father do it, he even makes his friends wait while he's doing nothing. He also acts as a mediator between Swami and Mani and the other three characters.

Mani as a symbol of local, indigenous strength and resistance, but who is tamed in the face of a "foreign" superpower in general. As a result, local government continues to lag behind colonial British authority. More clear colonialism references and reactions from the locals against the foreign force that had come upon them begin in Chapter 11. The author doesn't seem to denounce it specifically, and he isn't really forthright about it. Though the boys have some innocence, there is some aggressive activity (kidnapping, beating up, killing, etc.) that is very disturbing.

Was it because his father held a high place that Rajam, who is a symbol of colonialism himself, did not seem to see something wrong with Europeans? Or is it because of his fortune? The other

connection to colonialism that seemed to be very common in India was cricket—they seem to be able to boycott all but cricket: the theme of identity seems to play a role here. Swami tries to describe cricket to his grandmother, but she doesn't get it—her life and thoughts are from an earlier era in India, and this is a modern one.

In the world of English literature, India became a force to be reckoned with around the middle of the twentieth century. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan were three major Indian-born authors who helped put India on the map of English literature. Above all, R.K. Narayan (1906-2001) must be mentioned because it was his work that officially introduced Indian English Literature to the world as we know it. The book Development of Maritime Laws in 17th Century England was Narayan's first publication. He went on to write Swami and Friends, a novel set in the fictional town of Malgudi.

He met Graham Greene after getting married and working as a reporter for the newspaper The Justice. Graham assisted Narayan in the publication of Swami and Friends, as well as his subsequent works such as The Bachelor of Arts and The Dark Room are two of his subsequent works. His books have often dealt with social issues, ranging from school corporal punishment to male injustice in marriages. Following the death of his wife, he wrote The English Teacher, a book that expressed his sorrow. The piece ended up being part of an unintended trio that also included Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts. His works are mostly autobiographical, with various names for characters and a storey set in the fictional town of Malgudi. Malgudi Days was the title of his collection of short stories.

The Financial Expert is considered Narayan's magnum opus, followed by Waiting for the Mahatma, a fictional account of the Indian independence movement. Michigan State University and later the Viking Press published his writings. It was during this period that he wrote The Guide, which earned him the Sahitya Academy Award. The storey was also adapted into a film, for which he received the Filmfare Award for Best Story. The Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan, as well as the AC Benson Medal and membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, were bestowed upon him. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize many times but never received it.

Narayan, who is regarded as one of the top three Indian novelists in English, is known for his remarkable ability to tell stories about unforgettable characters with tiny oddities and eccentricities, as well as his wit. Political problems and high philosophy are seldom addressed in Narayan's fiction. He writes about the fictional town of Malgudi and its residents, as well as their daily lives, with grace and humour. The comic vision of Narayan is ironic. His all-encompassing irony, which involves the specific social context in which his men and women operate, as well as the existential truth centred on their unique experiences.

Narayan has a distinct diction that evokes a sense of uncommon freshness and rare ingenuity with a literary idiom in English. Among the Indo-Anglian novelists, Narayan is the most objective. Narayan's approach to his subject matter reflected this objectivity. In most Indo-Anglian novels, a variety of characters and events are woven around the young hero and heroine, and the storey concludes happily. Narayan, on the other hand, takes a very different approach. Narayan begins with a character and scenario in mind, and the storey follows what he sees as the logical progression of that premise. It means no happy ending, no engagement, and no standardised hero. The hero in Swami and Friends is a young boy who does nothing brave, honourable, or adventurous.

Chandran, the protagonist of The Bachelor of Arts, is a typical college student. The heroes of Narayan are not your typical heroes. Since the action in Narayan's stories logically stems from characters like accidence and coincidence, abrupt reversals of fortune have no place in the plot. Narayan paints an image of life that is untouched by drastic efforts. His stories are entirely dictated by the logic of the scenario or the character. Swami and Friends and The Bachelor of Arts, Narayan's first two novels, demonstrate this point. The core theme in both novels is the development of emotional maturity, which is accompanied by a crisis.

Some of his novels feature characters who, regardless of the repercussions, aspire to achieve their absurd goals and aspirations. Others, despite the challenges, obligations, and constraints imposed by family ties and a strict social code, aspire to achieve their goals and desires, regardless of the consequences.

Key words/ Glossary

Ambience – the character and atmosphere of a place
Memorabilia – things that people collect because they once belonged to a famous person, or because they are connected with a particular important place, event or activity
Succinctly – expressed clearly and in a few words
Ponder – to think about something carefully for a period of time
Veteran – a person who has a lot of experience in a particular area or activity

Perfectionist – a person who likes to do things perfectly and is not satisfied with anything less
Penchant – a special liking for something
Prolific – (of an artist) producing many works
Legendary – very famous and talked about a lot by people, especially in a way that shows admiration
Manuscript – a copy of a book, piece of music, etc. before it has been printed
Fount – the place where something important comes from
Transition – process or period of changing from one state to another
Locale – a place where something happens
Conjugal – connected with marriage
Demolition – to pull or knock down a building

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

Q.1. Name the international university that conferred honorary doctorate upon R.K. Narayan.

i) University of Leeds
ii) University of Cambridge
iii) University of Oxford
iv) University of Lancanshire

Q.2. Which of the following is a work of fiction of Narayan?

i) My Days
ii) The Ramayana
iii) Malgudi Days
iv) The Guide

Q.3. Which of the following is the work of mythology of R.K. Narayan.

i) Gods, Demons and others
ii) A Tiger for Malgudi
iii) The Reluctant Guru
iv) The Man-Eater of Malgudi

Q.4. In the name R.K. Narayan, what does R. stand for?

i) Rama
ii) Rasipuram
iii) Ratnagiri
iv) Reddy

Q.5. Where was R.K. Narayan born?

i) Purasawalkam, Madras
ii) Calcutta
iii) Mysore
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.6. Which home of R.K. Narayan has been converted into a museum?

i) Yadavgiri, Mysore
ii) Madras
iii) Laxmipuram
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.7. In which year was Padma Bhishan conferred upon R.K. Narayan.

i) 1965
ii) 2000
iii) 1964
iv) 1960

Q.8. Who was R.K. Narayan's friend who was the editor of *Frontline*?

i) T.S. Satyan
ii) N.Ram
iii) R. Purna
iv) Chandru

Q.9. Which of the following is the short story collection of R.K. Narayan.

i) The Guide
ii) Malgudi Days
iii) The Dark Room
iv) A Story Teller's World

Q.10. Who was the international author who got R.K. Narayan's novel *Swami and Friends* published?

i) Graham Greene
ii) N. Ram
iii) E.M. Forster
iv) T.S. Satyan

Answers of Self-evaluation

1	i	2	iv	3	i	4	ii	5	i
6	I	7	iii	8	ii	9	ii	10	i

Review Questions

1) What is the aspect of British Colonial India's tension visible in Swami and Friends?

2) What evidence do you have that R.K. Narayan was a plain, sensitive, and compassionate man?

3) What effect did R.K. Narayan's family and home life have on his education?

4) How can you characterise R.K. Narayan as an Indian writer in English?

5) How does Narayan represent Imperial India as a writer?

Further/Suggested Readings

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Unit 05: Swami and Friends by R.K. Narayan

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To employ the technique of Irony and Humour in the selected text
- To adapt the various modes of evolution at the various stages of a character's life
- To elaborate the various character portrait dimensions of an Indian adolescent
- To point out post colonial dimensions in Indian people
- To present typical Indian society and the temperament of semi-urban people
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers

Introduction

The road to success for Narayan was beset with many a difficulties and setbacks. Once ready with his first novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), Narayan could find neither publisher to publish it nor reading public. Owing to a lack of an established organized publishing industry, Narayan faced a tough time. He also sent the manuscript of the novel to one of his close friends, Krishna Raghavendra Purna who was overseas. However, Purna too could not get it published. In desperation, Narayan asked Purna to throw the manuscript into the Thames. (Finally, Purna took the manuscript to Graham Greene who helped to get it published.) Narayan never abandoned his resolve to be nothing if not a writer and "he went about it (writing) with dedication, modesty, independence, integrity and, eventually, solid literary success. His inner directedness kept him going during the early years".

Narayan was a perfectionist who would rewrite his work till he was completely satisfied. Rewriting a work was a sort of churning that helped Narayan remove the inappropriate and retain only that was imbued with his deep conviction. As the writer puts in his autobiography: "I began to notice that the sentences acquired a new strength and finality while being rewritten, and the real, final version could emerge only between the original lines and then again in what developed in the jumble of rewritten lines, and above and below them. It was, on the whole, a pleasant experience..." What was integral to Narayan's existence was his art of writing. A man who had simple pleasures of life had a penchant only for something that served his passion of writing that was notebooks or diaries that were brought to him by his friend, Ram from England or Holland.

To R.K. Narayan, writing was not just a matter of earning livelihood. It was the religion that he lived by; the means whereby he could express all that he thought and felt; the one anchor that sustained him emotionally and intellectually till his very last breath. The following incident as narrated by N. Ram testifies the reverent bond that existed between R.K. Narayan and writing. N.Ram says that just hours before he went on ventilator, Narayan asked him if he could bring a diary for him and Ram replies in the affirmative. N.Ram observes that till his last minute, Narayan thought only of writing.

Subject Matter

Swami and Friends (1935), Narayan's first novel, is remarkable for his understanding of child psychology and for his depiction of the buoyant world of school boys in a realistic and convincing manner. About this book Graham Greene wrote:

'It was Mr. Narayan with his *Swami and Friends* who first brought India, in the sense of the Indian population and the Indian way of life, alive to me… Swami is the story of a child written with complete objectivity, with a humour strange to our fiction, closer to Chekhov than to any English writer, with the same underlying sense of beauty and sadness.' (28)

A Sixth Grader, His Classmates and Their World of Adventures and Mischiefs!

Swaminathan, the young school student of sixth form is the hero of this novel. His exploits in the school and at home form the basic plot of the novel. Somu, the class Monitor, Mani, the Mighty-Good for-Nothing; Shankar, the most brilliant boy in the class; Samuel, the 'Pea' and Rajam the son of the Police Superintendent are his friends. The entire novel deals with the mischief and fun made by these boys. Humour of situation abounds in this novel. The very first paragraph of the novel is rich in the humour of situation and character. Let us read one extract from the text to understand this process of evolution:

'It was Monday morning. Swaminathan was reluctant to open his eyes. He considered Monday specially unpleasant in the calendar. After the delicious freedom of Saturday and Sunday, it was difficult to get into the Monday mood of work and discipline. He shuddered at the very thought of school: that dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class-teacher; and the headmaster with his thin long cane…' (1)

Beyond Childish Pranks: A World Full of Curiosity and Wisdom

This is far more than simple narrative of Swami's adventures—charming and entertaining as they are. By the delicate use of detail sympathetically observed, the author establishes for the reader the child's world as the child himself sees it and beyond the adult community he will one day belong to—in Swami's case, the town of Malgudi, which provides the setting of almost all Narayan's later novels. Swaminathan reaches the class in time and we are introduced to the "fire-eyed Vedanayagam", the class teacher and also the arithmetic teacher. Swami does not like him. When the teacher was scrutinizing the home exercises, Swaminathan began to think about the teacher's face:

'While the teacher was scrutinizing the sums, Swaminathan was gazing on his face, which seemed so tame at close quarters. His criticism of the teacher's face was that his eyes were too near each other, that there was more hair on his chin than one saw from the bench, and that he was very bad-looking. His reverie was disturbed. He felt a terrible pain in the soft flesh above his left elbow. The teacher was pinching him with one hand, and with the other crossing out all the sums. He wrote 'Very Bad' at the bottom of the page, flung the notebook in Swaminathan's face, and drove him back to his seat' (2-3)

The whole episode is highly amusing and another tribute to R.K. Narayan's knowledge and understanding of children's world. The boys waited eagerly for days together. But there was no response, no bats, balls and stumps. Rajam made three bats out of the bottom of a deal wood case and also obtained three old tennis balls from his father's club. A patch of ground adjacent to Rajam's house was to be used as the field. Pea promised to bring the stumps but could not even after a long search. A part of the wall of Rajam's house was marked as the stumps and so they began to play. The rest of the novel deals with cricket practice and the match which was played and lost. Swami had to be absent in the drill class for which he gave various excuses. When the Headmaster exposes him and punishes him, Swami runs away to Madras, but collapses on the outskirts of Malgudi. This is followed by prayers and offerings to gods if they descend from their heights and rescues him. Finally Swami returns home.

This unit focuses on the facts related with R.K. Narayan's life such as his family, his education, and his marital life. It also describes the inner self of Narayan that was unassuming, sensitive and highly compassionate. Further, the module delineates R.K. Narayan's love for writing, his struggles to become a renowned artist, and the honours bestowed upon him in recognition of his prolific writing. Narayan had built a house at Yadavgiri, Mysore which he refers to in *My Days* as "a retreat for writing". As he confesses in *My Days,* he divided his time between the two homes, one at Laxmipuram to enjoy the company of his family, and the other at Yadavgiri to return to his books and papers. Thus the most important room of the home at Yadavgiri is Narayan's study which he described as a "bay-room with eight windows affording me (him) a view in every direction".

After Narayan's death, his family began to plan the demolition of the house at Yadavgiri. A Mysore daily brought this to the notice of Mysore Urban Development authority that declared the house as a piece of national heritage and forbade the demolition. The government bought the property for 24m rupees and allotted around 3.45m rupees for its restoration. Soon the government began the work towards restoration of the house. The plan, as told by the Commissioner of Mysore City Corporation, Dr C. G. Betsurmath was that "the restored house would be turned into a museum, along the lines of Shakespeare's house at Stratford-upon-Avon in England, which attracts tourists from all over the world". What is most important to note is the following observation of conservation architect and a self-confessed fan of R. K. Narayan, RajnishWattas: "the need is to 'restore' – not 'renovate'." Thus every possible effort is being made to keep intact the original house, its ambience and feel as it was in the days of R. K. Narayan.

The house turned into museum houses memorabilia such as the study table on which R.K. Narayan would write, the sofa on which he would often sit, his belongings such as his clothes, three pairs of spectacles, books that he owned and those written by him, the medals (Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan), the awards, recognitions and honorary degrees, and some rare photographs of R.K. Narayan and his family and friends. The museum displays the plaques that reveal succinctly various facets of R.K. Narayan's life – as a writer, a friend, a husband and father, etc. Each one of these plaques has a different story to tell under its distinct heading – 'A Marvel Storyteller', 'The Soul of Malgudi', 'Awards and Honours', 'I am giving you trouble', 'Remembering R.K. Narayan', 'R.K. Narayan: Restoring the house of one of India's most beloved writers', to name a few.

Summary

The irony of British rule

Although the British would have said their presence in India is helping India by providing them order, that is clearly the opposite of their real effect. By imposing Western ways on communities with a delicate balance, they make India into an impoverished nation with in-fighting. They drain their resources in the name of growth, but Swami sees that these are lies, and so he marches against Britain.

Rajam, the authoritarian

Rajam hates authority, because his dad is a police officer with a pretty narrow view of justice, and as a child, he has been chronically disenfranchised by his father, so that he has an ironic crisis—he both needs authority because of the order that it brings, and he resents being controlled whatsoever. He even encourages Swami to rebel at school, but Rajam is also the most controlling of the friends.

The irony of school and cricket

In a way, the moment when Swami wants to meet his friends but has to stay in school, that moment signifies something ironic about his personality. Although he is very different than Rajam, they actually do both resist authority, except that when Swami throws his cane, it is clear what he wants: He wants to be with his friends playing outside in nature. The fact that school prohibits this is ironic to him, since he feels it is obviously better for him to play than to be a prisoner of the school.

The irony of rejection

Because Rajam resents his own personality, he rejects his friends (because he reminds himself of his father who also uses authority as a tool for getting what he wants). In a way, he says, "You guys aren't worth my respect," but that is an ironic message, because what the behavior really signifies is that Rajam himself doesn't believe he is worth their friendship, and he is resentful at them for that, as if they are patronizing (demeaning) him.

The irony of adventure

Is it really an adventure without the ironic addition of fear? Because Swami runs away from school and into nature, he becomes lost, eventually finding himself in Malgudi. But the irony is clear. In a moment of panic, he decided to take a very urgent adventure that caused him to become lost. He accidentally turned his real life into a metaphor for his mental and emotional life, and by finding himself in real life, he also finds a kind of emotional resolve for his panic.

R.K. Narayan was a sensitive soul who could feel the pain of others as much as he did his own. When T.S. Satyan, the veteran photographer once confessed his disappointment at multiple rejections of his submissions by editors, R.K. Narayan could at once relate to it, and in all his

simplicity and unassuming manner said, "That's part of the game. I have also had my share of these 'Editor regrets." And further: "Don't become despondent. Freelancing is not easy. If you persist with it with dedication, success will come your way someday."Narayan took a genuine interest in people as is evident from T.S Satyan's observation that Narayan "moved with unselfconscious ease with people from all strata of society - hawkers, lawyers and their clerks, printers, shopkeepers, students and professors."

This was R.K. Narayan - unconscious of his own genius, success or social and economic status - essentially and first and foremost a benevolent human being. R.K. Narayan's basic simplicity is seen in the fact that though Narayan had friends overseas and his circle of influence was wide, even on the international scene, his tastes and pleasures remained rooted in his native place. T.S Satyan narrates an anecdote from Narayan's life in which Narayan visits a New York cafeteria and orders coffee. He is taken aback when the server asks him, "Black or white?" But Narayan says that he wants it neither black nor white, but brown, which ought to be the colour of 'honest coffee' made in south India. A remarkable aspect of Narayan's life was his friendship with people whom he referred to as his 'constant friends'. N. Ram observes in one of his interviews that R.K. Narayan "valued friendship more than anything else".

Narayan's own words on friendship that he believes in friendship as a theme, and that just friendship by itself is an achievement are extremely pertinent in modern day context when relationships have gradually begun to lose their value and significance in the lives of many. Narayan's own friendships remained steadfast over long periods of time. A few of long-time friends of Narayan whom N. Ram mentions are M.S. Subbulakshmi who knew Narayan since 1930s and her husband, Sadasivam, M. N. Srinivas, the sociologist, Veena Doreswamy Iyengar from whom Narayan took music lessons, Sarad Singh who introduced Narayan to JawaharLal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Natwar Singh, C.N. Narsimhan, and Graham Greene, the British writer with whom Narayan's friendship was called 'legendary' by N. Ram. It comes as no surprise then that a dedicated, conscientious and versatile writer lie R.K. Narayan was honoured with numerous national and international awards.

One of the major recognitions is the huge national and international readership that his works enjoy as well as his works being translated into world's major languages. Narayan was conferred Padma Bhushan in 1964 and Padma Vibhushan in 2000. He was also nominated for Nobel Prize in Literature multiple times. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 for his fiction, *The Guide*, National Citizen's Awards in 1961, Taraknath Das Foundation Distinguished Award in 1982, Arthur Christopher Award in 1980, and Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1987. In 1981, Narayan was elected as the honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Various universities such as University of Mysore (1976), Delhi University (1973), and University of Leeds, UK (1967) recognized Narayan's literary excellence and contribution by conferring upon him honorary doctorate. Narayan was nominated to upper house of Indian Parliament starting in 1989 for his contribution to Indian Literature. R.K. Narayan was a prolific writer whose works covered varied genres. Narayan was a simple man with simple pleasures of life – long walks, long and hearty conversations with family and friends, a cup of coffee, rice and curd, and a keen observation of people and things around him. He loved to be with the members of his joint family that consisted of his mother, Gnanambal, his brothers and their wives, his nieces and nephews. Though he did not have much to buy from market for himself, he would make sure to carry little presents for his nieces and nephews such as plastic toys, clothes, jewelry, chocolates, etc.

One of his favourite pastimes was to play with children at home and narrating stories to them. No wonder R.K. Narayan was deeply affected by untimely demise of Hema, his daughter, though he tried to put it behind a façade of stoicity. As his close friend, N. Ram says, "He appeared exceptionally calm and composed, but later admitted that he was shattered inside. He did not want to see the body; he wanted to preserve the memory of having spent a lot of time with her the previous evening." On regaining his composure, Narayan tried to come to terms with the reality by remarking: "We are all in the queue, but she (Hema) jumped the line."Yet, as a loving father who wished to preserve the memory of her daughter and immortalize her, Narayan dedicated his fifteenth and last novel, *Grandmother's Tale* to Hema who had passed away of cancer.

Humour

Rajam and Mani

The narration of school incidents is full of fun, which are entirely natural. When Mani and Rajam quarrel with each other, Swami becomes mediator between them. Swami conveys Mani's messages

to Rajam and Rajam's messages to Mani. Due to their diplomatic relations, quarrel takes place between Mani and Rajam. Humour emerges when we see that two boys Rajam and Mani employ Swami as their mediator in fact they are very close to each other on the ground. This is illustrated by the following:

> "When the work for the day was over, Swaminathan, Mani, and Rajam, adjourned to a secluded spot to say what was in their minds. Swaminathan stood between them and acted as the medium of communication. They were so close that they could have heard each other even if they had spoken in whispers. But it was a matter of form between enemies to communicate through a medium Mani faced Swaminathan steadily and asked, 'Are you a man?' Rajam flared up and shouted, 'Which dog doubts it' Swaminathan turned to Mani and said ferociously, 'Which dirty dogdoubts it?'"
>
> "Have you the courage to prove that you are a man?" asked Mani Swaminathan turned to Rajam and repeated it. How?'
>
> 'How?' repeated Swaminathan to Mani.
>
> 'Meet me at the river, near Nallappa's Grove, tomorrow evening.'
>
> '-Near Nallappa's Grove', Swaminathan was pleased to echo.
>
> 'What for?' asked Rajam.
>
> 'To see if you can break my head.'
>
> 'Oh, to pieces,' said Rajam.

Cart Driver

Mani, Rajam and Swaminathan act like police inspectors and hold a cart driver on the charge of trespassing. They ordered the boy to get down, and said that they were the police, and that the culvert was weak, they will not permit him to move on, unless he showed them his pass. The boy had no pass, he was frightened, and begged and prayed to them to let him move on. They asked him a number of questions:

> 'What is your name? asked Rajam
>
> Karuppan answered the boy.
>
> Age?
>
> I don't know, sir.
>
> You don't know? Swami, write hundred, said Rajam.
> No sir, no sir, I am not a hundred.
>
> Mind your business and hold your tongue. You are a hundred. I will kill you if you say no. What is your bullock's name? I don't know, sir.
>
> Swami, write "Karuppan" again.
>
> Sir, that is my name, not the bullock's.'

They ignored this and Swaminathan wrote Karuppan against the name of the bullock. They finally sign off on a paper and hand it to the cart boy and ask him to leave.

Cricket

The incidents of cricket talk and preparations for the cricket match are very humorous. They are talking about the different cricket players and watching the cricket players' pictures. There is a great excitement for the naming the club. Every member of the team suggesting various names such as: Friends Eleven, Jumping stars, Excelsiors, Champion Eleven, and finally the simple Malgudi Cricket Club because of its irresistible magical associations with the M.C.C. The boys are talking about the playing bat. One of them says that the bat is wonderful and heavy. It seems that there are springs inside the bat so that when ball touches it, the ball flies in the air. These non-entities called 'M.C.C. Malgudi' write to the sports dealers in Madras—the language and the easy confidence behind which there is neither cash nor credit, prompting the dealers to honour the letter. To their great delight, the much awaited letter from Messrs Binns did at last arrives along with a large catalogue. However, still it was not clear that whether Messrs Binns would send them the ordered items. In the reply letter, the firm had asked to pay 25% of their order as an advance but

the three friends failed to understand the meaning of the letter. Then they concluded that the letter was sent by mistake to Rajam whereas in reality it was meant for somebody else. Hence, with the funny covering letter it was returned to them:

> "We are very sorry that you sent me somebody's letter. We are returning this somebody's letter. Please send our things immediately (Narayan: 2010, 141)."

Swami and Father

Through the distinct perceptions of a distinct age, Narayan creates comedy scenes in his novels. The perceptions of a boy differ from the perceptions of the adults. Narayan has presented his observations; in the episode in which Swami's father tries to teach him through which his awareness of incongruities and discrepancies is clearly seen. The conversation between Swami and his father is given below: "How many days is it since you have touched your books?" father asked as he blew off the fine layers of dust on Swaminathan's books, and cleared the web that an industrious spider was weaving between a corner of the table and the pile of books. Swaminathan viewed this question as a gross breach of promise.

> "Should I read when I have no school?"
>
> "Do you think you have passed the B.A.?" Father asked.
>
> "I mean, father when the school is closed, when there is no examination, even then should I read?"
>
> "What a question. You must read."
>
> "But father you said before the examinations that I needn't read after they were over. Even Rajam does not read" (Narayan: 2010, 58)

To make his argue strong, Swami cites the example of Rajam. He says to his father that Rajam, the cleverest student of our class he does not read during the vacation. At the same time he all of sudden he remembers Rajam's complaint of his tuition teacher who comes for two hours a day thrice a week.

Rajam has to tolerate his home tutor who pesters him for two hours even in the vacation. However, father cannot utter a single word against his argument but he stands over Swami. Father orders him to blow out the dust over his books and to clean his table. As Swami receives orders from his father, he executed the order within no time. He starts to blow out dust over his books. He carefully catches the industrious spider, takes it to the window and throws it outside the window. After throwing spider outside the window, he observes it for a while. It is swinging from a strand that gleams in a hundred nice and delicate tints. His father gets angry on him and says will you waste the whole day to throw out the spider. All of sudden, an idea comes in his mind that he wants a companion like spider so he does not throw it out but secretly keeps the spider inside his pocket and he pretends it by shaking his hands outside the window. He returns to his father and resumes his duty.

In the other incident, when his father gives an arithmetic lesson, Narayan's observation is clearly seen. After half an hour, Swami sits in his father's room with slate and pencil. His father puts a sum before him by saying that Rama wants to earn fifteen annas from ten mangoes, which he has with him. Krishna wants to buy only four mangoes. How much will Rama demand form Krishna for four mangoes? To this question, Swami gazes and gazes with a strange sight but he cannot get any answer. He reads the sum often and often and every time he receives a new meaning of his reading. He behaves as if he were trapped in a maze test. At one hand, he thinks to solve the answer of the given sum whereas on the other hand, he thinks about the mangoes and his mouth begins to water. He thinks about Rama that why he wants fifteen annas for his ten mangoes. What type of person Rama is!

He now compares Rama with Shankar and thinks that if he is like Shankar no one can help him to make fifteen annas from his ten mangoes. Further, he compares Krishna with the Pea and shows uncountable sympathy for him. His father was reading a newspaper when Swami is thinking about mangoes, Rama and Krishna. His father demands solution of the sum from Swami. Swami puts a question that whether mangoes are ripe or not. Set in a fictional town in South India about 1930, *Swami and Friends* is defined by the pressures and complexities of British colonial rule over India.

While the book's events revolve around common childhood trials and tribulations, the personal experiences of the protagonist and his friends are colored by their political context, even when the

characters themselves have little understanding of it. By examining British colonial rule through the lens of an ordinary boy's relatable childhood, R.K. Narayan demonstrates the pervasiveness and subtlety of this political structure's power. Swami's story shows that the impact of colonial rule is present in every corner of Indian life during this era, and that no individual's personal life can be truly separate from colonialism's profound, sometimes contradictory effects. The lighthearted conflicts of the book's early chapters underscore Narayan's point that that colonialism is present even in the innocent misadventures of children, although it may seem entertaining, inconsequential, or even impressive in their eyes.

Narayan first addresses the influence of colonialism in the book's opening chapter, when Swami and his classmates attend scripture class with Mr. Ebenezer, their fanatical Christian teacher. Narayan notes that the students sometimes enjoy the class because of the "stirring pictures" they imagine based on Biblical tales. For Swami and his friends, the Christianity imposed on them at the mission school is initially a source of idle entertainment rather than a threat or something to contemplate deeply.

Yet Swami soon perceives the way that Ebenezer's Christian teachings conflict with his own Hindu beliefs, and protests against his teacher. However, the consequences of this conflict are trivial; the class enjoys watching their teacher get scolded by the Mission School Headmaster and Swami is simply happy to escape punishment. Again, even in this direct conflict Swami is primarily occupied by childish concerns like impressing his friends and pleasing his father, and colonialism remains a backdrop that affects Swami without occupying much of his attention. The budding friendship between Swami, Mani and their new classmate Rajam again illustrates the ways that the young boys take existing power structures for granted.

Although Mani and Rajam at first intend to fight with each other, that animosity quickly dissolves into mutual admiration, leaving the boys untroubled by their initial reliance on violent dominance to solve their problems. When Swami finds out that Rajam's father is the Police Superintendent, he is impressed and excited to be associated with such power, again demonstrating his childish inability to reflect on the value and legitimacy of the powers around him.

As Swami's story progresses, however, the political context around him increasingly intrudes on his contained understanding of his life. Swami begins to take actions that appear outwardly political, but he still experiences these events in a personal, self-centered way. By blending Swami's still-childish perspective with large-scale political events, Narayan again fuses the personal with the political and illustrates the impossibility of separating them, particularly within a context of colonialism. Swami, Mani, and Rajam try out the experience of being in power themselves by bullying a young boy named Karuppan and saying that they are "the Government Police out to catch humbugs like you."

The three boys make unreasonable demands and frighten the boy, but seem not to reflect on the effects of their actions. It seems, then, that Swami and his friends develop an unconscious tendency to act out the oppression they have experienced. Shortly thereafter, Swami and Mani inadvertently participate in a public protest against English oppression of Indian peasants, and become immediately emotionally attached to the cause. Swami "resolve[s] to boycott English goods" and burns his own cap "with a feeling that he was saving the country." At this point, Swami's emotional reaction to the notion of English oppression becomes clear, but he is not yet able to connect that feeling with his own actions more generally. When Swami finds himself caught up in a school boycott the next day, he participates actively in the increasingly dangerous event but thinks mostly of the fun he's having rather than his behavior's political meaning, as when he realizes happily that "there were many glass panes untouched yet."

It is only when Swami witnesses Rajam's father "grimly ticking off seconds before giving orders for massacre" that he begins to gain awareness of the political tension present in his own life. Narayan notes that Swami "had unconsciously become defiant (rebellious)" through his new experience of protest. It is this subconscious change that leads Swami to run away from the Mission School, for the first time renouncing a major aspect of colonial oppression in his own life. Though Swami and his friends gain some degree of political consciousness over the course of the story, their lives continue to be circumscribed by colonial power in ways that are largely invisible to them. Narayan illustrates this reality especially vividly through the boys' experiences forming a cricket team.

By highlighting the prominent and complicated role that a quintessentially English activity plays in the friends' lives, Narayan demonstrates that individuals living under colonialism often have no choice but to tolerate—and sometimes even embrace—the cultures of their colonizers. Although Swami, Mani, and Rajam are initially excited about starting a cricket team, they quickly discover

that the logistics are more complicated than they expected, and Swami in particular worries about government registration and taxes. Reflecting on these difficulties, Rajam has "a momentary sympathy for Gandhi; no wonder he was dead against the government."

By equating the boys' seemingly trivial problems with Gandhi's opposition to the government, Narayan humorously points to the oppressive presence of the government in every Indian's life, no matter how slight it might seem. The formation of the cricket team initially serves as a way for Swami and Rajam to repair their friendship after their conflict over what Rajam calls Swami's "political activities," but eventually, the cricket team is also responsible for the breakup of Swami and Rajam's friendship, when Rajam is unable to forgive Swami for missing the match. By using the game to both unite and divide the story's protagonists, Narayan indicates the extent to which the characters may be at the mercy of English influence, even as they devote themselves to an English sport with seeming freedom.

Political forces work their way into the personal goals and relationships of Swami and his friends even during their leisure time, again demonstrating that no private life can be truly independent from politics in the context of a colonized state. Mr. Ebenezar, the scripture master, and while attempting to teach Christianity, he's the opposite of Christ-like, an angry fanatic, and derides the native's religion—Where did he get this example from Christ? Swami, the only Brahmin boy at the school (this is a reference to the caste or varna in Hinduism from which priests are selected, and it seems to be the highest) asks questions (showing resistance to teachings or primarily the teacher), and is physically abused by the teacher. Rajam represents a super colonial power represented by the material wealth mentioned, including living in a bungalow and his behavior – not displaying quiet confident as others, but authoritarian, commanding, the way he treats servants, etc. He even makes his friends wait while he's doing nothing just because he's seen his father do that.

He even plays a mediator role to reconcile Swami and Mani with the other three. Mani as a representation of local, indigenous power and resistance, but who is, nevertheless, tamed before a "foreign" super power per se. Thus, local authority is still inferior to colonial, British authority. From chapter 11 on, we notice more direct colonialism references and reactions from the locals toward the foreign power that had come upon them. The author doesn't seem to condemn it per se or is not very candid about it. Though there's some innocence there, present in the boys, there some violent behavior (plotting to kidnap, beat up, kill, etc.) that is quite unsettling. Rajam, who is a symbol of colonialism himself, does not seem to see anything wrong with Europeans—was it because his father had a high position? Or because of his wealth? The other link to colonialism that seemed to be really big in India was the game of cricket—they seem to be able to boycott anything else but this: the theme of identity seems to play a role. Swami tries to explain the game of cricket to his grandmother, but she has no understanding of it—her life and ideas were part of old India, and this is a new one.

The Portraiture of Adolescence

Swami is a paradox throughout the narration. R.K.Narayan does a wonderful job in bringing out his emotional pysche. While Swami sincerely and innocently believes in the sanctity of his friendship with Rajam, Rajam remains aloof and impersonal. Swami's relationship with his peer group is very complex as so-called 'friends'. The novel is full of irony and subtle wit. And also disturbing. Friendship at that age is nothing more than peer pressure and this is a fact that Swami cannot fathom. He tries to impress his friends and peers. He acts impulsively and loses control of himself on more than one occasion. He gets little emotional support at home or from his peers. School is a place where life is tough.

Constant pressure from all directions finally tells on Swami and he bends. Narayan also gently laughs at the world in which Swami lives. The paradoxes of pre-independence India, the alternating aloof and passionate nature of the people, the confusions that encompass the mind of a child in such a volatile environment: all those things are brought out beautifully. Narayan takes a dig at the educational system too as envisioned by the British masters. The use of the cane, the degrading and humiliating nature of the 'stand-up-on-the-desk' punishment, the heavy workload are all shown up by Narayan for what they are: a cruel way of education which mass-produces unimaginative clerks and subordinate staff to serve in the British administrative machine. The real irony of this is seen when Swami runs away from the Board High school and feels nostalgic about his old school: the Albert Mission. In the final analysis, *Swami and Friends* is more than the story of a child. It is the story of a generation of Indians who are born and brought up in the shadow of the British colonial Raj and who inherit the confusions of the cultural and social conflict.

This is best seen where Swami is seen alternatively admiring and envying Rajam: the rich boy who walks to school dressed like a 'European'. Swami is caught between two worlds as represented by Mani and Rajam. Rajam who stands for all that is posh and urbane, smooth and unemotional, well educated yet hard and ruthless in a way. The other end is Mani who is rough, untamed, naive, emotional and yet loyal. The masterly irony is seen because these two characters not only meet but (in Swami's eyes) they also apparently get along well. To the end, Swami cannot understand the difference and hence the pathos in the final scene. Narayan passes no judgment on anybody. He presents Swami for what he is and also the world around him for what it is. His style is smooth and simple.

His sentences are crisp, yet unconventional. His use of certain 'Indianisms' might alienate the foreign reader, yet they convey his meaning adequately. The apparent discontinuity of narration at places serves to enhance, rather than dispel, the overall effect. The cultural aspect is very visible throughout: for example Swami's fearful respect towards his father, his closeness to his grandmother, his turbulent relationships at school and his total emotional isolation in spite of physical proximity to so many people are so typical of Indian life where visible demonstration of love and care are seen as signs of weakness and a thing of shame. Throughout Swami grovels in darkness around him and yet does not see himself as being in the dark: that is the final irony and the one the cuts deepest.

Key words/ Glossary

Succinctly – expressed clearly and in a few words

Ponder – to think about something carefully for a period of time

Veteran – a person who has a lot of experience in a particular area or activity

Perfectionist – a person who likes to do things perfectly and is not satisfied with anything less

Penchant – a special liking for something

Prolific – (of an artist) producing many works

Legendary – very famous and talked about a lot by people, especially in a way that shows admiration

Manuscript – a copy of a book, piece of music, etc. before it has been printed

Fount – the place where something important comes from

Transition – process or period of changing from one state to another

Locale – a place where something happens

Conjugal – connected with marriage

Demolition – to pull or knock down a building

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

Q.1. Name the international university that conferred honorary doctorate upon R.K. Narayan.

i) University of Leeds
ii) University of Cambridge
iii) University of Oxford
iv) University of Lancanshire

Q.2. Which of the following is a work of fiction of Narayan?

i) My Days
ii) The Ramayana
iii) Malgudi Days
iv) The Guide

Q.3. Which of the following is the work of mythology of R.K. Narayan.

i) Gods, Demons and others
ii) A Tiger for Malgudi
iii) The Reluctant Guru
iv) The Man-Eater of Malgudi

Q.4. In the name R.K. Narayan, what does R. stand for?

i) Rama
ii) Rasipuram
iii) Ratnagiri
iv) Reddy

Q.5. Where was R.K. Narayan born?

i) Purasawalkam, Madras
ii) Calcutta
iii) Mysore
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.6. Which home of R.K. Narayan has been converted into a museum?

i) Yadavgiri, Mysore
ii) Madras
iii) Laxmipuram
iv) Ratnagiri

Q.7. In which year was Padma Bhishan conferred upon R.K. Narayan.

i) 1965
ii) 2000
iii) 1964
iv) 1960

Q.8. Who was R.K. Narayan's friend who was the editor of *Frontline*?

i) T.S. Satyan
ii) N.Ram
iii) R. Purna
iv) Chandru

Q.9. Which of the following is the short story collection of R.K. Narayan.

i) The Guide
ii) Malgudi Days
iii) The Dark Room
iv) A Story Teller's World

Q.10. Who was the international author who got R.K. Narayan's novel *Swami and Friends* published?

i) Graham Greene
ii) N. Ram
iii) E.M. Forster
iv) T.S. Satyan

Review Questions

1) Discuss the element of the irony and humour of childhood visible in *Swami and Friends*?
2) How can you substantiate the viewpoint that this story is Swamy's 'evolution of self'?
3) How did R.K. Narayan's the portraiture of adolescence is visible in *Swamy and Friends*?
4) How Narayan established Indian writing in English as an independent genre?
5) Discuss Narayan as a writer representing post-colonial India?

Answers

1	i	6	i
2	iv	7	iii
3	i	8	ii
4	ii	9	ii

5 i 10 i

Further/Suggested Readings

- http://www.rigzin.freeservers.com/rknarayan.htm#book
- http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1914/19140670.htm
- http://inwww.rediff.com/news/2001/may/15spec.htm
- http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl1811/18110040.htm
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VukssWa9C8
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahwG-VwxWU
- *"R K Narayan". The Daily Telegraph. London. 14 May 2001. Archived from the original on 26 July 2013. Retrieved 25 July 2009.*
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Unit 06: Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To compare the historical trauma and its after-effects in the contemporary society
- To employ the historical context in reference to the text discussed
- To illustrate the various writing narrative styles in the light of the selected text
- To create an insight about the time of partition

Introduction

Khushwant Singh grew up in the Muslim-majority village of Hadali, which was then part of British India, and was born into a wealthy Sikh family. His first language was Punjabi, but he was also fluent in Urdu and grew up reading Urdu poets' work. Later in life, he became a well-known Urdu poet translator. Singh graduated from Government College in Lahore with a Bachelor of Arts in 1934 and went on to King's College in London to study law in 1938. He began practising law in Lahore on the eve of World War II and continued until India's partition in 1947, when he relocated his family to Delhi and accepted a job as a press attaché with the Indian Foreign Service.

He worked in London and Ottawa during his four years in the foreign service, and he also began writing fiction. In 1950, he published his first book of short stories, The Mark of Vishnu, and Other Stories, in London. He started a career as a journalist with All India Radio the following year, and spent the next two decades serving as an editor for leading Indian publications while continuing to write fiction. He was a member of India's upper house of parliament from 1980 to 1986 and a supporter of Indira Gandhi's administration. After Indian troops assaulted and killed hundreds of Sikhs at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, he dropped his support for the prime minister.

Singh is also known for his two-volume work A History of the Sikhs, 1469-1964 (vol. 1, 1963; vol. 2, 1966) and The Company of Women, in addition to Train to Pakistan (1999). For his work in journalism and fiction, he won several awards, including a lifetime achievement award for his contributions to Indian literature. In 1939, Singh married Kaval, who died a few years before him. They had two children: Rahul, a son, and Mala, a daughter. At the age of 99, Singh passed away.

CONTEXT OF HISTORY

A Train to Pakistan is set in 1947, the year India gained independence from Britain and the partition of India resulted in the creation of Pakistan. The Partition, which sought to separate the nations along religious lines and initially resulted in widespread instability and bloodshed, displaced an estimated 14 million people. The years following World War II saw several nations restructured and the international system realigned as a result of the war's devastation. The Marshall Plan, a reorganisation proposal spearheaded by US Secretary of State George C. Marshall, was launched in 1947.

More than $15 billion was allocated to aid in the reconstruction of war-torn towns, factories, and infrastructure in Western Europe. To fund the war effort, the United Kingdom had to relinquish some of its colonies, including India. Britain's reputation as a superpower was severely harmed as a result of this action. In its position, the United States became the most dominant Western country, competing for foreign control with the Soviet Union. During and after the Cold War, the United States assumed the position of defender of Western democracy.

Subject Matter

Following WWII and at the start of India's decolonization, A Train to Pakistan was written alongside other literary works featuring the voices of former colonial subjects. Postcolonial English Literature critiqued and undermined imperial ideals by using the vocabulary of the former coloniser, which had once been an instrument of obedience. Aimé Césaire's essay Discourse on Colonialism (1950), Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958), and V.S. Naipaul's Mystic Masseur (1957) and A House for Mr. Biswas (1958) are all popular works from this era (1961). Singh also contributed to Indo-Anglian literature, or Indian literature written in English, as well as other genres.

The movement started in the nineteenth century, but it became more common in the 1930s. V.S. Naipaul, R.K. Narayan, who was mentored by British author Graham Greene, and contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Rohinton Mistry are among the well-known Indo-Anglian writers. Like Singh, they often deal with corruption, the caste system, and the complexities of religious life in India in their work.

Key Facts

- Full Title: *Train to Pakistan*
- When Written: 1950s
- Where Written: New Delhi, India
- When Published: 1956
- Literary Period: Postcolonial English Literature; Postwar Literature
- Genre: Historical Fiction
- Setting: Punjab, India
- Climax: A train arrives in Mano Majra from Pakistan, carrying the corpses of dead Sikhs.
- Antagonist: Malli, Religious bigotry
- Point of View: Third-person omniscient

Extra Credit

Iqbal, Muhammad. "Muhammad Iqbal" is not only the fictitious name given to Iqbal Singh by the subinspector, but also the name of a real-life poet and philosopher who was instrumental in the founding of Pakistan.

Indian National Army is an Indian military force. The Indian National Army, also known as the "Azad Hind Fauj," was a liberation army founded by Indian revolutionary and military leader Subhas Chandra Bose in collaboration with Japanese forces. Bose trained about 40,000 troops in Southeast Asia with the support of the invading Japanese army. The army, however, was defeated by Allied forces and forced to withdraw without the assistance of an air force. The Indian National Army served as a liberation army in Myanmar and former Indochina for a time, but after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, it ceased all operations.

Summary

Ten million Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs leave their homes on both sides of the new Pakistan-India frontier in the summer of 1947. Northern India is in turmoil, but the remote village of Mano Majra is at peace for the time being. Mano Majra, a teeny-tiny town with only three brick buildings—a gurdwara where Meet Singh serves as resident bhai; a mosque headed by the mullah and weaver Imam Baksh; and the Hindu moneylender Lala Ram Lal's home—becomes the scene of a notorious dacoity, culminating in Ram Lal's murder. The robbers pass by the home of former robber Juggut Singh, known as Mano Majra's most dangerous man and affectionately known as "Jugga," as they escape Ram Lal's estate.

To implicate Jugga in the robbery, one of the robbers throws stolen bangles into his courtyard. When they hear the shots fired during the dacoity, Jugga is having a tryst with Nooran. While laying in the dark, the couple notices the five robbers passing by on their way to the river. Malli, the gang's chief, is recognised by Jugga. The magistrate and deputy commissioner, Hukum Chand, arrives in Mano Majra the day before the dacoity. He inquires of the police subinspector if there has been any conflict between the religious communities, to which the latter responds that there have been no "convoys of dead Sikhs," as there have been in a nearby area.

Mano Majrans may be unaware that the British have left India or that it has been partitioned. Some people are familiar with Mahatma Gandhi, but the subinspector suspects that everyone is familiar

with Mohammed Ali Jinnah. When Chand asks if there are any bad guys in the neighbourhood, the subinspector mentions Jugga but claims that Nooran keeps him out of trouble. Chand inquires about having a prostitute for the evening, and the subinspector tells him that he will have his entertainment before returning to the police station. An elderly woman and a young girl dressed in a black studded sari arrive at the rest house later that evening. Haseena is the name of the young lady. Chand is alone with her when he hears one of the dacoity's gunshots.

The train station is packed the next morning. Twelve armed police officers and the subinspector disembark when the train from Delhi to Lahore arrives. A young man emerges from the train's other end. He is being examined by the police party. His demeanour suggests that he is out of place in the village. The young man approaches Meet Singh at the gurdwara and asks if he can stay for a few days. The priest agrees and inquires about the young man's identity, which is Iqbal. Iqbal is identified as "Iqbal Singh" by Meet Singh, who believes he is a Sikh.

Meet Singh discovers that Jugga has been arrested for the dacoity and that the police have discovered some of the stolen money and broken bangles in Jugga's courtyard. He claims that Jugga has fled, implying that the budmash has committed the crime. The priest is disturbed by Jugga robbing his own village, not by the murder.

Iqbal later encounters Banta Singh (the village lambardar) and a Muslim man at the gurdwara (implied to be Imam Baksh). The visitors praise the British and inquire as to why they have left India, which irritates Iqbal, who despises the British and asks the men if they want to be free.

According to Imam Baksh, independence belongs to the learned. The peasants would simply move from being English slaves to being slaves of educated Indians or Pakistanis. After the men depart, Iqbal doubts that he can do anything in a land where people's heads seem to be full of "cobwebs." He questions himself as a leader and believes he should make a grand effort to prove himself, such as going on a hunger strike or being imprisoned. He is arrested the next morning. Jugga is also detained by ten constables who surround his home with rifles.

Iqbal and Jugga are led away. The cops, on the other hand, believe the men are innocent. The subinspector inquires about Iqbal with the head constable.

He was the same guy who had gotten off the train with them the day before. After that, the subinspector goes to Hukum Chand and informs him of the arrests. Later, he strips Iqbal and discovers that he is Muslim because he is circumcised. As a result, he concludes that Iqbal is a Muslim League member. Chand instructs the officers to name Iqbal "Mohammed Iqbal" on the arrest warrant. He then orders the subinspector to obtain the dacoits' names from Jugga, and he makes no objections to the subinspector's suggestion of torture.

The train schedule is removed in early September. One morning, a train from Pakistan arrives, but no one gets off. It seems to be a ghost train. Officers then ask the villagers for all of their wood and kerosene in return for money, which they gladly provide. A wind blows in at sunset, bringing the scent of kerosene, wood, and burnt flesh. Hukum, huh?

Chand spends the day watching men, women, and children's bodies being pulled from the train and set ablaze. He makes an effort not to think about them. He orders whisky from his servant and invites the same performers back to the rest house. For the sake of warmth, Chand holds Haseena overnight, but they do not have sex. The subinspector pays a visit to the rest house the next morning.

He informs Chand that a group of forty or fifty Sikhs has arrived in town. Chand inquires about the Ram Lal murder case. Jugga has named members of his former gang, including Malli, but was not present when they were arrested. Malli and his companions are Sikh or Muslim, Chand inquires. Chand wishes they were Muslim, despite the fact that they are Sikh. This, combined with the assumption that Iqbal is a Muslim Leaguer, would convince the Sikhs in the village to expel their Muslim neighbours. Chand instructs the subinspector to release Malli and his gang and then request trucks from the Muslim refugee camp commander to evacuate the Mano Majra Muslims.

After a week in jail alone, Iqbal is assigned to Jugga's house, which is now occupied by Malli and his gang. Iqbal asks Jugga if he killed Ram Lal, and Jugga denies it; the banian gave him money to pay lawyers when his father, Alam Singh, was in prison. Iqbal believes the police will release Jugga, but Jugga knows that the cops do whatever they want. The subinspector arrives at the police station in Chundunnugger by mid-morning. He informs the chief constable that he wants Malli's men released in front of the villagers. The subinspector then inquires as to whether Sultana and his gang have been seen. They are in Pakistan, according to the head constable, and everybody knows it.

The head constable is instructed by the subinspector to act as if he is unaware of the situation. Then he orders the head constable to inquire among the villagers as to what "the Muslim Leaguer Iqbal" was up to in Mano Majra. Iqbal is a Sikh who cut his hair in England, according to the head constable, who is perplexed. The subinspector strongly advises the head constable to believe Iqbal is a Muslim League member called "Mohammed Iqbal." The head constable returns Malli and his men to Mano Majra, releases them, and questions the crowd as directed by the subinspector. The

villagers are taken aback by Iqbal's suggestion that "an urban babu" has no excuse to commit a crime.

The ruse, on the other hand, succeeds in arousing suspicion; Muslims and Sikhs alike have lost faith in each other. A party of Sikhs gathers at Banta Singh's house that night. The lambardar advises the Muslims to seek shelter in a refugee camp before things calm down. When the Muslims are away, the village will look after their belongings. Imam Baksh returns home and informs Nooran of their impending departure. She does not want to go to Pakistan, but they will be thrown out if they do not leave willingly. Nooran goes to Jugga's house to see if Juggut's mother is there. The elderly lady is irritated to see Nooran when she learns that she is two months pregnant.

Juggut's mother claims that once Jugga is released from prison, she will make certain that he is reunited with Nooran. Nooran expresses his gratitude and returns home. A convoy of trucks bound for Pakistan arrives early in the morning. Muslims are ordered to leave their homes and board the vehicles, taking only what they can bring, according to a Muslim officer. The Muslim officer rushes everyone into the vans, while a Sikh officer appoints Malli as the custodian of the Muslims' belongings. Malli and his gang, along with the Sikh refugees, ransack the homes of Muslims. The Sutlej River, meanwhile, is rising. The bodies of men, women, and girls, all with stab wounds, float by Banta Singh and some villagers.

They know they are dealing with the survivors of a massacre. The villagers go to the gurdwara for evening prayers that evening. Soldiers from the Sikh faith join. One is a teen-aged boy leader who encourages Sikh men to kill Muslims by luring them in by telling them that their manliness depends on it. After that, the Sikhs intend to slaughter the Muslim refugees who will board the train after sunset. The Sikhs will tie a rope across the railway bridge's first span.

All who is sitting on the roof will be swept down as the train passes. Banta Singh informs the cops about the scheme. Hukum Chand has become frustrated with the rising pile of bodies at the police station. The subinspector informs him that all of Chundunnugger's Muslims have been evacuated and will be travelling to Pakistan by rail, prompting Chand to remember Haseena. When Chand demands to know why the subinspector did not inform the refugee camp commander about the train plan, the subinspector responds that if the train does not depart, all of the camp's refugees will be killed. Chand arranges for the release of Jugga and Iqbal and writes Iqbal's name as "Iqbal Singh" in the official documents, explaining that no political party will send an educated Muslim to a Sikh village to preach peace.

Jugga discovers that all the Muslims have vanished, that Malli is the custodian of their lands, and that Malli's gang has risen in tandem with the thirst for Muslim blood. Meanwhile, Iqbal considers returning to Delhi and announcing his detention as part of a "Anglo-American imperialist plot." He imagines himself as a hero and considers whether or not he can intervene with the murderous crowd. He decides that the risk to his life posed by Indians is not worth it. Instead, he settles down with a glass of whisky and a good night's sleep. Jugga goes to the gurdwara that night and asks Meet Singh to recite a prayer for him. Jugga notices Iqbal sleeping and calls out to him on his way out.

When Iqbal wakes up, he asks Meet Singh to say "Sat Sri Akal" on his behalf. Hukum Chand bemoans the fact that he let Haseena return to Chundunnugger. He would not care what happened if she were with him. He is less confident in his capacity as magistrate, and he feels dreadful when he considers the number of colleagues he has lost to crime. He prays as he hears the train rumbling in the distance.

Men spread themselves out on both sides of the train tracks shortly after 11:00 p.m. They can hear the train approaching. “A large man” scales the bridge's steel girders; it's Jugga, but no one knows him. When the train approaches, the conductor yells for Jugga to come down. Jugga takes a small kirpan and slashes at the rope.

When the leader realises what he's doing, he lifts his gun and fires. The rope is shredded, but there is one strand that is still intact. With his jaws, Jugga snaps it. Jugga is knocked to the ground by a barrage of bullets. The rope snaps and he falls to the ground. The train passes through his body on its way to Pakistan.

CHARACTER LIST

Juggut Singh / Jugga is a Sikh peasant who is imprisoned on the false charge of committing Lala Ram Lal's dacoity, or theft. Juggut was once a member of Malli's gang, the true perpetrators of the crime against Lala Ram Lal. He was described as six-foot-four and wide "like a stud bull." His father, the thief Alam Singh, has a notorious history, and he is burdened by both his own criminal record and his father's.

Juggut's mother, Nooran, is the daughter of Muslim weaver Imam Baksh, whom he impregnates on the night of the robbery. While in prison, Juggut shares a cell with Iqbal Singh, whom Juggut admires for his education and experiences in the United Kingdom. The author suggests at the

conclusion of the novel that Juggut is the "big guy" who saves a group of refugees from being killed on a train to Pakistan.

Iqbal Singh is a character in the film Iqbal Singh. Iqbal comes to Mano Majra from Jhelum, a political worker with no specific religious history, while Meet Singh and Hukum Chand assume he is Sikh. Pakistan should increase public consciousness about land reform and enable peasants to demand greater political and economic rights. He refers to himself as "comrade" in private, implying that he works for a Communist group.

He was educated in England and is defined as a small, rather effeminate man. He rapidly establishes a reputation as a political agitator in Mano Majra, which the subinspector exploits to frame him for the murder and robbery of Lala Ram Lal. Iqbal is mistakenly identified as a Muslim (called "Iqbal Mohammed") working for the Muslim League when he is apprehended. The authorities' fabrication of this connection makes Iqbal a leading suspect in the assassination of Ram Lal, Mano Majra's wealthiest Hindu.

Iqbal is held in the same prison cell as Juggut Singh, who was also wrongly accused. Hukum Chand believes Iqbal is a "armchair intellectual," a definition backed up by the fact that Iqbal seems to have disdain for the people he was sent to help and is only interested in using them to further his own fame and ambitions.

Singh is someone you can get to know. An elderly Sikh priest who privately admits that he became a priest solely to avoid having to serve. Iqbal Singh and Imam Baksh are both friends of Meet Singh, and their friendship is characterised as having "an undercurrent of friendly rivalry."

Meet was born into a peasant family and survives on the rent from a small plot of land he rents out, as well as temple offerings. He doesn't have a wife or baby. He is neither a scholar of the Sikh scriptures nor a gifted orator, which is unusual for a priest. He is described as "short, fat, and hairy," as well as unkempt and seldom wears a shirt, opting instead for a pair of filthy shorts. He opposes the plan to assassinate the train carrying refugees to Pakistan, but his protests are futile due to his status as a "old bhai."

Hukum Chand, also known as nar admi, is the magistrate and deputy commissioner in Mano Majra.

He is in charge of both the subinspector and the chief constable. Chand, a Hindu from the "lower middle class," is in his fifties, married, and "corpulent." He had children in the past, including a daughter whom he adored, but they all died. Chand is consumed by a fear of death and is determined to evacuate as many Muslims as possible from Mano Majra in order to avoid a massacre. He starts a relationship with Haseena, a teenaged Muslim prostitute, after a drunken evening of entertainment. He falls in love with Haseena because she is the same age as his daughter would have been if she had existed.

Mahatma Gandhi was an Indian lawyer, politician, journalist, and social activist who is best known for his active use of nonviolent civil disobedience. He joined the Indian National Congress as a representative in 1920 and used his political clout to spread Indian nationalism. Gandhi argued that Indians remained under British colonial rule because of their own shortcomings, not because of British control and arms. Gandhi began boycotting British companies and institutions in India, but his first attempt failed to persuade the British to relinquish control of the then-colony.

In 1942, he became enraged by what he considered to be a deceptive British offer to pass power to India Gandhi requested that the British withdraw from India immediately, angered by their promotion of communal strife between Hindus and Muslims. As part of the British attempt to crush the Congress Party, Gandhi was imprisoned in the Aga Khan Palace (now the Gandhi National Memorial) in the same year. In 1944, he was released. The Mountbatten Plan—an agreement to divide British India into the independent states of India and Pakistan—was reached in 1945 after a series of talks between the newly elected Labor Party in England, the Indian National Congress, and the Muslim League headed by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Gandhi lamented his failure to assist in the creation of a united and independent India.

Gandhi went on hunger strikes between 1946 and 1947 to protest religious riots between Hindus and Muslims. In September 1947, his fast helped put an end to disturbances in Calcutta. On January 30, 1948, he was shot and killed by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu fanatic, while heading to an evening prayer meeting in Delhi.

Mohammed Ali Jinnah, also known as "Muhammad Ali" and Qaid-i-Azam ("Great Leader"), was an Indian Muslim politician who was the founder and first governor-in-chief of the newly created state of Pakistan. In 1906, he began his political career and collaborated with members of the Indian National Congress. Initially, he saw Muslim interests as being constrained by Indian nationalism. He admired British institutions and hoped that one day India will achieve a similar level of functioning and gain greater international recognition. He advocated for Hindu-Muslim unity and proposed holding joint annual meetings between the Congress Party and the Muslim League.

Jinnah opposed Mahatma Gandhi's boycotts against the British and despised Gandhi's singularly Hindu approach to politics when he became the leader of the Congress Party in 1920.

Jinnah left the Congress Party and the Home Rule League, a political body committed to self-government, respectively. He remained, however, a strong supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. By 1937, Hindu-Muslim relations had deteriorated, thanks in large part to the Congress Party's consolidation of power.

Despite his initial reluctance to seek the establishment of a separate state, Jinnah emerged as the undisputed leader of Pakistan. The Congress Party, as well as the British government, which was committed to preserving India's unity, thought the idea of a separate state was absurd and opposed it. However, Jinnah's tactical savvy and campaign leadership finally persuaded both the Congress Party and the British to back down. Pakistan gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947.

Jawaharlal Nehru was India's first prime minister after the country gained independence from Britain. Nehru formed a parliamentarian government in India and maintained a neutral stance in international relations. He was one of Mahatma Gandhi's closest associates during the independence movement, but he differed from Gandhi due to his modern political and economic perspective, as well as his secular style and habits. Nehru was a Congress Party member as well.

In Mano Majra, Lala Ram Lal is a rich Hindu. He's known in the village as the "banani," or moneylender, according to Juggut Singh. Ram Lal dies from a stab wound to the stomach after being battered and robbed by Malli and his gang. Juggut tells Iqbal Singh in jail that he couldn't be so cruel as to murder Ram Lal because he had given Juggut money to pay lawyers when his father, Alam, was in prison.

Juggut's Mother – Juggut's mother, who is unnamed, lives with her son and disapproves of Nooran's relationship. She begs him not to leave their house on the night of the dacoity to see Nooran. She begs the cops not to take Juggut away when they arrive at her house to arrest him later. When Nooran learns that Juggut has impregnated her, she seeks help from Juggut's mother. Juggut's mother's animosity toward Nooran, whom he refers to as "beybey," is ended as a result of the conversation.

Imam Baksh – Nooran's father, a Muslim weaver described as tall, lean, and bald. He's still blind, acts as the local mosque's mullah, and is friends with Meet Singh. Many people pity Imam because his wife and son died "within a few days of each other," but he is also respected. He and Nooran are on their way to Pakistan from Mano Majra, and they are on the train that will be the scene of a planned massacre orchestrated by a group of Sikh conspirators. Nooran is afraid of her father marrying her off or murdering her if she tells him she is pregnant with Juggut's child.

Banta Singh – The headman, or lambardar, of Mano Majra, who collects revenue from the locals. Banta Singh is carrying on a tradition passed down through his family for many generations. He is portrayed as a "hard-working peasant like the rest of his fellow peasants" and a humble man. His dealings with the government, on the other hand, grant him official status and a title. Banta Singh pays them a visit along with a "Muslim," who is most likely Imam Baksh, while Iqbal Singh is staying with Meet Singh in the gurdwara, or temple. Iqbal refuses to drink the milk that Banta has brought.

During a discussion about Indian politics, Banta questions the wisdom of the British leaving India and expresses his preference for British soldiers over Indian soldiers. He informs the police in Chundunnugger about the train plot at the end of the book.

Malli – The dacoity's commander against Lala Ram Lal. Malli's gang used to include Juggut Singh. When Malli is arrested and put in the same cell as Juggut and Iqbal Singh, Juggut confronts Malli in a violent manner in retaliation for the trouble Malli has caused him. Following the Muslims' departure from Mano Majra, Malli is named as a custodian of the departed Muslims' property by Sikh officers, which he and his gang promptly rob. Malli is also involved in the conspiracy to destroy Muslim refugees heading to Pakistan, working with his gang and a group of Pakistani refugees.

Haseena is a Muslim prostitute who becomes Hukum Chand's concubine when she is between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Her procurer is her grandmother. She dresses in a black sequined sari and claims to be a singer and dancer, despite Chand's assumption that she is a prostitute. Chand selects her because she has a childlike appearance. She is from the village of Chundunnugger, where the subinspector, also known as "Inspector Sahib," told the Muslim villagers that they were welcome to stay.

She is the same age as Chand's daughter would have been if she had existed. Chand falls in love with her and later regrets allowing her to return to her village, which has expelled all Muslims. He also knows she is on the train that will carry out the planned massacre.

The Subinspector / Inspector Sahib – A police officer who works for Hukum Chand and is a conniving Hindu official. As Iqbal Singh arrives at the Mano Majra train station the day after the

dacoity, he sees him for the first time. Iqbal may not have been present at the time of the robbery. Under Hukum Chand's orders, he falsely imprisons Iqbal and Juggut Singh for the murder of Lala Ram Lal in order to keep the men from causing trouble in the village. The subinspector conspires with the head constable to frame Iqbal and threatens Juggut with torture in order to obtain the names of the robbers.

Iqbal Singh and Juggut Singh are arrested by the Head Constable, a very simple-minded police officer. To cover up the police's mistake in arresting these criminals, the subinspector instructs him to frame Iqbal for Lala Ram Lal's dacoity and mischaracterize the political acquittal. As a Muslim working for the Muslim League, the political activist.

Prem Singh is a Sikh colleague of Hukum Chand who travels to Lahore, Pakistan, to buy his wife jewellery. Prem spends a lot of time at Faletti's Hotel, which is a common hangout for European sahibs and their wives. In an attempt to create friendly relations, he offers them beer, especially the Englishmen. The English refer to him as "a good old Wog," which indicates that they approve of his character but also that they do not regard him as an equal.

Sundari is Hukum Chand's orderly's daughter. When a party of Muslims surround their bus on the way to Gujranwala, she has been married to Mansa Ram for four days. Sundari receives her husband's penis after they strip him naked and cut it off. The mob then rapes her and smashes the red lacquer bangles she was offered as a gift after their marriage for good luck.

Sunder Singh – A Sikh soldier who received awards for his courage in combat in Burma, Eritrea, and Italy. He is given land in Sindh, Pakistan, by the government. He tries to take an overcrowded train to Sindh with his wife and three young children, in a compartment packed with 500 men and women.

He murders his wife and children to relieve them of their intense hunger and thirst while the train is stuck at a station for four days with no one allowed to get off. He fires them just as the train starts to move toward its destination. When he tries to kill himself, he realises that it's pointless. He carries his wife and children's bodies off the train and travels to Pakistan.

Leader of the Boys – He is a violent teenage soldier who encourages the Sikhs of Mano Majra to kill Muslims. He is described in the text as just a "lad" and as somewhat "effeminate" in his youthful appearance. He entices a crowd with a speech in which he challenges the manhood of the male villagers and says that for every Sikh and Hindu killed by Muslims, they should kill "two Musulmans."

Minor Characters

Juggut Singh's girlfriend and the daughter of Muslim weaver Imam Baksh, Nooran / Nooro. This elevates her caste above that of Juggut, a farmer and former robber. Her Muslim faith, on the other hand, puts her at odds with the Sikhs and Hindus in Mano Majra.

Alam Singh – Juggut Singh's father, Alam is a dacoit, or armed robber, who is hanged two years before the storey begins. In addition, he is the son of a dacoit. Juggut's mother is afraid that, like his father, Juggut will be hanged.

Bhola – The tonga driver who transports Juggut Singh and Iqbal Singh to and from the Chundunnugger police station. He has a habit of thrashing his scrawny brown horse when he is irritated by life's circumstances.

Sundari's husband, Mansa Ram. During a Muslim mob assault on his bus, he is stripped naked and his penis is severed, while his new wife is raped by the mob.

The Indian Subcontinent's Experience with Partition was immense. Let us talk about Trauma and Morality now. Meet Singh claims early in the novel that Europeans lack values because they are unconcerned with religion. He clearly sees a connection between religion and morality, but he would have no qualms in lying on Jugga's behalf if Jugga murdered anyone from another village. Being moral in Mano Majra entails being faithful to one's salt, relatives, and fellow villagers (Singh 63). Truth, dignity, and financial honesty take a back seat to this. Outsiders like Iqbal find this code of morality perplexing, but villagers like Meet Singh and Jugga understand it fully.

One of the reasons Jugga, not Iqbal, sacrifices himself to save the world is because of this code. Despite being morally superior to Jugga for the majority of the book, sacrifices himself to save Mano Majra's Muslims. Hukum Chand is another important character in Train to Pakistan when it comes to morality. He seems to struggle emotionally with his choices at any turn. Haseena, for example, wakes up feeling "old and unclean" after spending the night at his home (Singh 133). He compares her to his daughter and expresses guilty for his behaviour, but he knows that his remorse will wash away once he drinks again. When Chand releases Jugga and Iqbal in the hopes of saving the Muslim train from the mob, the morality of his decision resurfaces.

He's practically dispatching two civilians with dubious motives to save a group of refugees from certain death, a task that should have been his duty as Mano Majra's magistrate. Chand is aware of

this and is concerned about his decision, but he does nothing to change it. Instead, in his hour of spiritual ineptitude, he sits, cries, and prays.

Persecution of Christians and Trauma is the next theme. Religious persecution is a driving factor in Train to Pakistan, as well as in India's partition as a whole. Approximately 10 million people were unexpectedly in the "wrong" nation as a result of this division. People who had lived in the same villages for centuries became rivals overnight. Sikhs fleeing Pakistan faced the same adversities as Muslims fleeing India, including rape, pillaging, and death.

Though the novel briefly mentions the differences between the sects, the majority of the conflict between the two communities derives from acts of violence committed by each side against the other in the past and present. Singh never goes into detail in the novel about what triggered the tense political environment and violence between Sikhs and Muslims, or even why the partition was necessary in the first place. Everything we know is that different characters have biases towards members of the opposing religion.

A young Sikh man from Mano Majra, for example, accuses Muslims in Mano Majra of "stealing their salt" for centuries. Some Sikhs may regard Muslims as intruders and freeloaders, based on these terms. Because of their long hair, beards, and kirpans, some Muslims regard Sikhs as "barbarous infidels with ill intent." We can see that the characteristics of the people who practise and religion, not the religions themselves, are the source of religious hostility.

Trauma and Mob Rule is the next theme. A power vacuum developed during India's partition, as the newly formed Indian and Pakistani governments struggled to establish and retain control. Sikh and Muslim villages are pillaged and robbed in this vacuum, and people of both faiths are attacked, raped, and murdered. As a result, a vigilante justice system is created, with the primary motto being "an eye for an eye." For example, in revenge for a train carrying dead Sikhs being sent from Pakistan, the leader of a Sikh mob plots to return a train carrying dead Muslims.

Despite their respect for their Muslim neighbours, the Sikhs of Mano Majra are compelled by the mob leader's propaganda to betray their own principles and join the murdering mob.

The object of pillaging and killing Muslims, according to the mob leader, is to "teach" the other side and put an end to the bloodshed. He clearly does not trust the government to reclaim power and restore stability, and believes that the people must take matters into their own hands.

Trauma and National Identity is the next theme. Questions of national identity are at the core of India's 1947 partition. What does it mean to be an Indian and a Pakistani, respectively? These issues are particularly pressing for many Muslims who have been forced to leave India for Pakistan due to their faith.

Muslims have lived in India for decades, as Imam Baksh points out, establishing roots and building lives. Their faith is Pakistani, but their society has been Indian up until now. They are not only being forced to move to a country they are unfamiliar with, but they are also being subjected to abuse and death.

Let us now talk about Trauma and Displacement. The displacement of 10 million Indians and Pakistanis in 1947 was central to India's partition. In the first few pages of Train to Pakistan, Singh paints a bleak image of the revolution and eventual displacement. He explains the situation in India and Pakistan's four corners, but then claims that Mano Majra is one of the few remaining "oases of calm" (Singh 11). The reader is immediately left wondering how much longer Mano Majra will be safe from the turmoil that has engulfed the rest of the world.

Even government officials are concerned about Mano Majra's fate and how long its villagers will be unaware of what is going on in the outside world. When a train of dead Sikhs arrives in town, the response isn't long. They were murdered as they attempted to flee Pakistan. As the train and reports of mass rape, robbery, and abuse show, the displacement of Sikhs and Muslims during the partition was far from peaceful.

Key words/ Glossary

Dacoity – An act of armed robbery. A 'dacoit' is a member of a gang who commits the act of armed robbery.

Bhai – "Brother" or "cousin" in Hindi. "Bhaiji" is a similar term of endearment, but it includes the gender-neutral honorific ending "-ji," which is commonly used in many South Asian languages and dialects to show respect.

Sepoy – A designation for an Indian soldier serving under European orders.

Charpoy – Traditionally used in India, it is a bed woven with tape or rope, consisting of a wooden frame that looks like a bench.

Chapatti – Also spelled "chapati," this is an unleavened flatbread that serves as a staple food in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as in parts of East Africa and the Caribbean. Another common name for the bread is "roti."

Budmash – A term that refers to a notorious person, a worthless person, a thug, or a person of poor character. The term is also used playfully among friends and family members.
Punkah – A large fan suspended from a ceiling, sometimes run on electricity, which moves back and forth. Traditionally, punkahs can be moved backward and forward by pulling on a cord.
Muezzin – A person appointed by a mosque to lead followers in prayer. The muezzin calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret, or mosque tower, and leads them in worship five times per day.
Lambardar – A title in India that applies to powerful landowners and members of their families. The title is hereditary and gives its holders wide-ranging powers, including police powers and the ability to collect revenue from tenants.
Betel – A leaf that is frequently chewed, along with its seeds, like tobacco. The betel nut is the seed of the betel plant, a popular stimulant in southern Asia, particularly in India. It is estimated that one-tenth of the world's population regularly chews betel, making it the fourth most commonly used drug in the world, after nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine.
Shikar / Shikari – A hunt.
Sahib – A term meaning "sir" or "master." It was commonly used in colonial India when natives addressed a European or someone with an official or higher-class status.
Gurdwara – In Punjabi, the term means "doorway to the Guru," or "house of God." A gurdwara is a Sikh temple. Like other houses of worship, Sikhs conduct the business of worship in the gurdwara. They also use the space to officiate weddings and religious initiation ceremonies.
Nar Admi – A male administrator. "Nar" in Hindi and Punjabi means "male." The term is used to refer to Hukum Chand, the magistrate for Mano Majra.
"Sat Sri Akal" – A common Sikh greeting in Hindi. It roughly means, "Blessed is the person who believes that God is Truth."
Babu / Babuji – An honorific title for a man, particularly one who is educated. The inclusion of the suffix "-ji" emphasizes the respect shown to someone with an elevated social status.
Banian – A title used for someone who is a member of the merchant class. It was sometimes used pejoratively to refer to an Indian trader who worked with a British firm, implying that the person's loyalties were with the British imperialists and not with the native people.
Toba – "Penance" in Hindi.
Mem-sahib – A term used by Indians to refer to a white, upperclass European woman, usually the wife of a colonial official.
Houri – In Muslim faith, a houri is a beautiful young virgin who will serve as a reward for just and faithful men in Paradise, or Heaven.
Kirpan – A small, curved sword or dagger traditionally carried by Sikh men.
Beybey – A term of endearment similar in meaning to "mother" or "aunt" and used by younger people to refer to elder women.
Pathan – Another name for a "Pashtun" or, often, an Afghan. The Pathan people are natives of southern and eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan. They speak Pashto and are usually Sunni Muslims.
Tonga – A small carriage used for transportation in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that can hold up to four people and is pulled by a single horse or pony.
Hijra – A group that includes both transgender and intersex people. They feature prominently in both Hindu and Muslim history and are characterized by their heavily made-up faces and dazzling saris. As eunuchs, they were the protectors of harems during the Mughal Empire. Currently, they dance in temples and on the streets, often begging for rupees in traffic. Out of a commonly-held superstitious belief that hijras have the power to bestow powerful blessings or curses, Indians frequently give them money in return for a blessing. The failure to give alms could, some believe, result in a curse.
The Muslim League – A political party founded in 1906 to protect the rights of Muslims in India. The organization received support from the country's colonizer, Great Britain, until 1913. In that year, the party began to push for the prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity, in favor of gaining independence from Britain. Its most notable leader was Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who initially supported the alliance but, in 1940, joined the rest of the league in calling for a separate state for Muslims, which became Pakistan. To reflect the change, the party later called itself the All Pakistan Muslim League.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. Explain the novel's title in terms of the plot.

The storey of Mano Majra, a once peaceful village broken apart during India's 1947 partition, is told in Train to Pakistan. "Ghost trains," or trains full of massacred Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, crisscross the new frontier separating India and Pakistan in the partition and the book. No one

knows who sent the first train, but when each side retaliates to the other's acts of aggression, trains of corpses are sent back and forth. A mob arrives in Mano Majra at the end of Khushwant Singh's book, and hires Sikh Mano Majrans to help massacre a train of Muslim refugees on their way to Pakistan. There are Muslim Mano Majrans on this train, which adds a layer of betrayal to the scheme. The novel's climax occurs when Jugga saves the train, allowing it to safely cross the border into Pakistan. As a result, this train is the "train to Pakistan" mentioned in the novel's title.

2. Compare and contrast Jugga's and Iqbal's character portraits.

Jugga and Iqbal are nicely set up as foils to one another by Khushwant Singh. The men seem to be polar opposites from the outside. Jugga is taller, more muscular, and larger than the average Indian man, making him stand out in Mano Majra and the surrounding area. Iqbal, on the other hand, is a thin, frail man with an effeminate look. He's also distinct because his demeanour and mannerisms clearly indicate that he's from the city.

Iqbal's childhood in the city suggests a high degree of schooling and a progressive political philosophy. Jugga, on the other hand, is illiterate and unconcerned about government and police corruption. When they are both wrongly arrested for the murder of Lala Ram Lal, their opposing views on government are on display. Iqbal is righteously stubborn, while Jugga quickly accepts that the cops are free to do whatever they want with him. The final and most important distinction between the two men is what they do when they learn of the scheduled train massacre.

Jugga, the illiterate town badmash, finds the strength to sacrifice himself and save the Muslims, despite Iqbal's lofty ideals about humanity, justice, and morality. Khushwant Singh teaches a fascinating lesson about the true meaning of courage, morality, and sacrifice through these two guys.

3. Examine the novel's portrayal of women.

Women are nameless and faceless helpmeets to the men in their lives in Train to Pakistan, with the exception of Nooran, Haseena, and Jugga's mother. Even Jugga's and Hukum Chand's love interests, Nooran and Haseena, fail to claim their independence in their relationships. Nooran appears to refuse Jugga's advances, but it is later revealed that she is pregnant with his child and wishes to remain with him, leaving it unclear how she really feels about him. Haseena is initially afraid of Hukum Chand, but as they spend more time together, she becomes more at ease and forthright. Hukum Chand and Jugga's passion for the women in their lives ultimately drives them to try to save the doomed train of Muslims bound for Pakistan. Women serve as the impetus and catalyst for one of the novel's most dramatic moments in this way.

4. In the end, the subinspector and Hukum Chand try to save the Mano Majra Muslims despite their dishonest behaviour. Do their goals outweigh their methods? Are their acts sufficient?

The subinspector and Hukum Chand are quasi-villains for the majority of the novel because of their shady interactions with Jugga and Iqbal, the novel's key characters. Ironically, the majority of the men's activities are aimed at keeping peace in Mano Majra and reducing the number of Sikh and Muslim deaths in the region. The subinspector and Chand must resort to corrupt machinations and elaborate schemes to prevent the spread of violence in the Mano Majra region without additional help from the Delhi government.

Unfortunately, innocent men like Jugga and Iqbal suffer as a result of this. Despite this, the Muslims are able to reach Pakistan alive thanks to the efforts of the subinspector and Chand, which makes their actions quite justified. Their plans and deeds, however, would be useless if Jugga's innate sense of justice, patriotism, and courage were not present. The police's plans would have been for naught if Jugga had not sacrificed himself, and they would have been held responsible for the train massacre. Chand was right in relying on Jugga to save the Muslims, but his own contribution to the rescue mission was inadequate.

5. In the book, what part do religious figures like Meet Singh and Imam Baksh play?

Meet Singh and Imam Baksh, as Mano Majra's Sikh priest and Muslim imam, are not only religious authorities in Train to Pakistan, but also sources of knowledge and moral compass. The villagers go to the Sikh temple to hear the latest news and gossip about what's going on in and around town. When the brutality and turmoil of the outside world starts to creep in, this is where everybody gathers. Similarly, it is Imam Baksh who informs the Muslim families of Mano Majra of their impending evacuation. Finally, when the Mano Majra Sikhs begin to believe the misinformation and negative stories about Muslims, it is Meet Singh who stands up and speaks out against them. He is also the only person, along with the lambardar, to speak out against the militant mob's plot to

massacre the Muslims on the train. He can't stand by and watch while his neighbours' and town's morality is shattered.

Review Questions

1. In what year does the story take place?
   1947.
2. What is happening in India during the time of the book?
   The Hindus and Muslims are in a war.
3. What was created in the summer of 1947?
   The new state of Pakistan.
4. Who is the only Hindu in Mano Majra?
   Lala Ram Lal.
5. What is the Sutlej?
   The largest river in the Punjab.
6. What is Man Majra known for?
   Its railway station.
7. What do the citizens of Mano Majra time their lives by?
   The trains.
8. Which word reflects 'Dacoity' in reference to the content discussed for the novel:
   An act of armed robbery.
9. What do you understand by the word 'Bhaiji' on the basis of the novel Train to Pakistan:
   "Brother" or "cousin" in Hindi.
10. What does the word 'Sepoy' reflect in relation to the context of the novel:
    A designation for an Indian soldier serving under European orders.

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Unit 07: Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh

CONTENTS

Objectives

- To justify the role of various social structures in the formation of culture
- To compare the historical trauma and its after-effects in the contemporary society
- To employ the historical context in reference to the text discussed
- To illustrate the various writing narrative styles in the light of the selected text
- To create an insight about the time of partition
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel

Introduction

Train to Pakistan is set in 1947, the year India gained independence from Britain and the Partition of India resulted in the creation of the new nation of Pakistan. The Partition, which sought to separate the nations along religious lines and initially resulted in widespread instability and bloodshed, displaced an estimated 14 million people. The years following World War II saw several nations restructured and the international system realigned as a result of the war's devastation. The Marshall Plan, a reorganisation initiative spearheaded by US Secretary of State George C. Marshall, offered more than $15 billion to aid in the reconstruction of war-torn towns, factories, and infrastructure in Western Europe.

To fund the war effort, the United Kingdom had to relinquish some of its colonies, including India. Britain's reputation as a superpower was severely harmed as a result of this action. In its position, the United States became the most dominant Western country, competing for foreign control with the Soviet Union. During and after the Cold War, the United States assumed the position of defender of Western democracy.

Khushwant Singh grew up in the Muslim-majority village of Hadali, which was then part of British India, and was born into a wealthy Sikh family. His first language was Punjabi, but he was also fluent in Urdu and grew up reading Urdu poets' work. Later in life, he would become a well-known interpreter of Urdu poetry.

Singh graduated from Government College in Lahore with a Bachelor of Arts in 1934 and went on to King's College in London to study law in 1938. He began practising law in Lahore on the eve of World War II and continued until India's partition in 1947, when he relocated his family to Delhi and accepted a job as a press attaché with the Indian Foreign Service. He worked in London and Ottawa during his four years in the foreign service, and he also began writing fiction. In 1950, he published his first book of short stories, The Mark of Vishnu, and Other Stories, in London. The following year, he started working as a journalist for All India Radio, where he spent the next few years.

Though continuing to publish fiction, I work as an editor for leading publications in India. He was a member of India's upper house of parliament from 1980 to 1986 and a supporter of Indira Gandhi's administration. After Indian troops assaulted and killed hundreds of Sikhs at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, he dropped his support for the prime minister. Singh is also known for his two-volume work A History of the Sikhs, 1469-1964 (vol. 1, 1963; vol. 2, 1966) and The Company of Women, in addition to Train to Pakistan (1999). For his work in journalism and fiction, he won

several awards, including a lifetime achievement award for his contributions to Indian literature. Singh married his fiancée. In 1939, Singh married Kaval, who died a few years before him. They had two children: Rahul, a son, and Mala, a daughter. At the age of 99, Singh passed away.

7.1 Subject Matter

Following WWII and at the start of India's decolonization, A Train to Pakistan was written alongside other literary works featuring the voices of former colonial subjects. Postcolonial English Literature critiqued and undermined imperial ideals by using the vocabulary of the former coloniser, which had once been an instrument of obedience. Aimé Césaire's essay Discourse on Colonialism (1950), Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958), and V.S. Naipaul's Mystic Masseur (1957) are all famous works from this era. A House for Mr. Biswas (1957) by V.S. Naipaul and Mystic Masseur (1957) by V.S. Naipaul (1961). Singh also contributed to Indo-Anglian literature, or Indian literature written in English, as well as other genres.

The movement started in the nineteenth century, but it became more common in the 1930s. V.S. Naipaul, R.K. Narayan, who was mentored by British author Graham Greene, and contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and Rohinton Mistry are among the well-known Indo-Anglian writers. Like Singh, they often deal with corruption, the caste system, and the complexities of religious life in India in their work.

Iqbal, Muhammad. "Muhammad Iqbal" is not only the fictitious name given to Iqbal Singh by the subinspector, but also the name of a real-life poet and philosopher who was instrumental in the founding of Pakistan.

Indian National Army is an Indian military force. The Indian National Army, also known as the "Azad Hind Fauj," was a liberation army founded by Indian revolutionary and military leader Subhas Chandra Bose in collaboration with Japanese forces. Bose trained about 40,000 troops in Southeast Asia with the support of the invading Japanese army. The army, however, was defeated by Allied forces and forced to withdraw without the assistance of an air force. The Indian National Army served as a revolutionary army for a time. The Indian National Army served as a liberation army in Myanmar and former Indochina for a time, but after the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, it ceased all operations.

Summary

THE PARTITION OF INDIA AND RELIGIOUS WARFARE

A Train to Pakistan, by Khushwant Singh, is set in the fictional town of Mano Majra during the summer of 1947, the year of India's infamously bloody Partition. Following World War II, the United Kingdom granted independence to its former colonies and then split it into the states of India and Pakistan, in an effort to ease religious tensions by establishing a separate homeland for Indian Muslims.

Millions of Muslims attempted to cross the partition into Pakistan, while Hindus and Sikhs attempted to cross into India, resulting in a bloodbath. Singh uses Mano Majra, a small border village that was once a "[oasis] of harmony," as a microcosm of religious, caste, and moral differences in India that had existed for a long time but were revealed during the nation's literal schism The violence that erupted as a result of India's partition, according to Singh, had less to do with outside forces and more to do with people's ability to succumb to pre-existing prejudice and hate.

Despite its proximity to a railway bridge that connects India and Pakistan, Mano Majra, a religiously diverse border town, is blissfully unaware of the turmoil surrounding it at first. When Hukum Chand, the judge, inquires about "the situation" in Mano Majra, the subinspector responds that he is unsure if anyone is there. "Knows the British have left and the country has been split into Pakistan and Hindustan."

He believes that some of the villagers are familiar with Mahatma Gandhi, but he doubts that anyone is familiar with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder. When a trainload of dead Sikhs arrives from Pakistan at the Mano Majra train station, this blissful ignorance easily gives way to wrathful abuse. Singh demonstrates how this horrific incident, in combination with pre-existing racism, sets in motion a dangerous cycle of animosity and abuse. When the train schedule goes awry, causing passenger trains to arrive extremely late, it's the first indication that things are changing in the village.

The village's sense of normalcy is disrupted for Mano Majra, which bases its daily routine on the arrival and departure of trains. The arrival of the "ghost train" from Pakistan, the second sign, sows the first seed of doubt in the minds of the villagers. Finally, Sikh officers arrive and ask the villagers to donate all of their wood and kerosene. The villagers are kept in the dark on why the soldiers

need these supplies, but they later smell a mixture of burning wood and kerosene, as well as burnt flesh.

The Sikh officers' and others in authority's secrecy, including Hukum Chand, who presided over the bodies' burning, gives the villagers the impression that something is very wrong and that they are in danger. The head constable later asks if anyone has talked to "a young Mussulman babu named Mohammed Iqbal who was a member of the Muslim League" after the dacoity at Lala Ram Lal's home. The villagers find it curious that the police believe an educated, middle-class man might be a suspect in a heinous crime, and they begin to suspect that Iqbal was sent as a spy by the Muslims. The head constable's questions divide Mano Majra "as neatly as a knife slices through a pat of butter," showing how easily people can be duped into mistrusting those they call mates.

After the monsoon, when the rainwater causes the Sutlej River to rise, the village is subjected to even more brutality. When the villagers see many people floating in the sea, they notice stab wounds and women's breasts that have been mutilated, indicating that they have been massacred. The sight of these bodies, combined with the knowledge that hundreds of Sikhs and Muslims were murdered in Pakistan before being shipped into India on the "ghost train," drives Sikhs to violence, convincing many to join the conspiracy to murder Muslim refugees on their way to Pakistan.

Not all of Mano Majra's residents are enslaved by hate.

Meet Singh, the local bhai, isn't an especially gifted priest, but he takes advantage of his status to cater to people's sense of dignity. His attempts to persuade his fellow Sikhs that they should not blame their Muslim neighbours for the actions of Muslims across the border fail to calm the violent impulses sparked by visiting Sikh soldiers. Indeed, Mano Majra is visited by a group of Sikh soldiers with rifles slung over their shoulders, one of whom—a boy leader—entices the crowd to participate in revenge killings in Pakistan in response to the massacres of Hindus and Sikhs.

He tells the men in the village to kill "two Musulmans" for "every Hindu and Sikh [the Muslims]" kill. Meet Singh points out the absurdity of this; the Muslims of Mano Majra have nothing to do with Pakistan's terror. The priest tells the crowd that treating Muslims as individuals is more necessary than condemning an entire race, but his calculated appeals to reason are defeated by the boy leader's appeal to the crowd's desire for vengeance. The boy leader schemes with Sikh villagers near the end of the novel to murder hundreds of Muslim refugees who will be sitting on the roof of a train bound for Pakistan. Meet Singh counsels his fellow Sikhs on moral conduct, but he avoids interfering too much for fear of becoming a victim of retaliatory abuse.

The bhai's words, on the other hand, motivate Juggut Singh, a former thief with a history of crime, to take retributive action. Juggut pays a visit to Meet Singh and requests that the priest read a prayer to him. He then inquires about the prayer's efficacy, to which the priest responds that the Guru's word is always good and can assist those who do good. If people do bad things, the Guru's words will backfire on them. Juggut then goes on to "do good" by giving his life to save a train full of Muslim refugees. The author suggests that, like the head constable's manipulative advice to the villagers, language alone cannot deter or spur crime, but it can be a trigger that causes people to act on already existing desires.

By refusing to assign responsibility for the brutality of the partition to any one religious community, Singh demonstrates the complexities of humanity at a time when people were reduced to their simplest forms in allegiances of a religion He provides extensive descriptions of the atrocities perpetrated by all to demonstrate that certain behaviours are not exclusive to certain religious groups, but are universal. Even as Singh uses the storey of India's partition as a cautionary tale of what can happen when people give in to their baser impulses, Jugga's destruction of the rope demonstrates that humanity is capable of remarkable acts of bravery and heroism in the face of hate.

POSTCOLONIAL ANXIETY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

A Train to Pakistan explains how India's partition not only separated the country geographically, but also marked the end of the British colonial period and the beginning of the postcolonial era. Despite the fact that the partition was Britain's solution to stemming the rise of religious unrest, some characters in the novel argue that India was better off under British rule. Singh portrays India as a country struggling to define itself after colonial rule and forging its own road to success. Ultimately, the novel demonstrates how overcoming colonial rule entails not only reclaiming power of one's political future, but also overcoming the psychological impediment of decades of servitude.

Iqbal Singh, a political worker wrongly accused with Juggut Singh of committing the dacoity against Lala Ram Lal, is used by the author to portray the desire for Indian independence and prosperity without the help or intervention of the British. Iqbal was raised in the United Kingdom and is the novel's only character who is open about his dislike for the British Empire. Iqbal does not trust the British to defend India from terror, unlike Imam Baksh, whom he meets through Meet Singh. He also recoils from Juggut's analogy of English women to "houris," or angels, which he

finds offensive and Indian women as "black buffaloes," and argues against others' near-worship of the British and distrust of Indian institutions.

When Banta Singh, the lambardar who joins Meet Singh and an unidentified Muslim during a visit to Iqbal, asks Iqbal why the English left India, Iqbal describes it in the sense of the English fear that the nation will inevitably turn against them, citing the ambiguous example of "the mutiny of the Indian sailors" against the British during WWII. After World War II, he notes an increasing trend in India toward resistance, which was necessary in assisting India in fulfilling its own destiny.

Some Indians, for example, were defying the British by joining the Japanese war effort, while also implicitly pointing out the irony of fighting with the British against Japanese imperialism while the British maintained their own empire. Despite the fact that "independence" is an abstract term to Iqbal's listeners, he maintains that the concept of political liberty can be used to promote a new economic reality—that is, a framework in which fewer Indians are poor. Self-determination would be difficult to achieve if the British remained in India indefinitely.

Some characters, however, argue that India was better off under British rule. Banta Singh, for example, maintains that the other Indian soldiers "liked the English officers" and felt they "were better than the Indian" while describing how he fought with the Allied Powers on behalf of the British in World War I. Meet Singh backs up his claim with an anecdote from his brother, "a havildar," or sergeant, who claims that all of the "sepoys are happier with English officers than with Indians," and that his niece always receives gifts from his "brother's colonel's mem-sahib" in London. Both men use terminology that is clearly comparative and appears to elevate the British soldier over the American.

The Indians were beaten by British soldiers not because of their military prowess or leadership, but because of the nature of their personal encounters with British officers. Banta Singh, Meet Singh, and Imam Baksh use these optimistic memories to implicitly explain the British presence in India, and they use these anecdotes to overlook their former colonisers' cruelties. Their remarks also imply that the three men believe the British are superior and thus better suited to lead India, which Iqbal finds frustrating.

As Iqbal refers to the British as "a race of four-twenties" in reference to Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code, which "defines the obscene," he contradicts this notion of dominance. "Defines the crime of cheating," according to the Penal Code. He claims that if the British were trustworthy, they would not have expanded their domain across the globe. He also makes a distinction between their "nice" human temperament and their political conduct. It is possible for the British to study Indian religious practises and language, as Lord Mountbatten—"the handsome, Hindustani-speaking cousin of the King"—did, though also weakening India with destructive policies like the partition, which was Mountbatten's idea. Mountbatten's love for India is compared by Iqbal to that of "the missionaries"—it is not a love based on recognition and equality.

but one that aims to change India in favour of British principles and customs Iqbal's characterization of the British as "cheats" is an attempt to get others to see them as flawed rather than the superior rulers that Indians have been taught to treat them as. This initiative harkens back to Iqbal's political work in assisting Indians in overcoming their perceptions of themselves as subjects rather than self-governing people. Iqbal's experiences in Britain, on the other hand, have allowed him to see the British in a more democratic light, while the others only see them as ruling officers.

As a result of his higher social status, he has access to such interactions that make it more difficult for Iqbal to comprehend the concerns of poorer Indians who feel they cannot develop their own way forward on their own. Indeed, Imam Baksh explains his anti-independence stance by claiming that the British leaving would make no difference to the weak and ignorant. He claims that educated Indians, such as Iqbal, will gain access to jobs previously reserved for the British, while poor Indians, who were once "slaves of the English," will simply "be slaves of the educated Indians—or the Pakistanis." Imam Baksh has a pessimistic view of India after independence, believing that there will still be an underclass that others will rule over.

The dialogue between Iqbal, Meet Singh, Banta Singh, and Imam Baksh is ultimately used by the author to illustrate the confusion that many Indians felt in the post-Independence period. Despite the fact that British rule was unjust, some argued that the imperialists provided the nation with a framework that it would not have had otherwise. The author explains the essence of postcolonial anxiety based on these discussions, including how self-doubt, lack of education, elitist rule, and, more recently, sectarianism have made a stable post-Independence government seem increasingly elusive.

CORRUPTION AND POWER

Iqbal Singh and Juggut Singh, two men from separate castes, who end up sharing a cell with each other after being falsely accused of plotting to commit dacoity against Hindu landowner Lala Ram Lal. Both Iqbal and Juggut are easy targets for the crooked local police, who have no basis for

incarcerating or arresting either man merely because it is politically expedient. Iqbal poses a danger to proven authority, while Juggut—who is already a suspected offender in the village—serves as a convenient scapegoat for avoiding investigative work. The novel portrays a country in which police powers are broad, unregulated, and violent through the experiences of these men.

This corruption is also essential for the perpetuation of a caste system that ensures that many Indians remain poor and powerless. Iqbal is seen as a troublemaker because of his efforts to bring political reform to Mano Majra, including attempts to end wealthy Indians' unrestricted rule over the poor. The head constable, with the help of the subinspector, finally succeeds in framing Iqbal as a Muslim League member. The police do this in part to make up for their initial mistake in arresting Iqbal for the dacoity; the subinspector forgot that he saw Iqbal arrive in Mano Majra on his train the day after the dacoity, indicating that he may not have been the perpetrator.

They want to prod the Sikh villagers of Mano Majra into sending their Muslims away in addition to covering their mistake. The fact that Iqbal is circumcised is the subinspector's "evidence" that he is a Muslim political tinker. The subinspector conspires with Hukum Chand, the judge, to rename Iqbal "Iqbal Mohammed." Iqbal Singh's arrest and deliberate renaming shows the arbitrary existence of Indian justice since Independence, as well as how citizens of various social groups and sects are vulnerable to the country's police corruption.

When Juggut Singh is brought in for interrogation, it is an especially heinous example of corruption. Owing to his own criminal history, Juggut is readily blamed for the crime. Malli, the dacoity's true chief, even threw bangles stolen from Ram Lal into Juggut's courtyard to implicate him. The subinspector then threatens to whip Juggut's buttocks or inject "red chilies" into Juggut's rectum to compel him to talk. Juggut, on the other hand, has already been tortured and knows what it's like to have his "hands and feet pinned under charpoys' legs with half a dozen policemen sitting on them" and his "testicles twisted and squeezed" until they go numb. Juggut winces from the recollection of such agony, which pleases the subinspector. And the fact that he can cause harm as well as use it to "solve" a case gives him a sense of omnipotence. In each case, the police demonstrate their authority in India by inflicting physical damage on accused criminals and suspending any rights to due process.

Iqbal asks Juggut, who is incarcerated and sharing a cell with him, if he is responsible for the murder of Ram Lal, which Juggut categorically denies. Juggut explains that Ram Lal was a money source for the village, and that he once gave Juggut money to help his father, Alam, get out of jail.

Iqbal believes that this would be sufficient evidence for the police to release Juggut, but Juggut claims that the police will only release him "when they feel like it," and that they might also "make up a case of [him] holding a spear without a licence or moving out of the village without permission."

Juggut's explanation of police authority over peasants like him shows how authorities can restrict people's movements and file false charges against those who lack the financial resources to defend themselves. Ironically, it seems that Ram Lal was one of the few people in power who sympathised with those who were unable to protect themselves against such abuses of power.

Despite his higher social status and education, Iqbal is no longer capable of defending himself against the police's deception. The subinspector's jealousy of Iqbal, which influences his desire to frame the social worker, stems from his envy of Iqbal's education, higher social status, and foreign manners, all of which he first realised when they met at the train station. Before being imprisoned, the subinspector mocks Iqbal's demonstrated demand for habeas corpus, or due process. As Iqbal asks to be transferred to a different cell after Juggut brutally assaults Malli, the subinspector mocks him again, asking if he'd like "an electric fan" mounted in his cell for added warmth.

This encounter demonstrates how everyone is insecure in a police environment where officers can frame and imprison anyone they want. Iqbal's polished manners and schooling don't help him any more than Juggut's six-foot-four frame does; both are left weak and powerless. In A Train to Pakistan, the author portrays concrete instances of police corruption to emphasise their prevalence throughout India's political system, the powerlessness of peasants like Juggut in response to it, and the difficulties that political agitators like Iqbal face in reforming a society engulfed in corruption.

HEROISM AND HONOR

Iqbal travels to Mano Majra, a town he has never visited and knows no one, in the hopes of inspiring the locals to promote political change. Iqbal believes that with his assistance, the village peasants will be able to claim stronger political and economic privileges. Juggut, on the other hand, sees himself as a budmash—someone who is born poor and has a criminal past that works against him. Regardless, it is Juggut, not Iqbal, who proves himself a hero at the novel's conclusion.

Singh indicates that true honour can only be accomplished by selfless sacrifice by examining the contrast between men's words and deeds. Iqbal is a Delhi-based political activist who is urbane, educated, and, despite his stated goals, aloof to the concerns of Indians in Mano Majra. Due to his self-identification as a "comrade" and his desire to overthrow the landowning government, he is

most likely a member of a Communist political party. Iqbal's good intentions, however, are tainted by his disdain for the people he was sent to represent. Iqbal is used by Singh to demonstrate the hypocrisy of so-called political revolutionaries, who are frequently hypocrites. Frequently, they are no more honourable or legal than the leaders they want to depose.

The religious extremism in the region irritates Iqbal especially. He knows that his circumcision would have gotten him killed if he hadn't kept company with the Sikh bhai Meet Singh and Juggut, who is also Sikh. He is irritated by the fact that he must "prove his Sikhism to save his life." He compares the Mano Majrans' murderous religious zeal to attitudes in Delhi, which he finds to be "civilised." Despite his ostensible commitment to alleviating poverty and ignorance in Mano Majra, Iqbal overlooks the following. Because of the upper classes' long-standing indifference to their suffering and ignorance, the villagers are intensely loyal to their religious tribes. Iqbal demonstrates that he cannot and does not want to associate with the Mano Majrans by his propensity to look down on the simpler peasants and view them as the antithesis of civilization.

Iqbal also has fantasies of how the public will respond to his ostensibly political sacrifices. He imagines news reports announcing his arrest, and he considers confronting a mob of Sikhs planning to kill refugees on a train bound for Pakistan in the evening. Iqbal is intrigued by how brave he will appear, "like the heroes on the screen who [become] bigger and bigger as they step right towards the camera," rather than by some moral obligation to avoid bloodshed. Knowing that no one of consequence will be present to witness this self-sacrifice, however, convinces Iqbal that risking his life to avoid a wave of violence in Mano Majra is pointless. These examples demonstrate that Iqbal's political beliefs are merely surface-level. He isn't genuinely interested in assisting Indians in adjusting to life after colonialism or in abolishing the oppressive caste system. He wants people to believe that he will save them from their predicament so that his own sense of glory will loom large.

On the other hand, Juggut is already a well-known figure in Mano Majra. He is known in his village as the most dangerous guy, a reputation he inherited from his grandfather and father, Alam Singh. Juggut, on the other hand, has given up his former life of crime in favour of farming. Juggut takes action where Iqbal fantasises. Juggut goes to the gurdwara to see Meet Singh and pray after learning that Mano Majra has fallen into the hands of the villainous Malli, who now leads the mob planning to massacre Muslim refugees going to Pakistan.

Juggut, who has never visited the temple before, arrives at such a late hour, which surprises the priest. Juggut's search for faith indicates that he is seeking spiritual guidance, most likely as a result of his mistrust of his own instincts. He wants to not only get over his false arrest's credibility, but also to find a path to lawful action so that he can do right by his Muslim lover Nooran and his friends. Though Singh never explicitly names Juggut, the plot's development strongly implies that Juggut is the "big guy" who, at the novel's conclusion, scales the railway bridge and onto the rope that will be used to cut through a crowd of Muslim passengers who will be riding on the train.

The fact that none of the villagers remember the "big guy" as Juggut means that the former robber has undergone a transformation. Juggut eventually gives his life while cutting the rope, dying in the midst of "a volley of bullets," to ensure that Nooran and her father, who are on the train, are not killed. Juggut does this completely out of love for Nooran, with no idea of her pregnancy. Hukum Chand had predicted that "[his] type never [risks] their necks for women," and that any retaliation against Malli would be merely a matter of "[settling] scores."

Juggut's sacrifice avenges his family's criminal past and saves his village from oblivion, demonstrating that even a former dacoit can be forgiven. Singh demonstrates how someone can perform acts of heroism—that is, acts that help others without providing immediate personal gain—through Juggut. Meanwhile, Iqbal portrays himself as someone who wants to support Mano Majra, but in fact is only interested in using the village to further his own fame. He wants to be a hero, but he's afraid of the sacrifices he'll have to make to get there.

The fact that the villagers, including Meet Singh and other elders, believe Iqbal is a good man despite his selfishness raises the question of whether or not Iqbal is a good man. Despite his selfishness, he poses the issue of what it means to do "right" and what judgments people make based on their social standing. Singh's examination of heroism by these two men shows the complexities of morality as well as the cost of honour in the end.

MASCULINITY AND GENDER

Despite the fact that love is a powerful force in A Train to Pakistan's desperate world, women in the storey are systematically denied autonomy and determined primarily by their relationships with men. Simultaneously, the men in the storey are subjected to rigid masculinity norms that form their proclivity for abuse. Singh argues that, in addition to religious and caste tensions, gendered racism is heavily to blame for the horrors that followed Partition by emphasising the extremely patriarchal attitudes that prescribe both male and female conduct in the book. The story's female characters

lack their own sense of self-awareness. It is in the light of their relationships with men that they are addressed.

Juggut's lover and the daughter of the Muslim weaver, Imam Baksh, is described as Nooran, who is more thoroughly detailed than any other female character in the novel. Juggut's mother is given no name, but Nooran refers to her as "beybey," a nod to her position as a female elder and a phrase that reinforces her role as a nurturer. Haseena, a Muslim prostitute, is the story's most vulnerable female character, whose thoughts and feelings are filtered through Hukum Chand's impressions of her.

These portrayals of women only serve to perpetuate the idea that they lack personal autonomy. Women are often used as artefacts or vessels for the needs of men. In a shared cell with Iqbal, for example, Juggut refers to British women as unattainable sexual artefacts ("houris") and Indian women as "black buffalos" due to their darker skin. The analogy of English women to houris, or angels, confirms a colonial misconception about English women. Since white women were once forbidden to Indian men, they are superior to darker-skinned women and more attractive.

When women aren't treated as sexual objects, they become symbols of virtue whose worth is determined by their chastity. Hindu women, according to Chand, are so "pure" that they would rather commit suicide than allow a stranger to touch them. This suggests that Hindu women who are raped are concerned that the crime will diminish their worth in the eyes of Hindu men. Chand's remark is particularly hypocritical, considering that he happily employs Haseena, a teenaged Muslim prostitute, while waxing lyrical about Hindu women's "purity."

This reveals starkly different codes of conduct for Hindu men and women, which constrain the latter while maintaining the former's sexual freedom. When men are unable to demonstrate their masculinity through sexually exploiting or objectifying women, they resort to abuse. In the book, Sikh men define manhood by their ability to confront or commit crime. When a group of Sikh soldiers goes to a community meeting at the gurdwara, for example, a boy leader stands out among them and tempts the Sikh male villagers to kill Muslims by claiming that their masculinity depends on it. Singh describes the young man as being "small in stature, slight in build, and somewhat effeminate." This suggests that the boy leader is using his military power to incite the male villagers to violence in order to prove his manhood.

The hijras, whose transgender or intersex identities position them outside of conventional modes of masculinity and femininity, often pose a threat to manhood. The hijras' flagrant disregard for social expectations helps them to highlight gender's performative existence. The hijras, for example, "[whirl] around so fast that their skirts [fly] in the air" during a fight with a Sikh and Hindu mob that attempts to kill a Muslim child exposing their genitals and asking them to ask the mob whether they are "Hindus or Muslims," a comedic jab at strict adherence to ethnicity categories.

When the Sikhs agree to let the hijras stay in the village in return for their immediate departure, one hijra "[runs] his finger in a Sikh's beard" and asks if he is afraid that the men will become like the hijras and avoid having children, which causes the crowd, including other Sikhs, to erupt in laughter once more. The remark is a not-so-subtle reference to some Indian men's proclivity for having sexual affairs with hijras while publicly denying any association with them.

To address the men's hypocrisy, Singh uses the hijras' mockery of the crowd, especially of the Sikhs, who are the most hostile toward them. The hatred for the hijras often shows that masculinity is often built as a rejection of something resembling femininity. The novel's portrayal of women and hijras shows their vulnerability in a country that does not value them as individuals, and eventually demonstrates how misogyny and gender inequality contributed to the country's vicious cycle of violence. The novel's frequent mention of rape as a weapon of war demonstrates the gendered nature of that brutality.

Muslims in Mano Majra, for example, talk about rumours of "gentlewomen getting their veils off" and being "raped in the marketplace." Sundari's tale is another horrifying one, in which Muslims rape the newlywed and then cut off her husband's penis, the most heinous and humiliating of punishments. According to Singh, this regular denial of humanity to women and hijras was one of the precursors to the broader violence that engulfed India in 1947.

Key words/ Glossary

Sahib – A term meaning "sir" or "master." It was commonly used in colonial India when natives addressed a European or someone with an official or higher-class status.

Gurdwara – In Punjabi, the term means "doorway to the Guru," or "house of God." A gurdwara is a Sikh temple. Like other houses of worship, Sikhs conduct the business of worship in the gurdwara. They also use the space to officiate weddings and religious initiation ceremonies.

Nar Admi – A male administrator. "Nar" in Hindi and Punjabi means "male." The term is used to refer to Hukum Chand, the magistrate for Mano Majra.

"Sat Sri Akal" – A common Sikh greeting in Hindi. It roughly means, "Blessed is the person who believes that God is Truth."

Babu / Babuji – An honorific title for a man, particularly one who is educated. The inclusion of the suffix "-ji" emphasizes the respect shown to someone with an elevated social status.

Banian – A title used for someone who is a member of the merchant class. It was sometimes used pejoratively to refer to an Indian trader who worked with a British firm, implying that the person's loyalties were with the British imperialists and not with the native people.

Toba – "Penance" in Hindi.

Mem-sahib – A term used by Indians to refer to a white, upperclass European woman, usually the wife of a colonial official.

Houri – In Muslim faith, a houri is a beautiful young virgin who will serve as a reward for just and faithful men in Paradise, or Heaven.

Kirpan – A small, curved sword or dagger traditionally carried by Sikh men.

Beybey – A term of endearment similar in meaning to "mother" or "aunt" and used by younger people to refer to elder women.

Pathan – Another name for a "Pashtun" or, often, an Afghan. The Pathan people are natives of southern and eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan. They speak Pashto and are usually Sunni Muslims.

Dacoity – An act of armed robbery. A 'dacoit' is a member of a gang who commits the act of armed robbery.

Bhai – "Brother" or "cousin" in Hindi. "Bhaiji" is a similar term of endearment, but it includes the gender-neutral honorific ending "-ji," which is commonly used in many South Asian languages and dialects to show respect.

Sepoy – A designation for an Indian soldier serving under European orders.

Charpoy – Traditionally used in India, it is a bed woven with tape or rope, consisting of a wooden frame that looks like a bench.

Chapatti – Also spelled "chapati," this is an unleavened flatbread that serves as a staple food in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as in parts of East Africa and the Caribbean. Another common name for the bread is "roti."

Budmash – A term that refers to a notorious person, a worthless person, a thug, or a person of poor character. The term is also used playfully among friends and family members.

Punkah – A large fan suspended from a ceiling, sometimes run on electricity, which moves back and forth. Traditionally, punkahs can be moved backward and forward by pulling on a cord.

Muezzin – A person appointed by a mosque to lead followers in prayer. The muezzin calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret, or mosque tower, and leads them in worship five times per day.

Lambardar – A title in India that applies to powerful landowners and members of their families. The title is hereditary and gives its holders wide-ranging powers, including police powers and the ability to collect revenue from tenants.

Betel – A leaf that is frequently chewed, along with its seeds, like tobacco. The betel nut is the seed of the betel plant, a popular stimulant in southern Asia, particularly in India. It is estimated that one-tenth of the world's population regularly chews betel, making it the fourth most commonly used drug in the world, after nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine.

Shikar / Shikari – A hunt.

Tonga – A small carriage used for transportation in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that can hold up to four people and is pulled by a single horse or pony.

Hijra – A group that includes both transgender and intersex people. They feature prominently in both Hindu and Muslim history and are characterized by their heavily made-up faces and dazzling saris. As eunuchs, they were the protectors of harems during the Mughal Empire. Currently, they dance in temples and on the streets, often begging for rupees in traffic. Out of a commonly-held

superstitious belief that hijras have the power to bestow powerful blessings or curses, Indians frequently give them money in return for a blessing. The failure to give alms could, some believe, result in a curse.

The Muslim League – A political party founded in 1906 to protect the rights of Muslims in India. The organization received support from the country's colonizer, Great Britain, until 1913. In that year, the party began to push for the prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity, in favor of gaining independence from Britain. Its most notable leader was Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who initially supported the alliance but, in 1940, joined the rest of the league in calling for a separate state for Muslims, which became Pakistan. To reflect the change, the party later called itself the All Pakistan Muslim League.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

Q1. Based on Mano Majra's definitions, what can we deduce about the village's geographic location? Given the political events (the partition of India and Pakistan) and the time frame in which the novel takes place, how important is that location? Have a general understanding of the historical meaning of the novel and be able to tell in your own terms what the general issues were that guided the shift to partition.

Ans. 1. The story of Mano Majra, a once peaceful village broken apart during India's 1947 partition, is told in Train to Pakistan. Throughout the novel and the division, "ghost trains," or trains carrying massacred Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, crisscross the current frontier divide between Indian and Pakistan. No one knows who sent the first train, but when each side retaliates to the other's acts of aggression, trains of corpses are sent back and forth. A mob arrives in Mano Majra at the end of Khushwant Singh's book, and hires Sikh Mano Majrans to help massacre a train of Muslim refugees on their way to Pakistan. There are Muslim Mano Majrans on this train, which adds a layer of betrayal to the scheme. The novel's climax occurs when Jugga saves the train, allowing it to safely cross the border into Pakistan. As a result, this train is the "train to Pakistan" mentioned in the novel's title.

Q2. How do the villagers feel about these national events? How do those who help partition's interests reach the villagers of Mano Majra? [Page 22] What is the value of religion to the villagers on a daily basis?

Ans. 2. Jugga and Iqbal are nicely set up as foils to one another by Khushwant Singh. The men seem to be polar opposites from the outside. Jugga is taller, more muscular, and larger than the average Indian man, making him stand out in Mano Majra and the surrounding area. Iqbal, on the other hand, is a thin, frail man with an effeminate look. He's also distinct because his demeanour and mannerisms clearly indicate that he's from the city. Iqbal's childhood in the city suggests a high degree of schooling and a progressive political philosophy. Jugga, on the other hand, is illiterate and unconcerned about government and police corruption.

When they are both wrongly arrested for the murder of Lala Ram Lal, their opposing views on government are on display. Iqbal is righteously stubborn, while Jugga quickly accepts that the cops are free to do whatever they want with him. The final and most important distinction between the two men is what they do when they learn of the intended train massacre. Jugga, the illiterate town badmash, finds the strength to sacrifice himself and save the Muslims, despite Iqbal's lofty ideals about humanity, justice, and morality. Khushwant Singh teaches a fascinating lesson about the true meaning of courage, morality, and sacrifice through these two guys.

Q3. Prepare an overview of Mano Majra village. What do we learn about the village's relative rate of prosperity?

Ans. 3. Women are nameless and faceless helpmeets to the men in their lives in Train to Pakistan, with the exception of Nooran, Haseena, and Jugga's mother. Even Jugga's and Hukum Chand's love interests, Nooran and Haseena, fail to claim their independence in their relationships. Nooran appears to refuse Jugga's advances, but it is later revealed that she is pregnant with his child and wishes to remain with him, leaving it unclear how she really feels about him. Haseena is initially afraid of Hukum Chand, but as they spend more time together, she becomes more at ease and forthright. Hukum Chand and Jugga's passion for the women in their lives ultimately drives them to try to save the doomed train of Muslims bound for Pakistan. Women serve as the impetus and catalyst for one of the novel's most dramatic moments in this way.

Q4. Is it true that K. Singh takes great care to create the rhythms of life in Mano Majra? What are the indications for such rhythms? What are the first signs that the patterns of the body are being disrupted? What are the steps that lead to the situation devolving from rhythmed order to chaos?

Ans. 4. The subinspector and Hukum Chand are quasi-villains for the majority of the novel because of their shady interactions with Jugga and Iqbal, the novel's key characters. Ironically, the majority of the men's activities are aimed at keeping peace in Mano Majra and reducing the number of Sikh and Muslim deaths in the region. The subinspector and Chand must resort to corrupt machinations and elaborate schemes to prevent the spread of violence in the Mano Majra region without additional help from the Delhi government.

Unfortunately, innocent men like Jugga and Iqbal suffer as a result of this. Despite this, the Muslims are able to reach Pakistan alive thanks to the efforts of the subinspector and Chand, which makes their actions quite justified. Their plans and deeds, however, would be useless if Jugga's innate sense of justice, patriotism, and courage were not present. The police's plans would have been for naught if Jugga had not sacrificed himself, and they would have been held responsible for the train massacre. Chand was right in relying on Jugga to save the Muslims, but his own contribution to the rescue mission was inadequate.

Q5. In addition to writing novels, K. Singh is a well-known historian (particularly for his work on the history of Sikhs in India) and journalist in India. Singh's style has been described as "journalistic" by one critic. Do you think that's a fair description? What distinguishes Singh's style? How does his writing style influence readers' reactions, especially to some of the novel's more gruesome events?

Ans. 5. Meet Singh, a Sikh priest, and Imam Baksh, a Muslim imam, both serve as religious authorities in Train to Pakistan but also as intelligence sources and moral compass The villagers go to the Sikh temple to hear the latest news and gossip about what's going on in and around town. When the brutality and turmoil of the outside world starts to creep in, this is where everybody gathers. Similarly, it is Imam Baksh who informs the Muslim families of Mano Majra of their impending evacuation. Finally, when the Mano Majra Sikhs begin to believe the misinformation and negative stories about Muslims, it is Meet Singh who stands up and speaks out against them. He and the lambardar, together, is also the only one who speaks out against the extremist mob's plan to slaughter Muslims on the train. He can't stand by and watch while his neighbours' and town's morality is shattered.

Review Questions

1. What can we learn about the villagers' importance hierarchy? How do you justify the villagers' turning against one another, given the values declared (for example, on page 41)? To what principles does the boy leader appeal in order to elicit action from the villagers? (p. 148 and onwards)
2. How does the caste system affect the characters and their behaviour, if at all? Where and how is this power manifested?
3. The novel's original title was Mano Majra, but Singh later changed it to the current title? Consider why he may have done so.
4. What is the meaning of the corpses being buried by bulldozer rather than the traditional methods of rites, ceremonies, and so on?
5. Why do you think K. Singh begins the novel three times, or has three scenes that all take place at the same time? [Is it lust, murder, or a passion without love?]
6. What is the novel's overall structure? Dacoity, kalyug, Mano Majra, and Karma are the titles of the four pieces.
7. Which word reflects 'beautiful young virgin' in reference to the content discussed for the novel:
   Houri
8. What do you understand by the word 'Kirpan' on the basis of the novel Train to Pakistan:
   A small, curved sword or dagger traditionally carried by Sikh men.
9. What does the word 'Beybey' reflect in relation to the context of the novel:
   "mother" or "aunt" and used by younger people to refer to elder women.
10. What is 'Pathan' in reference to the novel text discussion:
    Another name for a "Pashtun" or, often, an Afghan.

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Unit 08: Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To employ the historical context in reference to the text discussed
- To illustrate the various writing narrative styles in the light of the selected text
- To create an insight about the time of partition
- To justify the role of various social structures in the formation of culture
- To compare the historical trauma and its after-effects in the contemporary society
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel

Introduction

A Train to Pakistan, by Khushwant Singh, is set in the fictional town of Mano Majra during the summer of 1947, the year of India's infamously bloody Partition. Following World War II, the United Kingdom granted independence to its former colonies and then split it into the states of India and Pakistan, in an effort to ease religious tensions by establishing a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. Millions of Muslims attempted to cross the partition into Pakistan, while Hindus and Sikhs attempted to cross into India, resulting in a bloodbath. Singh uses Mano Majra, a small border village that was once a "[oasis] of harmony," as a microcosm of religious, caste, and moral differences in India that had existed for a long time but were revealed during the nation's literal schism The violence that erupted as a result of India's partition, according to Singh, had less to do with outside forces and more to do with people's ability to succumb to pre-existing prejudice and hate.

Despite its proximity to a railway bridge that connects India and Pakistan, Mano Majra, a religiously diverse border town, is blissfully unaware of the turmoil surrounding it at first. When the magistrate Hukum Chand inquires about the "situation" in Mano Majra, the subinspector responds that he is not sure whether anyone "even knows that the British have left and the country is split into Pakistan and India."

He believes that some of the villagers are familiar with Mahatma Gandhi, but he doubts that anyone is familiar with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder. When a trainload of dead Sikhs arrives from Pakistan at the Mano Majra train station, this blissful ignorance easily gives way to wrathful abuse. Singh demonstrates how this horrific incident, in combination with pre-existing racism, sets in motion a dangerous cycle of animosity and abuse. When the train schedule goes awry, causing passenger trains to arrive extremely late, it's the first indication that things are changing in the village. The daily schedule of Mano Majra is determined by the arrival and departure of trains.

This throws the village's normalcy into disarray. The arrival of the "ghost train" from Pakistan, the second sign, sows the first seed of doubt in the minds of the villagers. Finally, Sikh officers arrive and ask the villagers to donate all of their wood and kerosene. The villagers are kept in the dark on why the soldiers need these supplies, but they later smell a mixture of burning wood and kerosene, as well as burnt flesh. The villagers are instilled with the sense of secrecy by the Sikh officers and others in authority, including Hukum Chand, who preside over the burning of the bodies.

They have a strong feeling that something is really wrong and that they are in danger. The head constable later asks if anyone has talked to "a young Mussulman babu named Mohammed Iqbal who was a member of the Muslim League" after the dacoity at Lala Ram Lal's home. The villagers find it curious that the police believe an educated, middle-class man might be a suspect in a heinous crime, and they begin to suspect that Iqbal was sent as a spy by the Muslims. The head constable's questions divide Mano Majra "as neatly as a knife slices through a pat of butter," showing how easily people can be duped into mistrusting those they call mates.

After the monsoon, when the rainwater causes the Sutlej River to rise, the village is subjected to even more brutality. When the villagers see many people floating in the sea, they notice stab wounds and women's breasts that have been mutilated, indicating that they have been massacred. The sight of these bodies, combined with the knowledge that hundreds of Sikhs and Muslims were murdered in Pakistan before being shipped into India on the "ghost train," drives Sikhs to violence, convincing many to join the conspiracy to murder Muslim refugees on their way to Pakistan.

Subject Matter

Not all of Mano Majra's residents are enslaved by hate. Meet Singh, the local bhai, isn't an especially gifted priest, but he takes advantage of his status to cater to people's sense of dignity. His attempts to persuade his fellow Sikhs that they should not blame their Muslim neighbours for the actions of Muslims across the border fail to calm the violent impulses sparked by visiting Sikh soldiers. Indeed, Mano Majra is visited by a group of Sikh soldiers with rifles slung over their shoulders, one of whom—a boy leader—entices the crowd to participate in revenge killings in Pakistan in response to the massacres of Hindus and Sikhs.

However, he avoids interfering too much for fear of becoming a victim of retaliatory abuse. The bhai's words, on the other hand, motivate Juggut Singh, a former thief with a history of crime, to take retributive action. Juggut pays a visit to Meet Singh and requests that the priest read a prayer to him. He then inquires about the prayer's efficacy, to which the priest responds that the Guru's word is always good and can assist those who do good. If people do bad things, the Guru's words will backfire on them. Juggut then goes on to "do good" by giving his life to save a train full of Muslim refugees. The author is implying that language alone cannot deter or cause abuse, but that it can be used to do so. Language can be a catalyst that encourages people to act on already established impulses, just like the head constable's manipulative advice to the villagers.

Singh highlights the complexities of humanity at a period when people were reduced to their religious allegiances by refusing to blame any specific religious community for the brutality of the partition. He provides extensive descriptions of the atrocities perpetrated by all to demonstrate that certain behaviours are not exclusive to certain religious groups, but are universal. Despite the fact that Singh uses the storey of India's partition as a cautionary tale of what can happen when people give in to their baser impulses, his portrayal of the partition of India is inaccurate. The destruction of the rope by Jugga demonstrates that mankind is capable of remarkable acts of bravery and heroism in the face of hate.

Summary

OPPOSITION

Antimony is a metaphor for the rewards and risks of love and sex in the book. Antimony is a dangerous mineral that is mistakenly thought to be the main ingredient in kohl, the eyeliner used by Juggut Singh's Muslim girlfriend Nooran and Muslim prostitute Haseena. During their robbery of Lala Ram Lal, Malli and the other robbers talk about Nooran, a girl who appears innocent during the day but "puts black antimony in her eyes" at night, showing the association of antinomy with lust and sin. "She is dark, but her eyes are darker," they say of Nooran. Haseena's eyes are also lined "with antimony and lampblack."

In the book, both Nooran and Haseena are sources of gratification for the men who love them, although reluctantly. Due to their Muslim status, both women, like the "antimony in [their] eyes," are associated with risk. For example, when Nooran becomes pregnant with Juggut's child, she is afraid that her father will kill her because she is pregnant out of wedlock. She also worries that if her potential Pakistani neighbours find out that her baby's father is a Sikh, the infant will be murdered. Meanwhile, Hukum Chand, a middle-aged married magistrate, falls in love with Haseena, a young woman whose religious affiliation and social status are diametrically opposed to his own. Both women's eyes are flecked with antimony. Both women's eyes eventually identify them as subjects of desire, pleasure, and risk, despite their best efforts.

BRIDGE ON THE RAILWAY

The railway bridge represents both the positive and negative aspects of modernity, as well as India's relationship with Pakistan, which has endured amid Partition and religious animosity. The bridge, which physically connects India and Pakistan, was constructed during India's colonial era and is the only example of Western-style infrastructure in the tiny village of Mano Majra, which has no roads. Trains carrying passengers and goods pass through it on a daily basis, emphasising its importance as Mano Majra's only connection to the outside world.

However, the bridge is not only a means by which Mano Majra receives goods; it is also one of the ways in which the isolated and relatively peaceful village becomes embroiled in the chaos that has engulfed neighbouring and distant cities. It is this bridge that transports a trainload of refugees to Pakistan, and it is also the location of a Sikh plot to murder passengers on that train near the end of the book. The bridge thus symbolises the religious differences that exist between the two countries while also emphasising their inherent connection.

THE BANGLES

A bangle represents the Kara, or belief in eternity, in the Sikh faith—that God, or the Guru, has no beginning or end. The Kara is one of the Sikh religion's five "K's," or articles of faith. Bangles, on the other hand, become synonymous with a certain dissolution or undermining of religious confidence in the book. Malli and his gang steal bangles from Lala Ram Lal's house and throw them into Juggut Singh's courtyard, where they break into bits, in order to implicate Juggut in the robbery. The shattered bangles reflect both the alleged loss of a bond with God and India's geographical split. Newlyweds, including Hukum Chand's orderly, Sundari, wear a lot of bangles for good luck. When she and her husband, Mansa Ram, are dragged off a bus by a horde of Muslims.

The influence of this symbolism is then abused by Muslims, who rape Sundari. The author seems to say, through the narration of this anecdote, that such religious symbols are meaningless when the tenets of a religion are ignored in favour of brutality and political tyranny. In the book, the Sikhs are just as guilty of this as the Muslims. When many characters, including Meet Singh and the subinspector, believe that Iqbal Singh is a Sikh because he wears the steel bangle that many Sikh men wear to demonstrate their religion, the author further suggests that bangles are devoid of true religious power and significance. The bangle, on the other hand, could simply be an adornment to aid the religiously inclined.

The bangle, on the other hand, may simply be an accessory to help the religiously ambiguous Iqbal pass himself off as a Sikh. This, combined with the fact that Iqbal is circumcised, a symbol of Muslim faith, makes it difficult to determine his true religious affiliation. He doesn't identify with any of them. The fact that religious affiliation is unclear only adds to the absurdity of the violence between religious groups. If Sikhism is characterised solely by the wearing of bangles that are easy to put on and take off, the faith becomes a flimsy garment that anyone can don for political reasons or even to live.

INTERMINGLING OF HISTORY AND LITERATURE

The novel is set in the fictional town of Mano Majra on the Pakistan-India border in the summer of 1947 and is classified as Historical Fiction. The novel's political setting is India's partition in 1947. A narrator who is not involved in the plot tells the storey in the third person omniscient point of view. The novel's central conflict is the struggle between India's Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu communities in the wake of India's 1947 partition. “Then life in Mano Majra comes to a halt, save for the dogs barking at passing trains at night. Until the summer of 1947, it had always been that way” (Singh 16). Foreshadowing can be seen in the quote above since it depicts life before the summer of 1947, when it was calm and quiet.

This portends that things are about to change in Mano Majra, and that life in the small village will never be the same again. "'In Mano Majra, you will see significant changes!" Singh (Singh 222). The subinspector's quote is an excellent example of understatement, as he alludes to what happened in Mano Majra when Jugga and Iqbal were imprisoned. Rather than a "massive shift," the removal of half of the village's population is a perfect illustration of understatement. There are many allusions to real-life political figures in the book, including Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Jawaharlal Nehru, implying that the intermingling of their ideologies a mash-up of history and literature.

There are also many references to religious scriptures, including the Sikh Granth. Massacres, murders, pillaging, and rapes are common as Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs resettle and cross from India to Pakistan and vice versa. Around 14.5 million refugees cross borders in search of what they

perceive to be religious majority safety. In the aftermath of the partition, an estimated 2 million Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs are killed. The years following World War II saw several nations restructured and the international system realigned as a result of the war's devastation. The Marshall Plan is a reorganisation initiative orchestrated by the United Nations.

The Marshall Plan, a reorganisation initiative spearheaded by US Secretary of State George C. Marshall, offered more than $15 billion to help restore Western Europe's war-ravaged towns, factories, and infrastructure. To fund the war effort, the United Kingdom had to relinquish some of its colonies, including India. Britain's reputation as a superpower was severely harmed as a result of this action. In its position, the United States became the most dominant Western country, competing for foreign control with the Soviet Union.

During and after the Cold War, the United States assumed the position of defender of Western democracy. We gain a more humanitarian viewpoint through literary narratives focused on historical events, which gives us an appreciation of the people's feelings involved in the tragedy rather than only numbers of the number of people killed and the political events that contributed to it. Using fictional narratives to study foreign affairs broadens the discipline's spectrum and makes it interdisciplinary. It makes international relations more interesting to research and draws people into the field. People enjoy literature in the form of stories, novels, and poetry, and fictional narratives based on historical events aid in conveying this concept.

Simpler way to communicate this concept to the general public Combining International Relations and Literature aids in the conversion of complicated concepts such as national power, balance of power, and collective security into simplistic narratives that are easily understood by the general public. Furthermore, it tells people stories of people that are similar to them, translating them into ideas that they can relate to, and as a result, it is widely read. With the aid of various literary devices such as point of view, foreshadowing, understatement, allusions, and so on, Train to Pakistan is able to combine history and literature to address the vast and unending impact of the historical event of partition.

NARRATIVE IN THE THIRD PERSON

Throughout the book, Khushwant Singh's tone is satirically comedic and insightful. Even as he explains the novel's tragic events and behaviour, he emphasises the ironic absurdity of those events and actions. Something awful is brewing in Mano Majra, and the reader waits with bated breath for the hurricane to strike. A narrator who is not involved in the plot tells the storey in the third person omniscient point of view. In the case of Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, we learn about Partition in a non-traditional way and from a unique perspective, allowing us to gain new insights into the topic.

When we look at Partition, we can see that it was a calculated attempt by the British government to weaken the Indian subcontinent. However, Jinnah believed that Muslims would be unsafe in India and thus requested the country's partition. When we look at the facts, many Muslims who, according to political leaders, were not safe in India, were hesitant to leave. Thousands of people were killed as a result of partition, which developed an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust.

It was a total failure on the part of both India's and Pakistan's leaders, and it was poorly conducted. Literary narratives centred on historical events are a great way to learn about history, we gain a more humanitarian viewpoint that allows us to comprehend the people's feelings surrounding the tragedy rather than just facts about the number of people killed and the political developments that lead up to it.

Using fictional narratives to study foreign affairs broadens the discipline's spectrum and makes it interdisciplinary. This is just what the author was able to do in this third-person narrative. People enjoy literature in the form of tales, novels, and poetry, and fictional narratives based on historical events aid in better conveying this concept to the masses. The combination of International Relations and Literature aids in the conversion of the complex transforming complicated concepts like national power, balance of power, and collective security into simplistic narratives that people can understand Furthermore, it tells people stories of people that are similar to them, translating them into ideas that they can relate to, and as a result, it is widely read. Let's look at a few quotes from the text and see if we can figure out what's going on in these stories:

> 'The winds of destruction are blowing across the land. All we hear is kill, kill. The only ones who enjoy freedom are thieves, robbers and cutthroats.' Then he added calmly: 'We were better off under the British. At least there was security.'
>
> -Banta Singh, page 75

"Was life easier before?" is a common issue in the wake of every revolution. Banta Singh claims that life on the Indian subcontinent was better before India's independence from British rule

because there was more security. This is because India's new self-government refused to uphold the rule of law after the English relinquished power, resulting in an increase in violence and crime. This power vacuum is common in many post-revolutionary societies, and it's one of the reasons why revolution and the ostensible independence it brings are meaningless to people like Banta Singh:

> 'It will take us more than one night to clear out of homes it has taken our fathers and grandfathers hundreds of years to make.'
>
> -Imam Baksh, page 177

Imam Baksh, as the mullah of the mosque, is the unofficial spokesman for the Muslim community of Mano Majra. Following the head constable's announcement, he visits the gurdwara to speak with Mano Majra's Sikhs about what has happened. Imam Baksh gets up to leave and says the above words after it is decided that the Muslims are safer at a nearby refugee camp. He intends to strike a chord in his Sikh neighbours' hearts and minds, which he does. His words also effectively express the ideological challenge that India's partition posed for the 10 million people who were displaced as a result of Pakistan and India's separation. For many, India or Pakistan were the only options.

For many, India or Pakistan had been their only home for decades, but rage and violence were driving them out. If they were given one night or a year's worth of nights, it would be hard to ever "clean out" those houses.

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES

The author draws a connection between the unusual summer heat and the shift in Hindu-Sikh-Muslim ties as a result of India's partition. The lateness of the monsoon season, which usually cools the summer heat, is linked to an increase in crime, which becomes intolerable to the point that people leave their homes.

Muslims fled to Pakistan, their new homeland, while Sikhs and Hindus claimed India. Despite their insistence on living as rivals, the groups "[run] into" each other during this forced separation, showing how they share an experience of migration and displacement. Mano Majra is an oasis, or a place where you can get away from the relentless fighting. The three structures in Mano Majra (the home of moneylender Lala Ram Lal, a Sikh temple, and a mosque) reflect the existence of three religious communities. The land division also demonstrates that the caste system in the village is founded on religious membership. Ram Lal is a minority figure, but he is wealthy.

His wealth, however, is based on his position as a lender. Muslims are at the bottom of the social ladder because they do not own land; but, without their help, the Sikhs would be unable to sustain their farms. The social system is hierarchical, but it is also based on cultural understanding codependency. Since the majority of the villagers are illiterate, they base their days on the arrival and departure of trains. Trains are one of the few facets of modernity in the social system that they can use. The robbers intend to use the bangles to frame Jugga. This is the first time Nooran is mentioned in the story; she isn't identified, but she is described in relation to her father and Jugga, and she is remembered.

Jugga and only known for her ostensibly seductive looks. The arrival of the goods train and the robbers' plan to steal the house of the town's richest family have an amusing parallel. The women are the protectors of the house, but they are helpless when confronted by robbers. The women's helplessness is emphasised by Singh's portrayal of them "crouching," the boy "clinging to the elder," and the older woman "begging," which contrasts with the men's forceful acts of hammering, requesting, and taking the old woman's handful of jewellery. Singh emphasises the robbers' callous disregard for life by demonstrating their mistreatment of women and children.

Hukum Chand's later remark about Muslims being dismissive to women is contradicted by this scene. The thieves, who we later learn are Sikh, are just as brutal. Ram Lal goes into hiding to protect himself and his wealth, leaving the women and children alone. Despite his pleas to the crew not to kill anyone, his decision to hide and abandon an elderly woman and a small child to armed robbers reveals his greed. When the robbers kill Mano Majra's only Hindu. They upset the power balance that has existed for a long time by being the only man with enough resources to provide the villagers with money.

Finally, a gang decides to kill everyone on the train bound for Pakistan. Juggat Singh, a Sikh boy in love with Nooran, a Muslim girl, is also on board. Juggat Singh makes the ultimate sacrifice to save the Muslims. The novel emphasises common people's misery, who had no choice in the matter and were simply asked to comply with this act. The storey also demonstrates how hesitant Muslims were to move to Pakistan.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Lala Ram Lal
Lala Ram Lal is Mano Majra's moneylender, and his family is the only Hindu family in the region. Malli and a gang of dacoits assassinate him at the start of the book, attempting to blame Jugga for the crime.

Malli
Malli is a character in the film Malli. A young dacoit who leads a gang from a different village. He and Jugga are enemies, and he tries to blame Jugga for Lala Ram Lal's murder. He is left in charge of the Muslim population of Mano Majra's property at the end of the book.

Singh, Jugga/Juggut
In Train to Pakistan, he is the main character. He is Mano Majra's resident "bad guy," a young, strapping dacoit with a good heart. He redeems himself and saves the lives of Mano Majra's Muslim citizens by the end of the book.

Nooran
Nooran is the Muslim weaver's daughter, as well as the mullah of Mano Majra's mosque. She and Jugga have several trysts together, and she is pregnant with his child by the end of the book.

Juggut Singh's mother
She is a no-nonsense, long-suffering woman who disapproves of her son's reckless behaviour but is unable to stop him. She is the only one who is aware that Nooran is expecting Jugga's brother.

Alam Singh
Jugga's father, Alam Singh Alam, passed away. He was a notorious dacoit who had been hanged for murder two years before. His son's reputation is influenced by his.

Iqbal Singh
Muhammad Iqbal is a well-educated Delhi resident who has been dispatched to Mano Majra to inform the locals about various petitions for government reform. Instead, he is arrested alongside Jugga for the murder of Lala Ram Lal and is accused of being a member of the Muslim League.

Bhai Meet Singh
Meet Singh is a priest and the keeper of the Mano Majra Sikh temple. He is the only voice of opposition at the end of the book, when a band of Sikh extremists arrives in Mano Majra and gathers volunteers to kill a train of Muslims en route to Pakistan.

Banta Singh
In Mano Majra, Banta Singh is the lambardar (local chief). He is a municipal official since he collects taxes for the state. He tells the police in Chundunnugger about the plot to kill the Muslims on the train to Pakistan at the end of the book.

Chand Hukum
Hukum Chand is the deputy commissioner and magistrate of Mano Majra and the surrounding district. He struggles with all of his choices in the novel because he is morally dubious. Finally, he tries to prevent a massacre of Muslims in his district by releasing Jugga and Iqbal to stop the train massacre.

The Head Constable
He is Hukum Chand's lackey and the subinspector, and he is the police officer who arrests Jugga and Iqbal.

The Subinspector/Inspector Sahib
Jugga and Iqbal are imprisoned by the Subinspector/Inspector Sahib, despite the fact that he knows they did not kill Lala Ram Lal. In an effort to further discredit Iqbal, he spreads the storey that he is a member of the Muslim League. He also threatens Jugga with torture until he confesses the true identities of Lala Ram Lal's killers.

Baksh, Imam
Nooran's father, Imam Baksh, is the imam and mullah of Mano Majra's mosque. He is blind and has no idea about Nooran's friendship with Jugga.

Haseena
Haseena is a Muslim woman who lives in Pakistan. Begum, please. Hukum Chand hires Haseena, a young Muslim prostitute.

Prem Singh
Prem Singh is an Indian businessman. Hukum Chand's colleague who seeks to curry favour with groups of English citizens.

Sundari
Sundari is a kind of Hindu goddess. Hukum Chand's orderly's daughter. A mob rapes her on her way to Gujranwala four days after she and her husband Mansa Ram were married.

Mansa Ram
He is husband of Sundari. A Muslim mob threatens their bus as they travel to Gujranwala. His wife is raped and his penis is severed by the mob.

Sunder Singh
He is an Indian businessman. A Sikh war hero with a slew of medals to his name for victories in Burma, Eritrea, and Italy. When his children and wife are trapped for several days on an overcrowded train to India with no provisions, he shoots them. He lacks the necessary skills. He doesn't have the courage to commit suicide, and he makes it to India safely.

The Leader of the Mob
A young man from a nearby village who comes to Mano Majra. He incites the Sikhs of Mano Majra to turn on their Muslim neighbours, and plots the assassination of a Muslim train bound for Pakistan.

Key words/ Glossary

Betel – A leaf that is frequently chewed, along with its seeds, like tobacco. The betel nut is the seed of the betel plant, a popular stimulant in southern Asia, particularly in India. It is estimated that one-tenth of the world's population regularly chews betel, making it the fourth most commonly used drug in the world, after nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine.

Shikar / Shikari – A hunt.

Tonga – A small carriage used for transportation in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh that can hold up to four people and is pulled by a single horse or pony.

Hijra – A group that includes both transgender and intersex people. They feature prominently in both Hindu and Muslim history and are characterized by their heavily made-up faces and dazzling saris. As eunuchs, they were the protectors of harems during the Mughal Empire. Currently, they dance in temples and on the streets, often begging for rupees in traffic. Out of a commonly-held superstitious belief that hijras have the power to bestow powerful blessings or curses, Indians frequently give them money in return for a blessing. The failure to give alms could, some believe, result in a curse.

The Muslim League – A political party founded in 1906 to protect the rights of Muslims in India. The organization received support from the country's colonizer, Great Britain, until 1913. In that year, the party began to push for the prospect of Hindu-Muslim unity, in favor of gaining independence from Britain. Its most notable leader was Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who initially supported the alliance but, in 1940, joined the rest of the league in calling for a separate state for Muslims, which became Pakistan. To reflect the change, the party later called itself the All Pakistan Muslim League.

Sahib – A term meaning "sir" or "master." It was commonly used in colonial India when natives addressed a European or someone with an official or higher-class status.

Gurdwara – In Punjabi, the term means "doorway to the Guru," or "house of God." A gurdwara is a Sikh temple. Like other houses of worship, Sikhs conduct the business of worship in the gurdwara. They also use the space to officiate weddings and religious initiation ceremonies.

Nar Admi – A male administrator. "Nar" in Hindi and Punjabi means "male." The term is used to refer to Hukum Chand, the magistrate for Mano Majra.

"Sat Sri Akal" – A common Sikh greeting in Hindi. It roughly means, "Blessed is the person who believes that God is Truth."

Babu / Babuji – An honorific title for a man, particularly one who is educated. The inclusion of the suffix "-ji" emphasizes the respect shown to someone with an elevated social status.

Banian – A title used for someone who is a member of the merchant class. It was sometimes used pejoratively to refer to an Indian trader who worked with a British firm, implying that the person's loyalties were with the British imperialists and not with the native people.

Toba – "Penance" in Hindi.

Mem-sahib – A term used by Indians to refer to a white, upperclass European woman, usually the wife of a colonial official.

Houri – In Muslim faith, a houri is a beautiful young virgin who will serve as a reward for just and faithful men in Paradise, or Heaven.

Kirpan – A small, curved sword or dagger traditionally carried by Sikh men.

Beybey – A term of endearment similar in meaning to "mother" or "aunt" and used by younger people to refer to elder women.

Pathan – Another name for a "Pashtun" or, often, an Afghan. The Pathan people are natives of southern and eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan. They speak Pashto and are usually Sunni Muslims.

Dacoity – An act of armed robbery. A 'dacoit' is a member of a gang who commits the act of armed robbery.

Bhai – "Brother" or "cousin" in Hindi. "Bhaiji" is a similar term of endearment, but it includes the gender-neutral honorific ending "-ji," which is commonly used in many South Asian languages and dialects to show respect.

Sepoy – A designation for an Indian soldier serving under European orders.

Charpoy – Traditionally used in India, it is a bed woven with tape or rope, consisting of a wooden frame that looks like a bench.

Chapatti – Also spelled "chapati," this is an unleavened flatbread that serves as a staple food in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as in parts of East Africa and the Caribbean. Another common name for the bread is "roti."

Budmash – A term that refers to a notorious person, a worthless person, a thug, or a person of poor character. The term is also used playfully among friends and family members.

Punkah – A large fan suspended from a ceiling, sometimes run on electricity, which moves back and forth. Traditionally, punkahs can be moved backward and forward by pulling on a cord.

Muezzin – A person appointed by a mosque to lead followers in prayer. The muezzin calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret, or mosque tower, and leads them in worship five times per day.

Lambardar – A title in India that applies to powerful landowners and members of their families. The title is hereditary and gives its holders wide-ranging powers, including police powers and the ability to collect revenue from tenants.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. Describe the environment in India, as described in the book's first section?
India is in the midst of a religious upheaval, as the country is divided between a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan. Both sides accuse each other of murdering and raping people at will, and violence is rampant.

2. Describe Mano Majra's town at the start of the novel?
With just three brick buildings and seventy households, Mano Majra is a small village. The number of Muslims and Sikhs is equal, but there is only one Hindu, the local money lender. The town is known for its railway station and is dependent on farming.

3. Describe Mano Majra's morning routine in terms of the Muslim mosque and Sikh temple?

The arrival of the mail train signals the start of the day. The mosque's mullah starts his prayers, and when he is done, the Sikh temple's priest begins his.

4. The moneylender of Mano Majra is

A. Lala Ram Lal
B. Malli
C. Jugga/Juggut Singh
D. Nooran

5. A young dacoit who is the leader of a gang from another village is

A. Lala Ram Lal
B. Malli
C. Jugga/Juggut Singh
D. Nooran

6. He/She's the only one that knows Nooran is pregnant with Jugga's child:

A. Alam Singh
B. Iqbal Singh/Iqbal Muhammad
C. Juggut Singh's mother
D. Bhai Meet Singh

7. The lambardar (local headman) in Mano Majra is:

A. Hukum Chand
B. The Head Constable
C. The Subinspector/Inspector Sahib
D. Banta Singh

8. Nooran's father and the imam and mullah of Mano Majra's mosque is:

A. Imam Baksh
B. Haseena Begum
C. Prem Singh
D. Sundari

9. The mob rapes his wife and cuts his penis off. He is:

A. The Leader of the Mob
B. Mansa Ram
C. Lala Ram Lal
D. Malli

10. He is the main protagonist of *Train to Pakistan*. He is:

A. Nooran
B. Juggut Singh's mother

C. Jugga/Juggut Singh
D. Alam Singh

11. He is an educated man from Delhi sent to inform the people of Mano Majra of various petitions for government reform. He is:

A. Bhai Meet Singh
B. Banta Singh
C. Hukum Chand
D. Iqbal Singh/Iqbal Muhammad

Review Questions

1. How does the weather, as well as the natural world in general, serve as a metaphor and context in the novel?
2. What is the meaning of trains in the book, including but not limited to the obvious deadly ones?
3. What is the narration's general style and tone? Does the impersonal (i.e., third-person) narrator seem to have a specific perspective on the characters and events? How simple or difficult is it to tell the difference between the narrator's point of view and the thoughts and feelings of the characters?
4. How much of the Partition's wider historical setting is depicted in the novel? How much evidence do we have of the effects of British colonisation? What were the pre-Partition relationships between the various groups? What are the conditions like outside of this village, and even in Punjab? What was the scope of the violence and migrations that took place during Partition?
5. To what degree does the novel mean that what happens in Mano Majra is common or emblematic of what happens during Partition in the Punjab and elsewhere, or does it imply that this is merely one individualised portrait?
6. Are the authorities depicted as being in an impossible position as the events unfold, especially in the novel's final segment, with little if any good options and little ability to avoid the violence?
7. Think about how the various ethnic/religious groups are represented: Sikh men and women, Muslim men and women, and Hindu men and women. How many of each kind are there? To what degree is this true? Based on these depictions, what are some characteristics that one may assign to each group and gender? Is there something wrong with these representations?
8. How does the novel depict a particular religious belief or practise? Is it implied in the novel that the terms "Muslim," "Hindu," and "Sikh" are solely religious designations, or is there more to belonging to these communities than religious belief?
9. How are the following characters portrayed as representative types: Iqbal Singh, a foreign-educated social reformer from the "new" India; Hukum Chand, a Hindu Indian government official; Bhai Meet Singh, a local Sikh villager; Juggut Singh, a masculine "sympathetic" criminal; Haseena and Nooran Baksh, two young, sexually abused Muslim female characters?

10. Comment, in particular, on the very different characterizations of the men whose lives become entangled in the novel: Iqbal and Jugga. How does the novel's ending affect our perceptions of each character, if at all?

Answer to self-evaluation questions

4	A	5	B	6	C	7	D
8	A	9	B	10	C	11	D

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Unit 09: Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To understand the structural outline of the selected text
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel
- To compare the thematic contexts with the content
- To illustrate the various writing narrative styles in the light of selected text
- To study the themes in the novel
- To acquaint the humanism in the novel
- To visualize the realistic and sympathetic treatment of the poor in India

Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand was a prolific writer who was best known as a social realist and a humanist during his period. He was born in Peshawar in 1905 and attended Khalsa College in Amritsar for his early education. Later, he moved to England and was accepted as an undergraduate at University College London. He went on to Cambridge University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1929. He became close friends with the Bloomsbury Group there, and even spent some time in Geneva. Anand spent most of his life in both London and India. He expressed his concern for India's independence movement by writing propaganda on behalf of the Indian cause.

He also worked as a journalist and advocated for freedom in other countries, especially in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. He worked as a scriptwriter for the BBC in London during WWII and became one of George Orwell's close friends. Anand returned to India in 1946 and resumed his literary career as a novelist. Most of his novels depict the lives of the oppressed, and he used literature to illustrate the exploitation of the poor in Indian conservative society.

Mulk Raj Anand's career as a writer was influenced in large part by his family tragedy, especially the rigidities of the caste system that existed at the time. His first essay was inspired by his aunt's suicide after her family excommunicated her for sharing a meal with a Muslim woman. Untouchable, his first book, was published in 1935 and was a satire on orthodox Indian society, which discriminated against people from lower social classes. This book, which gained him enormous fame, shows his vision of a humanist and reformist.

Coolie (1936), Two Leaves And A Bud (1937), The Village (1939), Through the Black Waters (1941), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), and The Big Heart (1945) are his other humanistic novels. Anand has also published seven short story collections – The Child and Other Stories (1934), The Barber's Trade Union and Other Stories (1944), The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories (1947), Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories (1953), The Power of Darkness and Other Stories (1959), Lajwanti and Other Stories (1966), and (1973). Indian Fairy Tales (1961), and The Old Woman and the Cow are among his other works (1960). The Road (1963) and The Death of Hero (1964)

followed (1964). His autobiographical novels include Seven Summers, Morning Face, The Confession of A Lover, and The Bubble. The Sahitya Akademi Award for Morning Face was given to him (1968).

Mulk Raj Anand was a member of the International Progress Organization and the editor of the literary journal Marg. He gave a series of lectures on Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru, highlighting their contributions to India and their progressive views on humanism. In addition, Anand has written a number of short stories about India's rich culture and tradition. His later works are seen as an effort to embark on a spiritual quest in pursuit of a higher degree of self-awareness.

9.1 Subject Matter

Untouchable is a well-known novel in Indian English literature for its realistic portrayal of the life of an untouchable sweeper boy named Bakha. "Bakha is a real man, lovable, thwarted, often grand, often weak, and thoroughly Indian," writes E.M. Forster in the novel's Preface. We can recognise his strong articulate face, graceful body, and heavy buttocks as he performs his dreaded job or steps out in artillery boots in the hope of a nice stroll through the city with a paper packet of cheap sweets in his hand." This novel depicts the marginalised sections of society during the pre-independence period of India in a realistic manner.

Bakha, the novel's protagonist, represents all of the country's downtrodden citizens who have suffered injustice and suppression because of their caste. Bakha and other characters in the novel suffer as a result of their lower caste status. "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment but beyond their borders and separate from them," writes the author at the beginning of the book. Scavengers, leatherworkers, washermen, barbers, and water-carriers all stayed there, the Hindu society's grass-cutters and other outcasts." These people suffer because they are considered outcasts by others from birth. Mulk Raj Anand has exposed the artificiality and hypocrisy of upper caste men, especially men like Pandit KaliNath, who preaches good things but is deeply corrupted himself.

Untouchable is the storey of a single day in Bakha's life, and it depicts the embarrassment and hardship that he and other lower caste people faced. Bhaka was unhappy with his job as a toilet cleaner and desired to improve his situation by furthering his education. The lower castes were forbidden from drawing water from wells, entering temples, or touching something because it was thought that untouchables would pollute the environment. Bakha was also abused mentally and physically by Hindus from the upper castes. Pandit Kalinath sexually harassed his sister when he summoned her to clean his house's courtyard. He was drawn to Sohini's youthful beauty and attempted to touch her, but when she screamed, the Pandit reacted by alleging that he had been touched by an untouchable and blaming Sohini entirely. Bakha arrives at the location and dismisses Sohini.

Despite his anger, he remained silent and walked away from the scene. When he gets home, he tells his father that people think they're disgusting because they clean up after the mud. He believes it is a spell that he must break as soon as possible. He attends the wedding of Ram Charan's sister, whom he once loved but couldn't marry due to their social class differences. Later that evening, Bakha goes to Havilder Charat Singh's house to play hockey. A little boy is injured during the game, and Bakha tries to support him, but the boy's mother chastises him for polluting her son. Bakha is depressed as he witnesses embarrassment all around him.

However, Bhaka is motivated after hearing Gandhi's thoughts on untouchability, which he saw as a form of discrimination that people should be free of. The novelist offers three different options for the protagonist and the people in his society to live a better life. Col. Hutchinson urged Bakha to convert to Christianity, which has no caste system, and he would no longer face prejudice in his life. Gandhi's views on untouchability, as well as the education he provided to these outcasts, have greatly enlightened people.

At the conclusion of the book, Bhaka meets a poet called Iqbal Nath Sarshar, who tells him about a new method of automatically cleaning faeces, namely, toilet-flush machines. Cleaning excreta would no longer require human effort, and manual toilet cleaning would be obsolete. Bakha sees this as a solution to his dilemma, and believes that a transition will undoubtedly occur, improving his living conditions.

Summary

Mulk Raj Anand was born in Peshawar in 1905 and attended Khalsa College in Amritsar for his early education. He was acquainted with the Bloomsbury Group while pursuing his Ph.D. at Cambridge University. Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves And A Bud (1937), The Village (1939), Through the Black Waters (1941), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), and The Big Heart (1943) are among his best-known novels (1945). The Sahitya Akademi Award for Morning Face was given to him (1968). During India's pre-independence era, this novel paints a realistic image of all oppressed sections of society. Bakha, the novel's protagonist, is a symbol for all of the country's downtrodden people who have suffered oppression and suppression because of their caste.

Since he and the other characters in the novel are from a lower caste, they suffer. Untouchable is a film that portrays the lives of the poor and oppressed in an orthodox Indian society. The novel is a satire on the snobbery and hypocrisy prevalent in Hindu society's upper castes. According to the book, the untouchables, known as panchamas, are forbidden from drawing water from wells because their touch could contaminate it. The novel's social element, which deals with religion and caste discrimination, has been described in a realistic manner.

Throughout the book, the novel's primary character, Bakha, is mistreated by the high-caste people. In the book, the holy man Kalinath depicts the hypocrisy and greed that some people partake in to manipulate the ignorant and downtrodden. In the book, Anand uses the stream of consciousness technique. Bakha, the central character, is tormented by society's treatment of him and his fellow beings, and the stream of consciousness approach is used to dig deep into his psyche. There are also a number of flashbacks, as well as symbolic images and thoughts mixed with a sense of realism that gives the piece a contemporary feel to the novel.

Plot

Mulk Raj Anand's novel Untouchable was released in 1935. His aunt was inspired to write the storey after she shared a meal with a Muslim and was regarded as an outcast by his family. Untouchable by Anand is a sociological novel that emphasises the evils of untouchability by focusing attention on the wretched condition, combustion, poverty, and decline of a large segment of Indian society. The plot of this book begins with an appeal for the abolition of the caste system. Bakha, a young'sweeper,' is "untouchable" due to his job cleaning latrines, and the film portrays a day in his life. Bakha is described as "strengthened and capable" full of energy and aspirations that range from dressing up as a 'Tommie' in 'Fushun' to playing hockey. His obstacles, as well as the fact that he is a lowercaste hindu, force him to beg for food, to be humiliated often, and to be at the mercy of the whims of other, higher caste hindus.

For Bakha, the day depicted in the storey is a tenacious one. Throughout the day, he is slapped in public for accidentally 'polluting' an upper caste hindu and has food thrown at him by another citizen after he cleans her gutters. His sister is molested by a priest, and he is held responsible for a young boy's injury sustained during a brawl during a hockey game and his father kicks him out of his house Finally, towards the end of the book, Anand suggests three possible solutions—the three possibilities that are revealed in front of Bakha.

The most important response is expressed by a Christian Missionary who is on the lookout for distressed outcastes in order to prepare them to convert from Hinduism to Christianity. The second stems from Gandhi's teachings, which advocate for the liberation of Harijans. The third is the use of flush toilets, a method that would eliminate his caste. Anand strongly supports the third option. Gandhi's speech in the novel opposes the caste system and encourages people to follow in his footsteps of non violent protest.

Bakha is enthralled by Gandhi's speech, but he lacks the knowledge to judge if Gandhi's suggestions are naive. Following Gandhi's address, Bakha overhears two educated men, a poet and a lawyer, discussing the speech's merits. Gandhi's goals, according to the prosecutor, are childish and unfounded. Long-held customs are rarely reversed, and he thinks the caste system will continue to exist amid reform efforts. The poet believes that the caste system's barbarism will be abolished, particularly now that the flushing toilet is rumoured to be coming to their town. There will be no need for the Untouchables until people have flushing toilets. to dispose of the town's garbage, which would necessitate a rethinking of their social position and responsibilities.

Untouchable has an authenticity and accuracy that makes it easy to empathise with Bakha and his kin, thanks to the author's background as an Indian and the fact that it was written when the caste

system was still in place. Untouchable provides readers with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to witness the plight of members of the caste system. At the same time, as India transitions from postcolonialism to globalism after World War I, the tale highlights the complexities of Indian identity.

Mulk Raj Anand (12 December 1905 – 28 September 2004) was an English-language Indian writer known for portraying the lives of the lower castes in traditional Indian society. He was one of the first India-based English authors to achieve an international readership, alongside R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali, and Raja Rao, as one of the pioneers of Indo-Anglian literature. Anand is well-known for his novels and short stories, which have become modern Indian English literature classics. They are known for their keen insight into the lives of marginalised people as well as their analyses of poverty, exploitation, and misfortune. He's also known for being one of the first authors to publish a novel. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his efforts to introduce Punjabi and Hindustani idioms into English.

List of Characters

Bakha-
He is the novel's protagonist, and he is introduced to the readers as a young man with a muscular body. He sweeps and cleans public restrooms for a living. Bakha maintains a high level of cleanliness throughout his work and is careful not to ruin his sleeves. His solid physique is a product of the hard work he puts in at work. Bakha represents all the underdogs who are victimised by society because of their low caste. Throughout the book, Bakha struggles with his own identity and seeks to understand the meaning of his life.

Lakha-
Bakha's father, Lakha, is a Jamedar of the Bulandshahr sweepers. After his wife died, he was left with three children. He agrees that he has a lower social status and is submissive to Hindus from the upper castes.

Rakha-
He is Bakha's younger brother who does not help with washing and sweeping and does not have his brother's good looks.

Sohini-
Bakha's sister, Sohini, is portrayed as a beautiful woman with a sylph-like figure and a slim waist. She is an important character in the novel because it is through her that Anand exposes the upper caste Hindus' corruption. She looks after her relatives and takes care of the household chores. The attempt on her life by Pandit Kalinath is a pivotal scene in the book, highlighting the hypocrisy and inequality perpetrated by the upper castes against the lower castes.

Charat Singh-
Charat Singh belongs to the 38th Dogra battalion and is a Havilder in the army as well as a fine hockey player. He is a good-hearted person who is unaffected by caste biases. He is seen as a contrast to the orthodox priests since he treats Bakha with love.

Col. Hutchinson –
He is one of the novel's English characters who dresses in an amusing combination of Western and Indian garb. He is the one who encourages Bakha to convert to Christianity.

Iqbal Nath Sarshar-
He is a young poet with revolutionary thoughts and a positive outlook who is opposed to untouchability. He proposes a solution to the society's societal blight. According to him, installing a flush mechanism in toilets would aid in the eradication of this scourge.

Characterization in the novel
Bakha, son of Lakha
He is a character in the novel Bakha, son of Lakha. Bakha, an 18-year-old Indian teen who works as a sweeper and is the protagonist of Untouchable, is an 18-year-old Indian teen who works as a sweeper. He is strong and capable, and he is enthralled by the lives and customs of India's English colonisers. His status as an untouchable has led to a great deal of self-pity and depression. Bakha can be harsh and, at times, aids in the perpetuation of the oppressive structure that he is a part of.

Surprisingly, he continues to challenge the status quo and a seemingly "set in stone" caste system. He says:

> "Posh keep away, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming!"

Bakha used this method to announce his arrival in populated areas every morning so that no one unintentionally bumped into him. However, when his conscience cries out for an answer, the question weighs heavily on his heart, and he responds:

> "For them I am a sweeper, sweeper — untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable!"

Chota, the son of a leather worker
He is one of Bakha's closest companions. Chota is higher in the caste system than Bakha, despite the fact that they are both outcasts. He, like Bakha, is fascinated with the English language.

Ram Charan
Bakha's other best friend is Ram Charan, the washer's uncle. Since his family just washes other people's clothing, he is also higher in the hierarchy than Bakha.

Bakha's dad, Jemadar of the Sweepers
A slacker and abuser who takes advantage of his children. Bakha's fascination with the English irritates him, and he advises Bakha to be content with their family's status as untouchables and sweepers.

Rakha
The younger brother of Rakha Bakha. He is portrayed as "a true child of the outcaste colony," which serves as a counterpoint to Bakha's character.

Sohini
Bakha, Sohini's younger sister, is portrayed as nubile and lovely. She faces the brunt of her family's annoyances with patience and fortitude. One of Bakha's existentialist woes stems from an altercation with a member of the high caste.

Charat Singh, Havildar
Singh, a well-known hockey player, is one of Bakha's heroes. His nature is jovial, and his mood is fickle. He nags Bakha to clean the latrines at the start of the book, but later on he gives him a brand new hockey stick. He doesn't believe in untouchability, as shown by his willingness to share his afternoon tea with Bakha.

Ali
He is a wonderful person. Ali is the son of a regimental bandsman and a Muslim, and he is Bakha's age group. Bakha challenges him about Islamic rituals, and he is accused of mocking Islam.

Ramanand
Ramanand, whom Bakha describes as a "peevish old black moneylender," is of a higher social class than Bakha. He shouts at Bakha to clean the latrines, interrupting his morning musings.

Gulabo
Ram Charan's girlfriend, Gulabo, is a washer woman. She suffers from a superiority complex as a result of her superiority complex she is at the top of the low castes/outcasts hierarchy. Bakha's relationship with her sons irritates her, and she despises Sohini.

Pundit Kali Nath
He is a priest in charge of the temple in Bulashah, the town where Bakha and his family live. He attacks Sohini sexually before accusing her of defiling him.

Lachman
He is a 26-year-old Hindu water-carrier who is drawn to Sohini.

Das Hakim Bhagawan
Hakim Bhagawan, a local doctor, saved Bakha's life when he was a young boy.

Ram Charan's Sister
Bakha's childhood crush, Ram Charan's niece, is a sign of the stuff Bakha is excluded from due to his low caste rank in the caste system.

Colonel Hutchinson
He is a general in the United States Army. Hutchinson, the local Salvation Army's commander, is a Christian missionary charged with persuading Hindus to convert to Christianity. He is the novel's face of Christianity, and he represents one aspect of England's colonisation of India.

Mary Hutchinson
She is a writer who lives in the United States. The Colonel's wife, Mary, is an atheist. She frequently demeans and disparages her husband's work among Indian peoples, whom she refers to as "blackies," since she is unhappy with their life in India.

Mahatma Gandhi
He was a great leader. Untouchable has some real-life characters that are alluded to or featured in the film. Gandhi was a key figure in the Indian independence movement. His goal in the novel is to make a religious, moral, and political case against untouchability.

Bashir, R. N.
An Indian lawyer who attended Oxford University. Bashir is a staunch opponent of Gandhi and Sarshar's Marxist solution.

Slade, Miraben
Miraben, a real-life character who appears in the book, was the daughter of a British admiral. She left Britain in 1925 to work alongside Gandhi for India's independence. She also joins Gandhi on his visit to Bakha's town in the book.

Sarshar, Iqbal Nath
Despite his reservations about Gandhi's political and economic views, a young poet defends him. Sarshar provides a Marxist understanding of the untouchables' situation, as well as a Marxist solution.

Critical Viewpoint-
Untouchable is significant not only for its characters, but also for how realistically it handles the themes. Mulk Raj Anand has always been concerned about "the creatures in the lower depths of Indian society who were once men and women: the rejected, who had to articulate their anguish against the oppressors." Mulk Raj Anand redefines the oppressed parts of society's structurally defined position. Anand is dedicated to the creation of a new society free of outside intrusion, dominance, and exploitation, as well as social and political marginalisation. As a result, his themes and treatment are directed toward the novel's conclusion. They are as follows:

Situations and Attitudes:
Mulk Raj Anand's vivid and moving depiction of exploitation is not a theorist's aberration. It is deeply rooted in his own circumstances and behaviours, as well as his childhood and adolescent interactions with the economically deprived lower castes. Anand was well aware that the untouchables in his novels were real people before he wrote them in to an art.
His profoundly religious mother instilled in him a sense of human value that, in an intellectually agnostic author, sometimes translates into a spiritual reorientation. She told him stories from the folklore and legends, which later appeared in his writing. Anand has personally witnessed the suffering, wretchedness, and squalor of Hindu society's lower classes, and his conscience has rebelled against the injustice being perpetrated against them. Before attempting to incorporate his heroes into his stories, he had first seen and cherished them as weeping human beings.

Injustices and Hypocrisy:
Anand had become aware of the religious hypocrisy and racism in Indian society, as well as its injustices, at a young age. Untouchability, feudalism, and economic marginalisation of the have nots by the haves are all examples of injustices that thrive. This knowledge was bound to turn him into a fervent critic of the Indian tradition's foundational elements. On the other hand, he was too fine an intellectual and a student of philosophy to completely ignore the tradition's balanced and perennial aspects.

Exposing the Limits:
Anand is at his best when he's pointing out the flaws in the decayed Indian culture and advocating for modernism as a panacea for the country's ills. It is his greatness that he keeps his composure when doing so. Anand is also at his best when he depicts a modern Indian who draws on both the power of the native culture and the lessons gained from his exposure to western ideas; his art, on the other hand, suffers when his criticism of the Indian tradition and his championing of modernism become strident or lead to direct preaching and emotional outpourings. The author was inspired to write Untouchable by a childhood recollection of a low-caste sweeper boy carrying him home after he was wounded. The boy was beaten by Anand's mother for touching her higher caste son in exchange for his good work. As a result, Anand is unquestionably a trailblazer in terms of theme selection. He is unafraid to shine a spotlight on the darkest corners of Indian life.

Marginalization's central theme:
Anand's concern for the poor and downtrodden is a recurring theme in his writings. The key problem, it could be argued, is job philosophy. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, who are more social reformers than novelists, redefine the structurally defined role of the marginalised sections of society. Anand attempts to use English in a native manner while writing in the practical mode. The writer's aim is to elicit compassion for the weak and untouchable.
By doing so, Anand faces opposition from both traditional and political forces: traditional culture, which colonised the poor and untouchables based on a religio-social superstitious mentality, and political colonisers, who had little sympathy for the colonized's oppressed. Anand depicts the forces of double imperialism and demonstrates a compassionate and sympathetic stance toward those who are oppressed. By doing so, Anand was attempting not only to portray India in a more realistic light, but also to highlight a new sense of identity that was emerging as a result of colonization's dehumanising effects.

Sympathetic national identity:
Anand attempts to depict a sympathetic national identity. He also tries to champion the marginalized's causes from a broader viewpoint, such that a common definition of the marginalised can be defined and followed. In his fiction, Anand could champion the interests of the oppressed by attempting to save them from the uncanny powers of double imperialism by adhering to an indigenous value system. This is how he attempted to go beyond the country by portraying it. Anand has revealed social evil in all of its forms and has evocatively portrayed various layers of human experience.

In his novels, he makes the economically and socially disadvantaged parts of society the subject of his storey. Anand, on the other hand, is well aware of his own social position: he is a member of the upper class, and hence there is a financial and social divide between him and those with whom he sympathises.

A day in the life of a sweeper:
Untouchable is limited to portraying a day in the life of a cantonment city sweeper, with the different episodes judicially chosen and arranged with the aim of delving into the hero's mind. At its heart, Untouchable depicts a young outcast's attempt to achieve various aspects of cultural identification, as well as his desire to imitate his superiors' lifestyle. This feeble effort by a socially oppressed outcast to emulate the European way of life sounds pitiful. Bakha, an outcast, lived on the periphery of society but aspired to improve. Bakha was yelled at by Howildar Charat Singh, a famous hockey player, who accused him of being responsible for his piles. He said that Bakha's work cleaning the latrines was the reason he became infected while sitting in one of the filthy latrines.
Mulk Raj Anand attempted to demonstrate the untouchables' water issue in the well incident. The upper castes' feelings of untouchability were so deeply ingrained in their minds that they never allowed the untouchables to fetch water from the public well. They had to stand by the well for hours and insist that the upper caste pour water into their pitchers.
The Pan Cigarette shopkeeper poured water on one anna coin that Bakha had put, and then threw a packet of Red-Lamp cigarettes at Bakha, just like a butcher would throw a bone to a stubborn dog. Bakha was tempted to buy some Jilebis at a confectioner's store, and the scene depicts how the confectioner tricked him while weighing.
Bakha, on the other hand, did not dare to complain because he felt socially and economically disadvantaged. On the shoe floor, he dropped four nickel coins. The confectioner's assistant stood ready to pour water on them, fearful that they would be poisoned if they didn't. Anand uses these events as symbols to tell the storey of oppressed people being exploited.

Bakha is a slave of slaves:

In his fiction, Anand depicts the poor in India in a truthful and sympathetic manner. Untouchable, in particular, is a protest and anger literature by Anand. In his work, he expresses concern for the poor and oppressed. Bakha is the Untouchables' universal representative. An upper-caste Hindu has slapped this stamp on his forehead. He is scolded for polluting them with his presence. Bakha's face is slapped, and he suddenly realises the wretchedness of his degrading and repellent life as a sweeper. The Untouchables were expelled from the ancient Aryan society's four-tiered system. Untouchables were not only ghettoised in ancient India, but they were also forced to perform menial tasks for the upper-class gentry. Bakha is, of course, a slave of slaves, which is a poignant irony.

Realism:

In portraying Bakha, Anand has descended to the lowest levels of a social order, where one can see a clear picture of a set and stagnated truth akin to Dante's hell. Anand portrays the deplorable plight of those who are poor. Anand is a novelist on a quest, writing with a goal in mind: to arouse social conscience and, through that approach, to instil a sense of duty in wealthy and influential people against victims of inequality and marginalisation. 'Posh, posh, sweeper coming,' Bakha must announce his approach. The literal translation of Punjabi exclamations and swear words demonstrates Anand's realism.

Conflicts:

The author discusses the brutality of caste conflict through popular characters such as Bakha and Lakha: despite the fact that this deadly disease of caste–conflict was at its peak before Independence, it is still seen in almost every state of India. Bakha has spent years working in a British regiment's compounds. Bakha accidentally touched a stranger when looking through a glass. Bakha was reminded of his Untouchability by the man who yelled at him. As Bakha touched him without announcing his approach, the man verbally abused him. The man was defiled by the touch of the oppressed Bakha. A crowd quickly gathered to slam Bakha.

The jilebis scene depicts how society oppresses Bakha by forbidding him from even eating the jilebis he paid a high price for. When he accidentally hit a high caste Hindu, the jilebis fell down and a barrage of abuse was thrown at him for polluting the high caste Hindu with his touch. His crime was that as he travelled down the lane, he forgot to announce his approach. Higher caste Hindus shouted "polluted, polluted, polluted!" as they blocked Bakha from entering the temple. When an Untouchable enters a temple, it pollutes it. Anand challenges the rationale of such discrimination: the outcaste may clean the temple but is denied entry to the inner sanctum or the right to worship there. God is equivalent to everyone, but it is culture that creates distinctions in faith and spirituality. In these aspects of life, the caste system plays a part. As a result, his novel is both a faithful representation of and a serious commentary on current social reality.

The novel as a tool for Anand's humanism:

With the requisite creative altitude and amendment, Anand's early playmates and friends became the protagonists of his first novels. Anand began writing at a young age. Anand's first prose was inspired by the tragedy of his aunt's suicide after being excommunicated for dining with a Muslim woman. Anand's literary career has enabled him to rise above the dictates of the Kshtriya doxology in order to demonstrate that social status should not be equated with moral worth; he also worked for the awakening of the socially oppressed sections: Anand depicts Bakha's travails sympathetically, displaying a reformist fervour of a humanist. The readers will believe that externally introduced solutions will bring about a fundamental change, and that the victims can afford to wait.

In the early stages of Anand's career, Forster's support was crucial. Anand's novel was published in England with a preface by E. M. Forster after 19 rejection slips. Forster had met Anand when he was studying for his Ph. D. in philosophy at Cambridge. All of this had a major influence on his humanistic outlook.

Alternatives to Consider:

Even if one considers casteism in the context of the vulgarities and misinterpretations of Hinduism, the question remains: can industrial progress and modernity free society's Bakhas from their karmic obligation of cleaning human excrement and guarantee them basic human dignity and general acceptance in the social order without regard to their birth or hereditary status? Bakha, trapped in the labyrinth of the Indian caste system, is unable to rebel.

The untouchables, or socially alienated citizens, who make up the most important part of a country's population, must live a life that is deplorable and wretched beyond description. Anand is a master artist because of his inventive use of the English language's linguistic tools, his storytelling methodology, his humanism, his treatment of individuals as social constructs, the symbiotic

relationship between art and culture studies, and other unexplored aspects of his writings. Anand is a natural storyteller who can narrate his tales in a captivating way, with a strong beginning and a satisfying conclusion. His contribution is outstanding. Anand penned the book, which contained the seeds of a social awakening among the underprivileged.

After a zigzagging path of ups and downs, we arrive at the three solutions that bring the book to a close. Hutchinson, a Salvationist missionary, proposed the first solution: Jesus Christ. But, when hearing that Christ welcomes all men, regardless of caste, Bakha becomes bored because the missionary is unable to tell him who Christ is. Then comes the second approach, which has a crescendo effect: Gandhi. Gandhi, too, believes that all Indians are equal, and his storey about a Brahmin doing sweeper work touches the boy's heart.

The third approach, put forward by a modernist poet, slams into this. It's very compelling. To save the Untouchables, no god is needed, nor are vows of self-sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indians, but only the flush method. All this vile nonsense about untouchability will vanish if water closets and main drains are built throughout India. Anand leaves it up to the reader to decide which solution will be the most effective or whether the marginalised will remain in their current situation.

Conclusion:

Anand believes in the concept of justice, which has been developed and deepened by various world religions, philosophers, political theorists, and theoreticians over the centuries. Anand is dedicated to the creation of a new society free of outside intrusion, dominance, and exploitation, as well as social and political marginalisation. We've seen how Bakha positions his optimism for the future in a flushing toilet at the end of Untouchable. Anand expresses his belief in industrialization as a solution to India's poverty on many occasions. For readers in other parts of the world, Anand tends to clarify regional practises, rituals, and ceremonies.

For readers outside of India, Indian practises, rituals, rites, and ceremonies. Such theories always stand out from the background and strike an unsettling tone. As a result, the Indian novel in English is marked by a wide range of themes and techniques. It is still evolving and adapting to the changing Indian landscape. As a responsible artist, Anand offers a variety of solutions to the human problems addressed in his novel while avoiding some kind of imposition. Anand understands that man must look inside himself to find the right solutions. An artist, according to Anand, should perceive reality rather than replicate it. His aim isn't only to shock his readers with a realistic depiction of life, but also to stimulate its consciousness.

Since Anand did not come from a deprived segment of society, he had the requisite understanding that there was a separation between art and life. To him, a work of art is first and foremost a social event, and a novelist's function is to produce rather than to decide. As a result, Anand portrays a true and national picture of India and her culture, rather than a skewed narrow and regional one.

Key words/ Glossary

Agnostic -- a person who believes that one cannot know whether or not God exists.
Squalor-- a state of being extremely dirty.
Hypocrisy-- behavior in which a person pretends to have higher standards than is the case.
Bigotry-- a prejudiced and intolerant person.
Strident-- loud and harsh.
Tenuous-- very slight.
Evinces-- show or indicate.
Polemical-- of or involving dispute or controversy.
Callousness-- insensitive and cruel
Crescendo-- a gradual increase in loudness.
Abnegation-- renounce or reject.

Review Questions

1. How does marginalisation figure prominently in the novel?

Bakha attempted to mimic European culture. Being an outcast, though, meant living on the outskirts of society. Bakha made a purchase of a pack of cigarettes. However, the shopkeeper dipped one anna coin in water and tossed the packet like a butcher might a bone to an insistent dog. An outcaste has access to the temple's outer sanctum but not to its inner sanctum. As a result, the novel's central theme is marginalisation.

2. Why were abuses so important in the novel?
Bakha was yelled at by Howildar Charat Singh, who accused him of being responsible for his stacks. He accidentally touched a Hindu of high caste. Instead of jilebis, a barrage of abuse was hurled at him for polluting the high caste Hindu with his touch. Bakha, who is untouchable, brought Mulk Raj Anand along, who was wounded. Anand's mother, on the other hand, harassed and abused Bakha. All of these incidents occurred on a single day in Bakha's life, demonstrating that he is continuously abused. As a result, violations play an important role in the novel

3. Why did Anand use English writing to portray an outcast in India?
Mulk Raj Anand used English to make the storey accessible to both Indian and non-Indian readers, allowing it to be judged by the highest standards of world literature. As a result, Anand has chosen English writing to reflect the outcaste in India.

4. How does Bakha portray all untouchables as a universal figure?
Since Bakha's experiences are similar to those of most untouchables, Anand has created a realistic and sympathetic image of him as a common representative of all Untouchables in his work. Abuse, physical harassment, oppression, and bigotry were all perpetrated against him.

5. How did Bakha respond when he touched a stranger?
Bakha accidentally touched a stranger when looking through a glass. Bakha was reminded of his Untouchability by the man who yelled at him. Bakha was abused by the man. The man was defiled by the touch of the oppressed Bakha. A crowd quickly gathered to slam Bakha.

6. How will Anand reveal the flaws in India's decayed tradition?
In Untouchable, Anand exposes the flaws in the decayed Indian tradition while advocating for modernism as a panacea for the country's problems. He gives examples of practise that need to be rooted out, such as the caste system, which is used to oppress people.

7. What is the novel's core theme?
Untouchable depicts a young outcast who has been oppressed attempting to achieve various aspects of community identity by imitating the European way of life. Bakha was an outcast who lived on the outskirts of society. As a result, the novel's central theme is marginalisation.

8. What part does the temple scene play in the novel?
Higher caste Hindus shouted "polluted, polluted, polluted!" as they blocked Bakha from entering the temple.
When an Untouchable enters a temple, it pollutes it. Anand questions the reasoning behind such discrimination: the outcaste has access to the temple's outer sanctum but not to its inner sanctum, nor does he have the right to worship there. God is equivalent to everyone, but it is culture that creates distinctions in faith and spirituality. In these aspects of life, the caste system plays a part.

9. What role do Anand's early playmates and friends play in his work?
Despite being born into one of the upper castes, Anand had mixed openly as a child with the children of the sweepers attached to his father's contingent, and such cross-caste connections had persisted throughout his adolescence. With the requisite creative attitude and amendment, these early playmates and friends became the protagonists of his first novels.

10. What was Untouchable's take on Bakha's day?
Bakha's day is depicted as a graph in Untouchable, which moves up and down the plot with great dramatic interest. The narrative progresses. Character and environment are considered chronologically, and the action unfolds as a result of the interaction of characters and environment.

11. In the book, what are the three possible solutions?
Colonel Hutchinson, a Christian missionary and leader of the Salvation Army, proposed the first solution to the issue. Hutchinson proposed a casteless society as a means of redemption for all. Untouchables were regarded by Gandhiji as Harijans–"men of God," and Iqbal Nath Sarshar, a modernist poet, proposed a new machine (the flush) that "will clean dung without anyone having to manage it."

12. How did Anand's work depict the poor in India in a truthful and sympathetic manner?

In his film, Anand has revealed social evil in all of its forms, as well as evocatively presenting various layers of human experience. In his novels, he explores the human experience. In his novels, he makes the economically and socially disadvantaged parts of society the subject of his story.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. How old was Bakha when all these incidents happened?

a Seven years

b Twelve years

c Twenty years

d Eighteen years

2. Who was Howildar Charat Singh?

a Famous cricket player

b Famous football player

c Famous hockey player

d Famous tennis player

3. How many days events did Anand narrate in the novel?

a ten days

b six days

c one day

d two years

4. How did the temple priest respond when Bakha tried to enter into the temple?

a The priest gave a warm welcome to Bakha.

b The priest abused Bakha for his attempt.

c The priest shouted at him to go out and play.

d The priest asked Bakha to offer prayer to God.

5. Where did Bakha work?

a In the compounds of the British regiment.

b In the compounds of the Indian regiment.

c In the compounds of the Pakistan regiment.

d In the compounds of the American regiment.

6. Who called the untouchables 'Harijans' ?

a Jinnah.

b Nehru.

c Gandhi

d Tilak.

7. Who was Iqbal Nath Sarshar?

a singer

b young poet

c dancer

d player

8. How many solutions did Anand give in the novel?

a one

b two

c three

d. four

9. Where did Bakha live?

a Among the upper castes

b Margins of the society.

c Among the priests.

d Among his classmates.

10. Who is Bakha modeled on?

a Anand's playmate.

b Anand's roommate.

c Anand's Brother.

d Anand's neighbor.

Self-Assessment Answer

1.	**d**	**2.**	**c**	**3.**	**c**	**4.**	**b**	**5.**	**a**
6.	**c**	**7.**	**b**	**8.**	**c**	**9.**	**b**	**10.**	**a**

Further/Suggested Readings

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Unit 10: Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To compare the thematic contexts with the content
- To illustrate the various writing narrative styles in the light of selected text
- To study the themes in the novel
- To visualize the realistic and sympathetic treatment of the poor in India
- To understand the structural outline of the selected text
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel
- To acquaint the humanism in the novel

Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand was born in Peshawar in 1905 and attended Khalsa College in Amritsar for his early education. He was acquainted with the Bloomsbury Group while pursuing his Ph.D. at Cambridge University. Untouchable (1935), Coolie (1936), Two Leaves And A Bud (1937), The Village (1939), Through the Black Waters (1941), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), and The Big Heart (1943) are among his best-known novels (1945). The Sahitya Akademi Award for Morning Face was given to him (1968). During India's pre-independence era, this novel paints a realistic image of all oppressed sections of society. Bakha, the novel's protagonist, is a metaphor for all the oppressed people.

Due to their caste, members of the country have faced prejudice and repression. Since he and the other characters in the novel are from a lower caste, they suffer. Untouchable is a film that portrays the lives of the poor and oppressed in an orthodox Indian society. The novel is a satire on the snobbery and hypocrisy prevalent in Hindu society's upper castes. According to the book, the untouchables, known as panchamas, are forbidden from drawing water from wells because their touch could contaminate it. The novel's social aspects, such as the treatment of religion and caste discrimination, have been realistically depicted.

Throughout the book, the novel's primary character, Bakha, is mistreated by the high-caste people. In the book, the holy man Kalinath depicts the hypocrisy and greed that some people partake in to manipulate the ignorant and downtrodden. In the book, Anand uses the stream of consciousness technique. Bakha, the central character, is tormented by society's treatment of him and his fellow beings, and the stream of consciousness approach is used to dig deep into his psyche. There are also a number of flashbacks, as well as symbolic images and thoughts mixed with a sense of realism that gives the piece a contemporary feel to the novel.

Mulk Raj Anand was a prolific writer who was best known as a social realist and a humanist during his period. He was born in Peshawar in 1905 and attended Khalsa College in Amritsar for his early education. Later, he moved to England and was accepted as an undergraduate at

University College London. He went on to Cambridge University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1929. He became close friends with the Bloomsbury Group there, and even spent some time in Geneva. Anand spent most of his life in both London and India. He expressed his concern for India's independence movement by writing propaganda on behalf of the Indian cause.

He also worked as a journalist and advocated for freedom in other countries, especially in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. He worked as a scriptwriter for the BBC in London during WWII and became one of George Orwell's close friends. Anand returned to India in 1946 and resumed his literary career as a novelist. Most of his novels depict the lives of the oppressed, and he used literature to illustrate the exploitation of the poor in Indian conservative society.

Mulk Raj Anand's career as a writer was influenced in large part by his family tragedy, especially the rigidities of the caste system that existed at the time. His first essay was inspired by his aunt's suicide after her family excommunicated her for sharing a meal with a Muslim woman. Untouchable, his first book, was published in 1935 and was a satire on orthodox Indian society, which discriminated against people from lower social classes. This book, which gained him enormous fame, shows his vision of a humanist and reformist.

Coolie (1936), Two Leaves And A Bud (1937), The Village (1939), Through the Black Waters (1941), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), and The Big Heart (1945) are his other humanistic novels. Anand has also published seven collections of short stories: The Child and Other Stories(1934), The Tractor and the Corn Goddess and Other Stories (1947), Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories (1953), The Power of Darkness and Other Stories (1959), Lajwanti and Other Stories (1966), and Between Tears and Laughter (1973). Indian Fairy Tales (1961), and The Old Woman and the Cow are among his other works (1960). The Road (1963) and The Death of Hero (1964) followed (1964). His autobiographical novels include Seven Summers, Morning Face, The Confession of A Lover, and The Bubble. The Sahitya Akademi Award for Morning Face was given to him (1968).

10.1 Subject Matter

Mulk Raj Anand was a member of the International Progress Organization and the editor of the literary journal Marg. He gave a series of lectures on Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Jawaharlal Nehru, highlighting their contributions to India and their progressive views on humanism. In addition, Anand has written a number of short stories about India's rich culture and tradition. His later works are seen as an effort to embark on a spiritual quest in pursuit of a higher degree of self-awareness.

Untouchable is one of India's most well-known English-language novels for its believable depiction of the life of an untouchable sweeper boy called Bakha "Bakha is a real man, lovable, thwarted, often grand, often weak, and thoroughly Indian," writes E.M. Forster in the novel's Preface. We can recognise his strong articulate face, graceful body, and heavy buttocks as he performs his dreaded job or steps out in artillery boots in the hope of a nice stroll through the city with a paper packet of cheap sweets in his hand." During India's pre-independence era, this novel paints a realistic image of all oppressed sections of society.

Bakha, the novel's protagonist, represents all of the country's downtrodden citizens who have suffered injustice and suppression because of their caste. Bakha and other characters in the novel suffer as a result of their lower caste status. "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment but beyond their borders and separate from them," writes the author at the beginning of the book. Scavengers, leatherworkers, washermen, barbers, water-carriers, and grass-cutters all lived there and other Hindu society's outcasts." These people suffer because they are considered outcasts by others from birth. Mulk Raj Anand has exposed the artificiality and hypocrisy of upper caste men, especially men like Pandit KaliNath, who preaches good things but is deeply corrupted himself.

Untouchable is the storey of a single day in Bakha's life, and it depicts the embarrassment and hardship that he and other lower caste people faced. Bhaka was unhappy with his job as a toilet cleaner and desired to improve his situation by furthering his education. The lower castes were forbidden from drawing water from wells, entering temples, or touching something because it was thought that untouchables would pollute the environment. Bakha was also abused mentally and physically by Hindus from the upper castes. Pandit Kalinath sexually harassed his sister when he summoned her to clean his house's courtyard. He was drawn to Sohini's youthful beauty and attempted to touch her, but when she screamed, the Pandit reacted by alleging that he had been touched by an untouchable and blaming Sohini entirely. Bakha arrives at the location and dismisses Sohini. He was enraged, but he did not act on it.

He walked away without saying something. When he gets home, he tells his father that people think they're disgusting because they clean up after the mud. He believes it is a spell that he must break as soon as possible. He attends the wedding of Ram Charan's sister, whom he once loved but couldn't marry due to their social class differences. Later that evening, Bakha goes to Havilder Charat Singh's house to play hockey. A little boy is injured during the game, and Bakha tries to support him, but the boy's mother chastises him for polluting her son. Bakha is depressed as he witnesses embarrassment all around him.

However, Bhaka is motivated after hearing Gandhi's thoughts on untouchability, which he saw as a form of discrimination that people should be free of. The novelist offers three different options for the protagonist and the people in his society to live a better life. Col. Hutchinson urged Bakha to convert to Christianity, which has no caste system, and he would no longer face prejudice in his life.

Gandhi's views on untouchability, as well as the education he provided to these outcasts, have greatly enlightened people. Bhaka encounters a poet called Iqbal Nath Sarshar near the end of the book who tells him about a new method of automatically cleaning faeces, namely, toilet-flush devices. Cleaning excreta would no longer require human effort, and manual toilet cleaning would be obsolete. Bakha sees this as a solution to his dilemma, and believes that a transition will undoubtedly occur, improving his living conditions.

Summary

Anand believes in the concept of justice, which has been developed and deepened by various world religions, philosophers, political theorists, and theoreticians over the centuries. Anand is dedicated to the creation of a new society free of outside intrusion, dominance, and exploitation, as well as social and political marginalisation. We've seen how Bakha positions his optimism for the future in a flushing toilet at the end of Untouchable. Anand expresses his belief in industrialization as a solution to India's poverty on many occasions. For readers in other parts of the world, Anand appears to describe regional traditions, rituals, and ceremonies, as well as Indian customs and tradition.

For readers outside of India, rituals and ceremonies Such theories always stand out from the background and strike an unsettling tone. As a result, the Indian novel in English is marked by a wide range of themes and techniques. It is still evolving and adapting to the changing Indian landscape. As a responsible artist, Anand offers a variety of solutions to the human problems addressed in his novel while avoiding some kind of imposition. Anand understands that man must look inside himself to find the right solutions. An artist, according to Anand, should perceive reality rather than replicate it. His aim is to stimulate his readers' consciousness, not just to shock them with a realistic depiction of reality.

Since Anand did not come from a deprived segment of society, he had the requisite understanding that there was a separation between art and life. To him, a work of art is first and foremost a social event, and a novelist's function is to produce rather than to decide. As a result, Anand portrays a true and national picture of India and her culture, rather than a skewed narrow and regional one.

Themes

You Are What You Wear

Habiliments, also known as clothes in modern parlance, play an important role in Untouchable. For instance, Anand uses the clothing of his characters to reflect anything from religion to caste level. Clothing is used to distinguish the many men who come to use the latrines at the start of Bakha's day. Except for their loincloths, the Hindus are completely naked. Muslims distinguish themselves from Hindus by wearing long white cotton tunics and baggy trousers (Anand 32). Furthermore, as people assemble to hear the Mahatma talk, they are divided into castes and religions. Members of the outcaste colony are dressed in rags, while the "Hindu lallas," or high-caste Hindu women, are "smartly dressed in silks" (Anand 264).

Clothing as a religious symbol and the "you are what you wear" theme encompasses more than just caste. Clothing becomes a symbol for dominance and enlightenment in Bakha's eyes. He admires "clear-cut European dress styles" and calls those who wear them "sahibs," or superior citizens. He believes that if he wore these adornments, he would lose his untouchable status and become a sahib as well (Anand 20). To that end, he begs Tommies for their extra clothes, regardless of how ill-fitting it is. Bakha's musings on clothing representing the inner individual have a thread of reality,

despite their superficiality. His own garb, despite being ill-fitting, is said to "remove him above his odorous world," as he cleans the latrines in the presence of onlookers (Anand 30).

Indian ancestors are scorned

Untouchable's core theme is the rejection of Indian practises and social norms. Bakha is the novel's best personification of this theme. When he observes Hindu men performing their morning ablutions, we learn about his dislike for such Indian customs. Bakha had been embarrassed of the "Indian way" of washing up after serving in British barracks, according to Anand (Anand 34). Bakha's rejection of these different habits stems from British attitudes toward them.

When the British see Hindus relieve themselves on the ground in public, they tell kala admi zamin par hagne wala (you who relieve yourself on the ground, black man) (Anand 35). In Bakha's view, these terms are a condemnation and cause for embarrassment. His rejection of Indian culture is inextricably linked to his acceptance of British culture. If the British sahibs object to anything, they must be right, and he must follow in their footsteps in everything. The rejection of Indian origins is inextricably linked to Britain's colonisation of India, and it spreads well beyond Bakha to Indian culture in general. Bakha isn't the only Indian who finds English culture fascinating.

The Salvation Army's involvement in Bulashah demonstrates this. It demonstrates that certain Indians are interested in Christianity, the colonizer's religion. Furthermore, at the novel's conclusion, it is proposed that embracing the European "machine" (i.e., shifting away from an agricultural to an industrial economy) might be the road to untouchability's salvation. Rejecting the Indian method of waste removal in favour of the European method of flushing it away without human contact could put an end to the demands that sweepers must meet, allowing them to search out work that does not require them to be untouchable.

However, things aren't always as simple as they seem. The British-Indian penal code, which poet Iqbal mentions near the end of the book, is an example of this. This code respects every Indian's legal rights before the courts, making all equal in the eyes of the law. Despite this, the Hindu caste system simply changed, making occupation the determining factor in caste rank. This did not change much because most families had the same occupation for decades. After spending a day in Bakha's shoes, it's clear that the caste system still exists, despite British efforts to abolish it. Although some aspects of Indian life have been marginalised in the face of perceived British dominance, others have flourished. The clash of Indian and British socio-cultural values can be seen here.

Class Conflict

Untouchable is a storey of class conflict at its heart. Bakha's day is formed and fuelled by the paralysing and polarising disparities between the different caste levels. Every interaction Bakha has during the day is influenced by his social class and caste. In the morning, his hero Singh greets him with a "grin that symbolised six thousand years of ethnic and class dominance." As Singh promises to give Bakha a hockey stick, he awakens in Bakha a "trait of servility" he inherited from his forefathers.

Bakha is "queerly humble" and happy to be the "bottom puppy" (Anand 31). This is an excellent example of how caste levels and what they represent regarding your social status can be internalised and then expressed in your personality and temperament. Inter-caste discrimination is more than just about how people deal with each other. It is fuelled by a set of rules that restrict outcasts' lives and rights, especially the untouchables. Outcasts, for example, are not permitted to draw their own water from a public well because doing so will pollute the water in the eyes of upper-caste Hindus. They must persuade higher-caste people who are drawing water to share some with them.

The rule of their untouchability is exclusive to the untouchables. They must be careful not to touch members of other castes and must shout a warning whenever they enter a room. Though the storey emphasises the struggle between caste levels, there is also intra-caste conflict. Ram Charan's girlfriend, Gulabo, is a perfect example of this. Despite the fact that she and her family are outcasts like Bakha and his family, since they are washers, they have a higher status within their mutual outcaste status than the sweepers. Bakha and Sohini are terrorised by Gulabo because of her higher station. As a result, caste stratification is not only a "inter" but also a "intra" problem.

Charity

In the realm of Untouchable, charity holds a unique position. Outcasts depend on higher castes for fresh water (Anand 50), food (Anand 130), clothing (Anand 20), and other necessities. The outcasts' begging is often met with derision and indignation by the upper castes. As you know that outcastes must beg for water because the caste system considers them incapable of drawing their own, this callous reaction is shortsighted. The higher castes are unable to see that the outcaste's poverty is due to their own behaviour, not the outcaste's. Hindus, on the other hand, must perform well in order to retain their current rank and/or rise in the caste hierarchy in the next life. The upper castes of Hindu society, the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, argue that they won their roles through their previous lives' good deeds. As a result, the higher castes are also reliant on charity.

Cyclical Oppression

The outcaste's existence is cyclical not only because of unethical interpersonal dealings, but also because it is hereditary. The injustice and deplorable living conditions that outcasts are subjected to are passed down through the generations. Bakha, like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and others, started working in the latrines as a sweeper when he was six years old (Anand 75).

The Burden/Responsibility of the Untouchable

The concept of the untouchable's duty or burden is deeply entwined with themes of class struggle and cyclical injustice. Aside from their sweeper duties, the untouchables are also responsible for ensuring that they do not touch higher-caste people and that they do not touch higher-caste people. After bumping into a caste guy, Bakha discusses this obligation for the first time. Bakha knows that he is surrounded by a barrier, not a physical barrier, but a moral one, when he is surrounded by a crowd of angry Hindus. He was well aware that, if he went ahead and made contact with him, he would defile a large number of more men" (Anand 92).

Instead of the men being responsible for making sure they don't enter Bakha, he is the one who is responsible. When Bakha apologises to the man he runs into and says, "I have erred now," he confirms this notion. I completely forgot to call. Please accept my apologies" (Anand 94). "Posh keep away, posh, sweeper coming, posh posh..." is the call Bakha is referring to (Anand 98). Untouchables must yell this as they walk to alert people to their presence. They must not only sweep up other people's trash, but they must also preserve other people's cleanliness. The responsibility of the untouchable is another way to hold the untouchable under control. Sohini's encounter with Pundit Kali Nath in the temple exemplifies this.

We have a Hindu high-caste man who freely touched Sohini in a sexual manner. Nath cried "polluted, polluted" and accused Sohini of defiling him after she rejected him (Anand 120). Sohini has no way of protecting herself because she is an untouchable. She can't say that Nath touched her on his own accord, because that would be absurd to Hindus who follow the caste system. Sexual assaults like Sohini's are legal because of the untouchable's incompetence, not the caste person's. This is another example of untouchables and caste people's class struggles, as well as another way untouchables are relegated to a subhuman status.

Religion

Untouchable's religion is the common thread that runs through all of the themes. Anand uses clothing to distinguish between Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Colonel Hutchinson's fascination with Bakha stems from his assumption that Bakha wants to become a Christian. Bakha also feels a bond to his father Lahka, despite his estrangement from him, when he considers how his father, mother, and forefathers all worshipped Rama, the Hindu god (Anand 244). Although religion is a source of many of the issues addressed in the book, it is also the force that holds our characters together.

Untouchability as a Practice

The aim of Mulk Raj Anand's novel Untouchables was to change people's perceptions of untouchables. In his essay "Why I Write," he says,

> "As a writer, I have tried to drink from the sources of love in people, especially poor people, and to give them my own exuberant passion… My own personal gain has been that much inner happiness has come to me through the very act of creative writing, which has sustained me in the face of tragic events of our time, because in absorbing life one understands its disequilibriums. That is why I have always considered literature and art as the instruments of humanism".

Untouchable is a film that portrays the lives of the poor and oppressed in an orthodox Indian society. As the author tells the storey of Bakha, an untouchable sweeper boy, the practise of untouchability is widespread. The novel is a satire on the snobbery and hypocrisy prevalent in Hindu society's upper castes. The Panchamas, or untouchables, are forced to live the life of an outcast in deplorable conditions. According to E.M. Forster,

> "The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he can't escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolation of his religion. Unclean himself he pollutes other when he touches them…"

The untouchables live on the outskirts of the settlement, far from the village. They can't even draw water from the wells, according to the book, because their touch could contaminate it. In Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things, Velutha faces similar discrimination. The Panchamas in Untouchables wait for hours in the expectation that someone from a higher caste will come along and draw water for them. Bakha's sister, Sohini, is in a similar situation and is waiting for someone to come and pour water into her pot near a well. Kalinath, who is drawn to her appearance, arrives after a long wait and assists her, but his goal was to gain an advantage.

He took advantage of her by summoning her to his home and molesting her. Bakha is enraged by the incident and expresses his displeasure to his father. His father, Lakha, remains unconcerned and unresponsive, as he has become accustomed to his current living situation. He readily supports the Hindu system of untouchability, and since there is no opposition, this tradition is passed on to future generations. The Panchamas are entirely to blame for their own woes. "The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive smell," says the definition of the unwelcoming environment where these untouchables live.

Washers, grass cutters, water men, sweepers, barbers, and other members of the untouchable caste lived in mud-walled cottages huddled together, socially segregated from the rest of the village. Bakha had unintentionally touched an upper caste Hindu in a market place one day. That individual was so enraged that he called Bakha a "swine dog," "dirty dog," and other derogatory words. Everyone in the room witnessed him being mocked, but no one said anything about it. Bakha, embarrassed, dropped to his knees and quietly listened to all of the threats directed at him. Finally, a Muslim tongawallah saved him from his plight. Bakha was so shattered by the incident that he burst out into anger,

> "Why are we always abused? The sanitary inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why, I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines every day. That's why they don't touch us, the high caste."

Untouchability is one of the most heinous caste traditions in India, and it still exists in many socially and economically deprived areas. Great leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar have spoken out against this issue and advocated for its elimination from society for the benefit of the people. They believe that no society will advance if its citizens are prejudiced against this type of casteism. In the book, Gandhi arrives on the scene and gives a speech about untouchability, which comforts and inspires Bakha and his community members.

> "The fact that we address God as purifier of the polluted souls makes it a sin to regard any one born in Hinduism as polluted – it is satanic to do so. I have never been tired of repeating that it is a great sin. I don't say that this thing is crystallized in me at the age of 12, but I do say that I did then regard untouchability as a sin. "

Religion and Caste Discrimination in Social Realism

Mulk Raj Anand is known as a true social realist because of the themes and problems that he addresses in his works. The novel's social aspects, such as the treatment of religion and caste discrimination, have been realistically depicted. The novelist starts by describing the untouchables' colony in detail:

> "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment but outside their boundaries and separate from them. There lived the scavengers, the leather-workers, the washer men, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society. A brook ran near the lane, once with the crystal clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes... "

Throughout the book, the novel's primary character, Bakha, is mistreated by the high-caste people. The novel is set over the course of a single day, and we get a glimpse of how Bakha is mistreated and treated like an animal right from the start. When he is hungry, a high caste Hindu throws a cigarette packet at him, and when he is hungry, he is given chapattis in the same way that food is thrown to a dog. His encounter with a Hindu in a market sheds light on the extent to which the area was rife with caste prejudice:

> "Why don't you call, you swine, and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, cock-eyed son of a bowlegged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt that I put on this morning! "

Bakha is embarrassed but powerless in the face of the situation, so he stays quiet. Later, he expresses his dissatisfaction by saying,

> "...All of them abused, abused, abused, why are we still abused?" And we're sweeping... I'm a sweeper, an untouchable sweeper!"

Religion plays an important role in the novel because it has a significant impact on the people of the society. Col. Hutchinson encourages Bakha to become a Christian in order to improve his miserable situation. Bakha, on the other hand, is wary of converting his own religion and suspects the missionary's motives. Bakha pondered,

> "If he (Lakha) saw him (Colonel) in the distance, saying that the old sahib had wanted to convert them to the religion of Yessuh Messih and to make them sahibs like himself, but that he had refused to leave the Hindu fold, saying that the religion which was good enough for his forefathers was good enough for him."

Anand captures the untouchables' plight and depicts a harsh reality. We can see that they are denied even the most basic of human needs, such as water. We can see how these people were forbidden from touching wells that would pollute them otherwise. With his acute observation and the regional language that he adopts, as well as the use of abuses, the novelist is also very influential in his rendering of the condition of the untouchables, demonstrating the social realism with which he has portrayed the curse of untouchability.

Anand has also spoken out against upper-caste Hindus. Many innocent people's lives have been suppressed in the name of religion innocents that are not afforded fair treatment and opportunities in society. For the smooth running of society, some religious scriptures have created a division or hierarchical order based on castes. However, it seems that others have misinterpreted it and used it for their own gain. The character of Kalinath in the novel represents the hypocrisy and greed that certain people partake in in order to manipulate the ignorant and downtrodden. While he is adamant about not touching the untouchable and finds it a sin, his carnal lust for Bakha's sister, Sohini, demonstrates his irreligion and lack of spiritual qualities.

He seeks to molest her by inviting her to clean the courtyard at his home. Anand tries to portray a blunt reality in this episode, namely that not all religious preachers are morally right at heart, and that we should not accept blind beliefs and caste discrimination in the name of religion. His main goal was to help these people who were socially alienated and unaccepted. Anand has not only offered a remedy for the plight of the untouchables in the novel but has also educated his readers about certain evil practises that need to be eradicated from society by including the Mahatma Gandhi episode. The plight of the untouchables, Gandhi observes, is both a moral and a religious issue.

The problem of the untouchables is both a moral and a religious one. Untouchability, he claims, is the "greatest stain on Hinduism," and that believing that everyone in Hinduism is born as an untouchable is "satanic." Untouchables, according to Gandhi, must "cultivate habits of cleanliness" and abstain from bad habits such as drinking liquor or gambling. They must also "cease to allow leavings from the plates of high-caste Hindus, however clean they may be represented to be," according to him.

Gandhi considers all Indians to be equal and wishes to be reborn as an untouchable. He gives them a new name, Harijan, and considers them to be the Hindu religion's cleaners. Despite the fact that Gandhi's words gave Bakha and others hope, Bakha ".....began to travel." His close-knit sinews and long breath sense were his strengths. He was thinking about what he had learned, even though he didn't understand everything. As he walked along, he was calm, but the tension in his soul remained, and he was torn between his admiration for Gandhi and his own awkward naive self."

Bakha's inner contradictions between passion and naiveté are appropriated at the novel's conclusion. This is a product of Bakha's experiences during the day and their indelible effect on him, as he situates himself within his own culture.

Bakha's conversation with poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar, as well as his thoughts on the flush toilet scheme, gave him hope for the future. Bakha says, "Perhaps I can find the poet someday and ask him about his machine," and the novel ends with a hint that the oppressed class's condition will improve.

Narrative Techniques and Styles

Because of its narrative style and technique, the novel is very impressive. Anand uses the stream of consciousness technique, which was prevalent in most of the period's writings, especially by Woolf, Joyce, and others. Bakha, the central character, is tormented by society's treatment of him and his fellow beings, and the stream of consciousness approach is used to dig deep into his psyche. It can also be considered a psychological novel because it gives us a vivid account of Bakha's thoughts and ponderings, which are often fragmentary.

Bakha is also surrounded by a group of monkeys in one of the novel's dream sequences. The novelist's goal was to present Bakha's perspective on the universe, which haunts him and confines him to a desolate world even in his subconscious mind. There are also a number of flashbacks, as well as symbolic images and thoughts mixed with a sense of truth that give the novel a contemporary feel. Anand employs a variety of visuals in the book, most notably the sun and the water. The sun is a symbol of life's innovative and vital power, and it is seen as a contrast to people's lives,

> "As they sat or stood in the sun showing their dark hands and feet they had a curiously lackadaisical, lazy, lousy look about them. It seemed their insides were concentrated in the act of emergence of new birth, as it were, from the raw, bleak wintry feeling in their souls to the world of warmth. The great life-giver had cut the inscrutable knot that tied them up in themselves. It had melted the innermost parts of their being. And their souls stared at the wonder of it all, the mystery of it, the miracle of it."

The picture of the river, which represents the flow of life that is past transition, is symbolic of the people's sorrow and grief. The novelist employs a variety of English words, idioms, and phrases that represent Indian speech patterns. Many Hindi and Punjabi words, such as girja ghar, jalebi, babu, and Harijan, have not been translated into English, although some abusive Hindi words, such as son of a pig, swine dog, and others, have. The aim was to capture the flavour and colour of a specific village in Punjab during the pre-independence period and portray it realistically.

Techniques of Narrative

The book is told from the perspective of a third-person omniscient third-person omniscient third-person omniscient third-person omniscient third-person omni Many of the characters in the book's thoughts and emotions are known to the narrator. In addition, the narrator's thoughts and observations are much more informative and complex than the novel's characters. Because of the disparities between the characters and the narrator, the novel is part "day in the life" tale and part critical, anthropological study of the Hindu caste system, which most untouchables are ill-equipped to provide. Anand claimed that he became compelled to write novels as a result of his compulsions. Through his books, he expressed the real people and events of his childhood and youth.

In reality, he repaid them with his novels for the inspiration he got from them. Anand claimed that in order to achieve excellence in narrative technique, Indian English novelists should use the compare and contrast approach. He favoured the western style of storytelling because he disliked authorial intrusions into the plot. At the same time, he felt that an author should still identify himself implicitly with the storey by loving the characters, overcoming his own loneliness, evolving with them, and sharing their joys and sorrows.

According to Anand, the novelist must concentrate on the inner changes of the mind, which he refers to as the "inner changes of the mind." He admired James Joyce's "stream of consciousness" technique, which Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf later adopted. He preferred and endorsed Joyce's technique because it could more subtly and authentically replicate the restless and troubled consciousness of modern man. Anand, on the other hand, was not in favour of following Joyce directly, but rather in a modified form in which the novelist might make value judgments about the characters. Untouchable allows readers to see the protagonist Bakha's plight from his consciousness. Many of the novel's events took place in a single day. Anand used the "stream of consciousness technique" sparingly.

He only used flashbacks when the situation needed it. Bakha was the epicentre of knowledge. Via Bakha's consciousness, the reader could sense his humiliation as untouchable. Bakha's consciousness and real-life circumstances were juxtaposed by Anand to emphasise the period's dynamic social milieu. This approach also aided the reader in making his own judgments about the situation. Bakha's terror-stricken consciousness, for example, was set alongside the caste Hindus' abuses in the episode where he accidentally kissed a caste Hindu. Readers empathised with the untouchable Bakha, who was going through a lot of emotional distress as a result of his humiliation.

Bakha's agony only served to confirm the threat of untouchability in pre-independence Indian society. The same can be said for the incident in which Pundit Kali Nath tried to seduce Bakha's sister. Bakha was enraged at such a heinous assault on his sister's modesty, but he was also aware of his inability to step forward. Bakha's reactions to various circumstances, whether good or bad, played a role in the plot. Anand used the "stream of consciousness" method to delineate his internal response though he didn't respond physically.

Anand's novel writing was a self-imposed obligation by which he hoped to change the world. He didn't write novels for the sake of gaining popularity or benefit. Writing was a way for him to express himself. Untouchable was a setback for him at the start of his writing career when nineteen publishers declined to publish it. This faith in his decision to become a writer aided him in continuing his career as a writer.

Anand also believed that art is for the sake of life, and that art should always be incorporated into community life. According to him, the artistic artist was best positioned to transform society. At the same time, he believed that a creative artist should be honest with himself because he has the power to raise men to their highest levels of integrity. Rather than an entertainer, he saw the artistic artist as a prophet of the day. Anand's critics have judged him as a novelist of Indian English novels against this backdrop.

Key words/ Glossary

Polemical-- of or involving dispute or controversy.

Callousness-- insensitive and cruel

Crescendo-- a gradual increase in loudness.

Abnegation-- renounce or reject.

Agnostic -- a person who believes that one cannot know whether or not God exists.

Squalor-- a state of being extremely dirty.

Hypocrisy-- behavior in which a person pretends to have higher standards than is the case.

Bigotry-- a prejudiced and intolerant person.

Strident-- loud and harsh.

Tenuous-- very slight.

Evinces-- show or indicate.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. How many days events did Anand narrate in the novel?
a ten days
b six days
c one day
d two years

2. How did the temple priest respond when Bakha tried to enter into the temple?
a The priest gave a warm welcome to Bakha.
b The priest abused Bakha for his attempt.
c The priest shouted at him to go out and play.
d The priest asked Bakha to offer prayer to God.

3. How old was Bakha when all these incidents happened?
a Seven years
b Twelve years
c Twenty years
d Eighteen years

4. Who was Howildar Charat Singh?
a Famous cricket player
b Famous football player
c Famous hockey player
d Famous tennis player

5. Where did Bakha work?
a In the compounds of the British regiment.
b In the compounds of the Indian regiment.
c In the compounds of the Pakistan regiment.
d In the compounds of the American regiment.

6. Who called the untouchables 'Harijans' ?
a Jinnah.
b Nehru.
c Gandhi
d Tilak.

7. Who was Iqbal Nath Sarshar?
a singer
b young poet
c dancer
d player

8. Who is Bakha modeled on?
a Anand's playmate.
b Anand's roommate.
c Anand's Brother.
d Anand's neighbor.

9. How many solutions did Anand give in the novel?
a one
b two
c three
d. four

10. Where did Bakha live?
a Among the upper castes
b Margins of the society.
c Among the priests.
d Among his classmates.

Review Questions

1. How does Anand convey his concern for the weak and untouchables?
Bakha attempted to mimic European culture. Being an outcast, though, meant living on the outskirts of society. Bakha made a purchase of a pack of cigarettes. However, the shopkeeper dipped one anna coin in water and tossed the packet like a butcher might a bone to an insistent dog. An outcaste has access to the temple's outer sanctum but not to its inner sanctum. As a result, the novel's central theme is marginalisation.

2. Contrast Bakha with every other protagonist from any of Anand's other works.
Bakha was yelled at by Howildar Charat Singh, who accused him of being responsible for his stacks. When he accidentally hit a high caste Hindu, the jilebis fell down and a barrage of abuse was thrown at him for polluting the high caste Hindu with his touch. Bakha, who is untouchable, brought Mulk Raj Anand along, who was wounded. Anand's mother, on the other hand, harassed and abused Bakha. All of these incidents occurred on a single day in Bakha's life, demonstrating that he is continuously abused. As a result, violations play an important role in the novel

3. Why did Anand use English writing to portray an outcast in India?
Mulk Raj Anand used English to make the storey accessible to both Indian and non-Indian readers, allowing it to be judged by the highest standards of world literature. As a result, Anand has chosen English writing to reflect the outcaste in India.

4. How does Bakha portray all untouchables as a universal figure?
Since Bakha's experiences are similar to those of most untouchables, Anand has created a realistic and sympathetic image of him as a common representative of all Untouchables in his work. Abuse, physical harassment, oppression, and bigotry were all perpetrated against him.

5. How did Bakha respond when he touched a stranger?
Bakha accidentally touched a stranger when looking through a glass. Bakha was reminded of his Untouchability by the man who yelled at him. Bakha was abused by the man. The man was defiled by the touch of the oppressed Bakha. A crowd quickly gathered to slam Bakha.

6. How will Anand reveal the flaws in India's decayed tradition?
In Untouchable, Anand exposes the flaws in the decayed Indian tradition while advocating for modernism as a panacea for the country's problems. He gives examples of practise that need to be rooted out, such as the caste system, which is used to oppress people.

7. What is the novel's core theme?
Untouchable depicts a young outcast who has been oppressed attempting to achieve various aspects of community identity by imitating the European way of life. Bakha was an outcast who lived on the outskirts of society. As a result, the novel's central theme is marginalisation.

8. What part does the temple scene play in the novel?
Higher caste Hindus shouted "polluted, polluted, polluted!" as they blocked Bakha from entering the temple. When an Untouchable enters a temple, it pollutes it. Anand questions the reasoning behind such discrimination: the outcaste has access to the temple's outer sanctum but not to its inner sanctum, nor does he have the right to worship there. God is equivalent to everyone, but it is culture that creates distinctions in faith and spirituality. In these aspects of life, the caste system plays a part.

9. What role do Anand's early playmates and friends play in his work?
Despite being born into one of the upper castes, Anand had mixed openly as a child with the children of the sweepers attached to his father's contingent, and such cross-caste connections had persisted throughout his adolescence. With the requisite creative attitude and amendment, these early playmates and friends became the protagonists of his first novels.

10. What was Untouchable's take on Bakha's day?
Bakha's day is depicted as a graph in Untouchable, which moves up and down the plot with great dramatic interest. The narration progresses chronologically, taking into account both character and setting, and the action evolves through the interaction of character and environment.

11. How did Anand's work depict the poor in India in a truthful and sympathetic manner?
In his fiction, Anand has revealed social evil in all of its forms and has evocatively portrayed various layers of human experience. In his books, he includes the economically and socially disadvantaged parts of society, giving them a voice. the central theme of his story.

12. In the book, what are the three potential solutions?
Colonel Hutchinson, a Christian missionary and leader of the Salvation Army, proposed the first solution to the issue. Hutchinson proposed a casteless society as a means of redemption for all. Untouchables were regarded by Gandhiji as Harijans–"men of God," and Iqbal Nath Sarshar, a modernist poet, proposed a new machine (the flush) that "will clean dung without anyone having to manage it."

Self-Assessment Answer

1.	c	2.	b	3.	d	4.	c	5.	a
6.	c	7.	b	8.	a	9.	c	10.	b

Further/Suggested Readings

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Unit 11: The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To understand the structural outline of the selected text
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel
- To compare the thematic contexts with the content
- To justify the various writing narrative styles in the light of selected text

Introduction

Kiran Desai was born in India in 1971 to Anita Desai, another poet. Kiran left India when she was 14 years old, spending a year in England with her mother before settling in the United States. She completed her secondary education in the United States, studying creative writing at Bennington College. She went on to receive two master's degrees, one from Hollins University and the other from Columbia University. Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, her first book, was published in 1998 and earned critical acclaim and numerous awards. Desai spent varying amounts of time in New York, Mexico, and India while working on her second book. In 2006, The Inheritance of Loss was written and awarded the Man Booker Prize.

Her third book is currently being published. Background information on two major historical movements in India is needed for The Inheritance of Loss. The first is British colonial rule in India, which led to India's eventual independence. The British sought to break the Portuguese monopoly on trade with Asia at the end of the 16th century. The Spice Trade was chartered by the British East India Company. In the mid-eighteenth century, British troops, whose primary mission had been to protect Company lands, joined up with the Bengali army's commander in chief, Mir Jafar, to depose Bengal's ruler. Jafar was then installed as a British puppet king on the throne.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the British had established direct or indirect influence over much of modern-day India, having recognised their power and capacity for capturing smaller Indian kingdoms. In an effort to resist the company's domination of India, the Indian Rebellion of 1857 took place in 1857. The British crushed the insurgency, and the British crown officially took control of India, bringing it under direct British rule and establishing the Indian Civil Service (ICS). To please the public, British state officials were initially in charge of the ICS, but they were eventually replaced by Indian officials. In the decades that followed, a reform movement morphed into the Indian Independence movement.

In the 1920s, Mahatma Ghandi and the Indian National Congress Party popularised it. British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, when the British granted Indian Independence. Following India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru of the Indian National Congress became the country's first Prime Minister. The Gorkhaland movement is the novel's second political underpinning. After the British granted India independence in 1947, they drew India's border in Darjeeling, resulting in the influx of many Nepalis into India. Subhash Ghisingh started a movement in the 1980s to create a separate Indian state named Gorkhaland from the current Indian state of West Bengal.

The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), a violent movement established in 1986, is responsible for much of the political violence in Desai's novel. About 1,200 people were killed as a result of various strikes and demonstrations. One of the book's climactic scenes takes place on July 27, 1986, during an especially bloody confrontation.

11.1 Subject Matter

V.S. Naipaul's A Bend in the River is one of Desai's most significant literary predecessors and influences in this genre. Two characters explore this book early on in The Inheritance of Loss, which tells the storey of post-colonial, traditionalist Africa encountering the new world through an Indian merchant. The characters in The Inheritance of Loss blame the author for remaining trapped in the past and failing to move past "colonial neurosis." Desai attempts to overcome these perceived shortcomings in A Bend in the River in The Inheritance of Loss by showing how colonialism has evolved into a more distinct yet often equally harmful type of oppression and prejudice towards Eastern countries.

KEY FACTS

- Full Title: The Inheritance of Loss
- When Written: 1998-2006
- Where Written: New York, Mexico, India
- When Published: 2006
- Literary Period: Contemporary
- Genre: Historical fiction, drama
- Setting: Kalimpong, India and New York City in the 1980s; various locations in India and England in the 1940s-1980s
- Climax: Biju returns to Cho Oyu
- Antagonist: Colonialism, the GNLF, the police
- Point of View: Third person omniscient

ADDITIONAL CREDIT

Anita Desai, Kiran's mother, was also a writer who was nominated for the Man Booker Prize three times but never won. Kiran, who is 35 years old, became the youngest woman to win the award.

Other is Relationships with family. Many of the characters in the book are inspired by Desai's own family and life. Desai's paternal grandfather, like the judge, was a penniless student at Cambridge University before becoming a civil service judge. Desai, like Sai, was educated in a convent school in Kalimpong and had a cook who she adored as a child.

Summary

The novel begins with the judge and his granddaughter Sai sitting on the veranda of their house, Cho Oyu, while their cook prepares tea and Mutt, the judge's dog, sleeps on the porch. A group of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) boys arrives and demands that the judge hand over his weapons, threatening them with a rifle and stealing everything valuable in the building. The cook is then taken to the police station by the magistrate. When the cops get home, they suspect the cook of being involved in the robbery. They deconstruct his shack and read letters from his son, Biju. Biju works at Gray's Papaya in Midtown Manhattan, but is forced to leave when the restaurant's manager is intruding.

A green card search has been requested by the restaurant. Biju then moves on to a different restaurant, but the situation remains the same. When customers complain about the scent of the food, Biju is shot from a French restaurant. The storey leaps back nine years to Sai's arrival at the judge's house when he was eight years old. Her mother and father had recently been struck by a

bus, so she had left St. Augustine's convent, where she had grown up with English customs. The nuns then tracked down her grandfather's address and returned her to him. When Sai arrived, she and the judge exchanged just a few sentences, but the judge was pleased that they seemed to have similar cultural backgrounds.

The judge recalls leaving his own home at the age of twenty. He'd been admitted to Cambridge University to pursue a career in the Indian Civil Service. He'd also recently married Nimi, a fourteen-year-old wife. He was regarded as an outcast and a second-class citizen at Cambridge, and he rarely talked to anyone. He started to think his own skin colour was different, as well as his own accent. He devoted the most of his time to research. The cook takes Sai to meet her new teacher, Noni, who stays with her sister Lola, the morning after she arrives.

They pass Uncle Potty's, Father Booty's, the Afghan princesses', and Mrs. Sen's upper-class and well-educated homes. Biju starts his second year in America at an Italic school begins at an Italian restaurant, where he is shot for the second time because the proprietors think he stinks. He then gets a job as a bicycle delivery driver for a Chinese restaurant. It's freezing in the winter, and he's shot because the food he delivers is too cold by the time he gets there. Biju returns to a Harlem cellar, where he lives in deplorable conditions with other illegal immigrants. After that, he gets a job at Queen of Tarts Bakery.

The cook had become ashamed of the judge's mistreatment of him over the years, and he started to lie to other servants and Sai to exaggerate the judge's wealth and social status. The judge was actually born into a peasant family, but his father saved up money to send him to the mission school. He had put in a lot of effort and had risen to the top of his class. He studied at Cambridge and was accepted into the Indian Civil Service after passing his exams. Despite his limited knowledge of regional Indian languages, he was put in a district far from his home and toured around India. Noni knows that when Sai turns sixteen, she will need another math and science mentor because her own experience has been surpassed. The judge approaches the local college's principal, asking whether he should recommend a teacher or graduate for her.

Gyan, a twenty-year-old recent graduate who has yet to find work, has been recruited. He and Sai are easily enthralled by each other. Biju meets a Muslim man from Zanzibar named Saeed Saeed at the Queen of Tarts Bakery. He admires Saeed because, unlike Biju, he seems to be able to remain afloat in the underground environment of becoming an illegal immigrant rather than drowning. Biju starts to doubt his racism towards Pakistanis, and then his prejudice towards people of many other ethnicities, because, unlike white people, they had never done anything detrimental to him or India.

Back in Kalimpong, Sai inquires about the judge's wife with the chef. The cook initially lies and claims that they love each other, but he soon remembers that the judge despises his wife. Sai then inquires about her grandmother with the judge. He dismisses her concerns, but he starts to remember her. His family didn't have enough money for the judge's travel expenses before he left for England, so they searched for a wife for him to earn a dowry. Bomanbhai Patel, a local businessman, was very wealthy and was very interested in the judge because he planned to join the ICS. Patel, who was fourteen years old at the time, gave up his most beautiful daughter. The couple married soon after, and the judge's family called her Nimi.

He attempted to consummate the marriage the night of the wedding, but she was afraid, so they did not. They shared one gentle moment before he left for England, when he took her on an exhilarating bicycle ride. The cook writes to Biju, pleading with him to assist others in their journey to America. These requests have overwhelmed Biju, and Saeed understands because he is going through the same thing. Above all, the two want to get their green cards.

They are swindled one day by men in a van who claim to be able to get them green cards but in reality only steal their money. The Queen of Tarts Bakery closes soon after this incident. Gyan and Sai's romance blossoms when he is stranded at home due to a monsoon. They flirt and play games with each other, taking measurements of each other's hands, feet, and limbs. Gyan asks her to kiss him one day, and she agrees.

They start going on outings together, visiting cultural centres, a zoo, and a monastery. Gyan tells her about his family's experience serving in the British Army and how they were exploited. Meanwhile, Lola and Noni address the rising political rumblings of Nepalis in India, who are calling for a separate state, more work opportunities, and Nepali language schools. Noni understands their cause better than Lola, but Lola starts to recognise her own prejudices. Mrs. Sen, her next-door neighbour, begins to talk about Pakistanis with the same discrimination.

Biju is now working at Brigitte's, but he is dissatisfied because the restaurant serves steak. He realises that keeping his principles is vital to him, so he quits his job and goes to work at the Ghandi Café, which is run by a man called Harish-Harry. Harish-Harry allows the employees to remain in the kitchen's basement, but only pays them a quarter of the minimum wage. Lola, Noni, Uncle Potty, and Father Booty join Sai in celebrating Christmas. Gyan is in the market after New Year's when he sees a procession of young men from the GNLF.

He quickly becomes engrossed in the procession and identifies with their demands and grievances, which mirror many of his own as a young Nepali man. Gyan arrives at Cho Oyu the next day, enraged by Sai's complicity in English cultural elitism, and shouts at her. The judge recalls how his relationship with Nimi had deteriorated. She had taken his powder puff when he returned from England. His family teased him for using it when he hunted for it. He was angry when he learned that Nimi had taken it, and he raped her. He demanded that she speak English and observe English traditions in the days that followed, which she declined to do. When he found her squatting on the toilet, he removed her bangles, tossed her hair oil, and forced her face into the toilet. He then abandoned her at their residence when he went on tour.

Gyan attempts to apologise the day after his outburst at Sai, but they just renew their feud over English customs, and Sai accuses him of being a hypocrite for enjoying Western foods like cheese toast with her while mocking them with his peers. He leaves and informs his GNLF friends about the judge's arms, providing a summary of Cho Oyu and informing them that there is no phone. The cook mulls about his plans to send Biju abroad.

Biju had interviewed and been admitted at a cruise ship line on his first try. Before they realised it was a scam, they had charged 8,000 rupees for the processing fee and the cost of instruction. His second attempt consisted of obtaining a tourist visa. Despite the fact that poorer people had a harder time getting visas, Biju was able to travel to America. Biju slips on rotten spinach at the Ghandi Café, three years after the visa was accepted. Harish-Harry refuses to pay for a doctor for him and accuses Biju of being ungrateful.

He advises Biju to return to India for medical treatment. Before the GNLF closes more roads and stores, Father Booty, Uncle Potty, Noni, Lola, and Sai go to swap their library books. As they begin walking back to their car, they come across a GNLF procession, where Sai recognises Gyan. He completely disregards her. On the way back, Father Booty stops at a checkpoint to photograph a butterfly and is apprehended by the cops. He is soon deported after it is found that he is in India illegally.

After the incident in which the GNLF boys rob the judge's arms, the narration jumps forward. A few days later, the cops arrest a drunk and suspect him of the crime, violently beating him. Meanwhile, Biju learns about the Nepalese strikes from a source in America. He attempts to contact the chef, but their conversation is disjointed. Biju is now more despondent than he was before. The strikes in Kalimpong are still going on, and Nepalis have set up tents in front of Lola and Noni's house.

The sisters begin to believe that their money, which had previously shielded them, is now putting them at risk. When Sai visits Gyan at his house, he sees how bad he is. Gyan becomes enraged by her pity, and the two quarrel until he beats her and throws her in a forest. When Sai returns home, he finds the wife of a drunk who was battered by the cops pleading with the judge for money and mercy. They turn away from her. In the meantime, Gyan's sister tells his family of his activities, and they prohibit him from attending the GNLF protest the next day.

The cook attends the protest the next day because the GNLF requires each family to send a male representative. Rocks begin to fly out of nowhere, and demonstrators and police, equally perplexed, begin throwing rocks at each other. The police then start shooting at the crowd. As a result of the deaths of several young people, demonstrators begin to wrestle guns from police officers and turn on them. The cops flee and seek refuge in private residences.

They are turned away by Lola and Noni. Despite being warned not to, Biju decides to return to India. He buys various souvenirs to bring home to his father and flies to Calcutta on the cheapest plane available. When he arrives, the airline loses a number of bags and only compensates non-resident Indians and foreigners. Biju takes a step out into the street while waiting for his luggage, which arrives undamaged. In his country, he is at ease. In Kalimpong, the terrifying events continue. There have been several robberies and arson attempts. The woman who had been turned down by the judge reappears and kidnaps Mutt in order to sell her. When the judge, the chef, and Sai discover she's gone missing, they all set out to find her. When the judge arrives at the police

station, he is ridiculed because this seems to be a minor offence in comparison to the crimes committed.

The judge recalls his family, culture, and the woman he had left behind. A woman had knocked on Nimi's door one day when he was on tour and taken her unknowingly to be a member of the Nehru welcoming committee for the Indian National Congress Party. The district commissioner challenged the judge when he returned. He had been humiliated after losing a promotion. He had cursed Nimi, beaten her, and kicked her when he returned home. His daughter was born six months later.

He had never seen her before. When Nimi's sleeve catches fire on the burner, it's implied that her brother-in-law arranged her death. Because of the political situation, Biju is told that there are no buses to Kalimpong. Biju is picked up by some GNLF guys. They transport him for the majority of the journey before abandoning him and robbing him of all of his belongings, money, and clothes. He is compelled to walk the remaining distance to Kalimpong. The judge becomes more concerned about Mutt's disappearance. He accuses the cook of being the culprit and threatens to kill him. After that, the cook goes to the canteen, where he meets Gyan. Gyan resolves to find Mutt about what has happened after hearing what has happened and feeling increasingly guilty.

Returning to Cho Oyu, the cook begs the judge to defeat him. The judge repeatedly slaps him with a slipper. Sai shouts at him to stop and pours tea for the chef. The gate begins to jingle at that moment, and the cook rushes to open it. Biju is the name of the character. As the sun rises over the mountains, the cook and his son jump at each other.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Jemubhai / The Judge – The judge, also known as Jemubhai or Jemu in flashback scenes, is the head of the Cho Oyu household and Sai's grandfather. He is raised in a peasant family who devotes all of their energy to ensuring that he receives a good education. He attends a mission school before receiving a scholarship to Cambridge University, aspiring to become a member of the Indian Civil Service He marries fourteen-year-old Nimi in order to obtain a dowry before departing, but the two do not marry.

Even though he is an outsider in Cambridge, he seeks to mimic British culture. He is admitted into the ICS after passing his exams. When he returns to India, she steals his powder puff, humiliates him, and he rapes her in revenge. The judge spends the remainder of their marriage bullying her and attempting to de-Indianize her. Fearing that he will kill her, he finally sends her away. In the present, the judge is a deliberate, enraged old man who despises himself because he is not recognised by neither British culture nor his own society interest him. His only source of comfort is Mutt, his dog, and, finally, his granddaughter.

The judge is the main character who goes through colonisation firsthand. He must come to terms with his harassment of his wife and the injustice he has caused on others as a result of being forced to follow British culture, even though he profits from it. Sai is the granddaughter of the judge. She had attended St. Augustine's convent before arriving at Cho Oyu, where she had been "Anglicized" (taught British traditions and ideas) in the same way that the judge had been. Sai's mother and father are killed in a bus crash when he is eight years old.

Sai - Sai is brought to Cho Oyu by the nuns to live with her grandfather, whom she had never met before. Noni (who tutors her), Lola, Father Booty, and Uncle Potty—the judge's upper-class neighbours who share English rituals with her including celebrating Christmas and listening to the BBC—become acquainted with her over time. Sai feels closer to the chef, who treats her like a sibling, because the judge is harsh with her. Sai gets a new mentor, Gyan, when she is sixteen. Before realising that their cultural differences are too great, the two have a fast and passionate romance. Sai is a naive and self-absorbed young man. She is, however, astute, and recognises that many of Gyan's problems with her have little to do with her and more to do with her upbringing and privilege.

Biju - Biju is the son of the chef. Biju moves to New York City at the behest of the cook in order to earn money and have a better life for the family's future generations. He bounces around from restaurant to restaurant, owing to green card checks, customer concerns about his odour, or his dislike for the owners and customers. When he encounters Saeed Saeed, a Pakistani man he admires, he is forced to face his own racism in a globalised America.

Biju also understands his own beliefs: he quits his job as a steakhouse chef because he knows that he must live according to his family's and religion's values. The Gandhi Café is where he meets Harish-Harry as a result of this. Biju is confident and gullible at times, but the life of an undocumented immigrant in New York City, whom he refers to as a "ghost class," wears him down. Biju eventually becomes tired from being overworked and exploited, and he decides to return to India, despite the fact that he will most likely disappoint his father. As a result, Biju embodies the longing for home that many of the characters feel.

The Cook – Biju's father and the judge's cook. Since he was fourteen years old, the cook has served for the judge, and his servant status is deeply rooted in him. He follows the judge's orders, despite the fact that the judge often verbally and physically assaults him. While the cook recognises his own position, he also strives to ensure that his son Biju has a better life in America. In order to supplement his income, he runs a small illegal business selling liquor on the side. He's pleased to hear from his son, who is bouncing around from job to job, knowing that his own hard work has paid off. Despite the fact that the cook is often insulted by other characters, he has a strong personality.

He, too, has a vanity streak. To make himself feel better about working for the judge, he exaggerates his status as well as the judge's wealth and kindness. The chef, on the other hand, is primarily seen as a servant. Despite the fact that they have spent more time together than anybody else, the judge and the cook have never met. This is emphasised by the fact that the cook's name, Panna Lal, is not revealed until the novel's second-to-last page, when his son returns. He does not completely develop as an individual until he is reunited with his son.

Gyan – Sai's twenty-year-old Nepali math teacher, with whom he develops a romantic relationship. Gyan begins the novel as naive as Sai, but as the GNLF movement takes root in Kalimpong, he matures. He knows that many of their grievances and fears are shared by him, and he marches in solidarity with them. Gyan is confused by Sai's innocence and cultural elitism after this political awakening. He betrays her for the campaign by informing his friends that the judge has weapons and no phone at his home, which leads to Cho Oyu's robbery. Gyan eventually feels guilty and seeks to reconnect with Sai, but their relationship is still unfinished at the end of the novel.

Gyan, like Sai, has hypocritical views because he loves tea parties and cheese toast with her, but he also understands that these British imports are byproducts of a scheme that contributed to his own enslavement. Gyan is, at the end of the day, a character dealing with centuries of systemic injustice that becomes personal as it leads to his own coming-of-age.

Nimi – Sai's maternal grandmother and the judge's wife. When she marries the lawyer, she is fourteen years old. Since Nimi is frightened, the two do not marry before the judge leaves for university, but they do share one last affectionate bicycle ride before he departs. When the judge returns, however, he continues to expect her to give up her culture, just as he has. When Nimi steals his powder puff, he becomes enraged and rapes her as a result.

He then starts abusing her in an attempt to force her to conform to English culture. The judge eventually sends Nimi away after she mistakenly becomes a member of the Nehru welcoming committee for the Indian National Congress. He fears that she has embarrassed him and that he will kill her in retaliation. Nimi then has a daughter, Sai's mother, and spends the rest of her life with her sister until catching fire from the stove (it's suggested that her sister's husband was to blame). Nimi comes to represent the Indian community from which the judge is trying to distance himself.

Noni - Noni is a judge's neighbour, Lola's niece, and Sai's first tutor at Cho Oyu when she arrives. She and Lola are upper-class Bengali women who have assimilated many aspects of British and Western cultures, including Christmas celebrations, Jane Austen reading, and BBC listening. In several ways, Noni becomes a mother figure for Sai. Noni, who has never been in love, advises Sai to take life as it comes and to avoid getting stuck in a situation where time seems to stand still.

Lola - Noni's girlfriend, Lola. She and Noni share a home that previously belonged to Lola and her late husband Joydeep, who died of a heart attack. Lola is more opinionated than her sister, enforcing India's rigid caste systems and maintaining strong negative perceptions of Nepalis. She insists that servants and upper-class citizens should be separated by strict lines. Pixie, the judge's daughter, is a BBC reporter, implying that she, like Noni and many of the judge's other neighbours, believes in the British cultural supremacy.

Father Booty – Father Booty, another of the judge's neighbours, is a Swiss priest who owns a dairy farm. It's suggested that he's related to someone. Uncle Potty has some kind of friendship with you.

Throughout the book, it is revealed that Father Booty is in India illegally and should not be allowed to own land. He is informed he must leave the country right away, and as a result, he becomes an unusual and unintentional victim of the GNLF movement.

Uncle Potty – The judge's next-door friend, who describes himself as "a gentleman farmer and a drunk." Father Booty is strongly implied to be in a relationship with him. Lola and Noni put up with him because he is well-educated and comes from a well-known family, despite the fact that he is less cultured than they are.

Saeed Saeed - Biju's coworker at the Queen of Tarts Bakery, Saeed Saeed. Biju admires Saeed, a Muslim man from Zanzibar, for his tenacity and determination to not only survive but also succeed as an undocumented immigrant. Saeed eventually persuades a young hippie woman to marry him and support him for a green card, which Biju considers the pinnacle of American ambitions.

Harish-Harry - Harish-Harry is the proprietor of the Gandhi Café, Biju's final employer. Harish-Harry takes advantage of globalisation to market generic Indian food to Americans. He is sweet to Biju, but he also takes advantage of him, refusing to pay for a doctor when Biju is hurt in the restaurant.

The Judge's Father – Just like the cook for Biju, the judge's father works hard to ensure that his son receives the best education and rises in society. When he notices that the judge has totally abandoned Indian culture, he claims that the judge has become a stranger to him and his family. For his part, the judge is ashamed of his father and the family in which he was raised.

Bose - After graduating from Cambridge, Bose becomes the judge's only associate. Bose is Indian, but he worked hard to shed his Indian identity in order to be accepted by the British. However, as he and the judge reunite for a final lunch, Bose realises how wrong he was. They were making a mistake by idolising a society that oppressed them so severely.

Mr. Mistry - Sai's father, is an orphan who served in the Indian Air Force. He and Sai's mother travel to Moscow for him to be interviewed for a place in the space programme, but the couple is hit by a bus while crossing the street, leaving Sai in the care of her grandparents.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Sai's Mother (Mrs. Mistry) - Mrs. Mistry, Sai's mother, is the judge's and Nimi's only child. She and Sai's father place Sai in a convent as they fly to Moscow to interview him for a position in the space programme. They are hit by a bus as they cross the street, leaving Sai orphaned and in the care of her grandparents.

Mrs. Sen – Lola's competitor and another of the judge's neighbours. Mun Mun, like Lola's daughter Pixie, is a reporter, but only in America, and the two often argue over whether the United States or the United Kingdom is the better place.

The Afghan Princesses – Two more of the judge's neighbours who were granted shelter by Nehru when the British sat their father's throne in the hands of someone else.

Mrs. Rice – The judge's British landlady when he is at Cambridge University.

Key words/ Glossary

Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) **–** A violent movement created in the 1980s by Subhash Ghisingh, on which much of the political conflict in Desai's novel is centered, and which Gyan briefly joins. The GNLF called for a separate state called "Gorkhaland" for the Nepalis in India, and turned particularly violent in 1985-1986. Various strikes and protests led to the deaths of over 1,200 people. An especially bloody conflict on July 27, 1986, serves as one of the book's climactic scenes.

Indian Civil Service (ICS) – The elite higher civil service of the British Empire in British-ruled India. The ICS oversaw all government activity in the 250 districts that comprised India. At first, almost all of the top members of the ICS were British, but eventually the service attempted to "Indianize" in order to appease those calling for Indian Independence. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the judge is appointed to a position in the ICS overseeing the district courts.

Indian National Congress – A political party in India (sometimes simply known as "Congress") founded in the late 19th century. Under the leadership of Mahatma Ghandi after 1920, it became the principal leader of the Indian independence movement, eventually leading to freedom from British rule in 1947. The first Prime Minister of India was Jawaharlal Nehru, a member of the Congress Party. When Nimi is unwittingly taken to be a part of Nehru's welcoming committee, the judge is furious because he opposes the Congress party and Indian independence, having benefited greatly from British rule.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. Who does Sai wait for at the beginning of the novel?
Her math tutor.

2. What does Sai serve to the judge at the beginning of the novel?
Tea.

3. Who approaches the judge's house at the beginning of the novel?
A young Nepalese men.

4. What is taken from the judge's house in chapter 1?
Guns.

5. Who is sent to the police station after the judge is robbed?
The cook.

6. Who built the judge's house?
A Scotsman.

7. Where does Biju live?
In America.

8. What is Biju's job when his character is first introduced?
Selling hot dogs.

9. How did The Judge deal with his disillusionment with Western culture after eventually receiving an education and being regarded as a non-Indian or non-English person?
His reaction to these disappointing events was twofold: first, he withdraws into himself, isolating himself from the source of the pain; and second, he uses the pain he feels to motivate himself to finish his law course. His second reaction to his betrayal and humiliation, on the other hand, effectively transforms him into a monster: he becomes a rough, calloused man who uses his connections, education, and wealth to gain control and leverage over everyone in their Indian culture. In other words, he transforms into the very thing he despises and has caused him so much pain: a racist of the worst kind.

10. How is the novel's theme of isolation explored?
Isolation is a theme discussed by the protagonists in the book. Each character is isolated at some stage, whether by choice, as in the case of the Judge and Sai, or by physical distance, as in the case of Biju, who is living as an illegal immigrant in the United States. As in the cases of Sai, The Judge, and Biju, isolation can also be a figurative type of isolation. Sai is a resident of India, surrounded by Indians and their society.
Despite this, Sai is isolated—practically shunned by her fellow Indians—due to her Anglo-centricity; a matter that doesn't concern Sai much because she despises the rest of India. Biju, like Sai, is constantly surrounded by people: he lives in one of the world's most populous cities (New York), and when he works, he is surrounded by other immigrant jobs. He is lonely, despite the crowded conditions; he is regarded as a commodity and shunned, even by other migrants. Because of his resentment and deep-seated cynicism, the Judge has removed himself from the rest of the world—he simply despises everybody and isn't afraid to display it.

11.Food is frequently mentioned in the novel; how does food function as a literary device in the story's progression?
Food is used in the novel in a variety of ways, including as a metaphor for socioeconomic status—wealthy characters like Sai, The Judge, Noni, and Lola are able to choose British food over Indian

food because they were wealthy enough to be introduced to it and wealthy enough to buy it on a regular basis. It's also used as a metaphor for the cultural difference that exists between the characters: Gyan loves Indian sweets, while Sai does not and is very outspoken about her disapproval. It also serves as a plot device for Biju, who, as a devout Hindu, is horrified at the prospect of cooking beef for a restaurant. He becomes so dissatisfied with his restaurant that he decides to leave the United States and return to India.

Review Questions

1. A poem by Jorge Luis Borges precedes The Inheritance of Loss. Why do you think Kiran Desai chose Borges' work as an epigraph, given what you know about him? Who are the "aspirant...highly covetous multitude"? What makes them "deserving of tomorrow"? Who am I, exactly?
2. "She had a fearful feeling of having entered a room so wide it extended both backward and forward" the first evening Sai was at Cho Oyu (p. 34). Discuss your findings. Could this possibly be a synopsis of the book?
3. Compare and contrast the concepts of globalisation and colonialism. What does it mean to bring a Western aspect into a non-Western world, or an individual from a poor country into a wealthy one? What examples would you find in the novel? Discuss them in terms of politics and economics. In what ways do Noni and Lola reflect the global middle class? See page 242 for more information.
4. Why did the judge in England live such a lonely existence? The judge was a different person when he returned to India. "He was envious of the English. He despised Native Americans. He served with a disdain for being English, and for what he would become, he would be hated by all, English and Indians alike" (p. 119). Discuss how the judge was affected for the rest of his life by the racism and rejection he faced in England.
5. In England, Bose was the judge's only associate. "A glance of acknowledgment had passed between them at that point. but also the promise that they will not, except to each other, expose one another's secrets" (p. 118). Make a comparison and contrast between the two guys. Who was the optimist, and who was the pessimist? When they were in England, how did Bose assist the judge? Bose had improved by the time they met again, thirty-three years later. How do you do it? Why did he insist on seeing the judge once more?
6. Nimi unwittingly attended a political rally. Who accompanied her to the rally? Explain why the judge was so furious. He found himself on the wrong side of history after independence. What was going on in India politically at the time? What does the Congress Party stand for?
7. The marriage of the judge and Nimi was doomed to fail. Is it true that the judge ever had any tender feelings for his wife? Why did her family pay for him to attend school in England, and how did they do it? What happened to Nimi in the end? What did the judge make up his mind about it? Finally, does the judge regret abandoning his family "for the sake of false values" (p. 308)?
8. Talk about how the judge felt about Sai, who was "maybe the only miracle fate had thrown his way" (p. 210). Sai was handled as if she were a daughter by the chef. Talk about their friendship.
9. Talk about Mutt's importance in the judge's life.
10. Sai's parents abandoned her at the Convent of St. Augustine, and she never saw them again. Why were they in the Soviet Union in the first place? What similarities exist between their path to and years spent in another country and the stories of Biju's and the judge's? How do India's allegiances to other countries cause such migration?

11. Tell us about Sai's first mentor, Noni. What was Noni's suggestion to Sai? What is the reason for this? See page 69 for more information.
12. Compare and contrast Gyan's and Sai's residences. Gyan's house is "modernity proffered in its most heinous form, brand-new one day, in ruins the next" (p. 256), while Sai's house was once a grand adventure for a Scotsman, but is now infested with spiders and termites, and the walls are sagging from the humidity (p. 7). What do their houses say about their personalities?
13. Compare and contrast Gyan and the judge. Both were the family's chosen sons, with a lot riding on their success and a lot expected of them. They're both sad and don't feel like they belong anywhere. Why don't they get along if they're so similar? Do you believe they will raise their sons in the same manner as they were raised?
14. How did the judge's father recognise that the Indian class structure would preclude his son from achieving his full potential, but that colonialism provided a chink in the wall? When the judge returns to India, why does he not work in his own province? What are the various forms of immigration depicted in the novel? There's Biju, Saeed Saeed, the judge, Sai's mother and aunt, Father Booty and Uncle Potty, Tibetan monks, and New York restaurant staff, to name a few as well as everyone at the Calcutta airport when Biju returns home (chapter 48). What exactly does all of this immigration imply?
15. Was Gyan a powerful individual? How did he end up in a "procession coming panting up Mintri Road led by young men keeping their kukris aloft and yelling, 'Jai Gorkha'" (p. 156)? At the rally, Gyan was not fully persuaded. What decision did Gyan make later at Ex-Army Thapa's Canteen, which was "lit by alcohol" (p. 160)? Describe his motivations. What was Gyan's opinion of his father?
16. Gyan went to Cho Oyu the next day. What had occurred to you? After leaving Cho Oyu, he returned to the canteen. Examine his motivations for betraying Sai. " 'You despise me for major reasons that have nothing to do with me,' Sai said, as though she could read his mind (p. 260). Examine why Gyan turned down Sai.
17. Talk about how Gyan and Sai are separated by unrest, betrayals, and eventually crime. How are their problems, as well as the cook's, judge's, Father Booty's, and Lola and Noni's, linked to statehood issues and old hatreds that refuse to die? Is Noni's remark, "Those bloody Brits are really unskilled at drawing borders," (p. 129) sufficient to justify the problems?
18. Biju's time in New York City does not go as planned. How do the people who came before him handle him? How do differences in class in India translate into differences in class in the United States, where none is meant to exist? "He relished the whole game, the way the country flexed his wits and rewarded him; he charmed it, cajoled it, tricked it, felt great tenderness and devotion toward it.... It was an old-fashioned romance," Saeed Saeed says of his success in America (p. 79). Why is he so prosperous when Biju is not?
19. The majority of American and other tourists' examples in India are particularly unflattering (pp. 197, 201, 237, 264). The majority of Indians in America are unimpressive, as shown by the students to whom Biju delivers food (pp. 48–51) and the businesspeople who order steak in a restaurant. In a restaurant in the financial district, I had steak (p. 135). What criteria do they use to evaluate themselves? What is Biju's opinion of them?
20. How did the judge's cook get his job? Is the cook content with his social standing? Was he able to carry out his duties despite the judge's treatment? Why did the cook embellish the details of the judge's stories?

21. What was the cook's motivation for sending his son, Biju, to America? Discuss Biju's experiences in that place. How did he feel about the prospect of never seeing his father again? Biju returned to India for a reason. Describe how he felt as soon as he exited the airport.
22. Has Sai changed or matured during the months of personal and political turmoil? "What she had been told was too easy to keep up. She could never again believe there was only one storey, and that storey belonged solely to her" (p. 323). Explain what she means when she says this. Is Sai going to abandon Cho Oyu?
23. The cook isn't mentioned by name until the novel's next-to-last page. What is the reason for this?
24. Which of the characters lived "a life of meaning and pride," as Gyan puts it (p. 260)?

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Unit 12: The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To understand the structural outline of the selected text
- To analyse the role of various characters in the formation of the novel
- To compare the thematic contexts with the content
- To justify the various writing narrative styles in the light of selected text

Introduction

V.S. Naipaul's A Bend in the River is one of Desai's most significant literary predecessors and influences in this genre. Two characters explore this book early on in The Inheritance of Loss, which tells the storey of post-colonial, traditionalist Africa encountering the new world through an Indian merchant. The characters in The Inheritance of Loss blame the author for remaining trapped in the past and failing to move past "colonial neurosis." Desai attempts to overcome these perceived shortcomings in A Bend in the River in The Inheritance of Loss by showing how colonialism has evolved into a more distinct yet often equally harmful type of oppression and prejudice towards Eastern countries as a result of globalization.

Kiran Desai was born in India in 1971 to Anita Desai, another poet. Kiran left India when she was 14 years old, spending a year in England with her mother before settling in the United States. She completed her secondary education in the United States, studying creative writing at Bennington College. She went on to receive two master's degrees, one from Hollins University and the other from Columbia University. Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, her first book, was published in 1998 and earned critical acclaim and numerous awards. Desai spent varying amounts of time in New York, Mexico, and India while working on her second book. In 2006, The Inheritance of Loss was written and awarded the Man Booker Prize. Her third book is currently being published.

Subject Matter

Background information on two major historical movements in India is needed for The Inheritance of Loss. The first is British colonial rule in India, which led to India's eventual independence. The British sought to break the Portuguese monopoly on trade with Asia at the end of the 16th century. The Spice Trade was chartered by the British East India Company. In the mid-eighteenth century, British troops, whose primary mission had been to protect Company land, joined up with Mir Jafar, the Bengali army's commander in chief to assassinate Bengal's ruler Jafar was then installed as a British puppet king on the throne.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the British had established direct or indirect influence over much of modern-day India, having recognised their power and capacity for capturing smaller Indian kingdoms. In an effort to resist the company's domination of India, the Indian Rebellion of 1857 took place in 1857. The British crushed the insurgency, and the British crown officially took control of India, bringing it under direct British rule and establishing the Indian Civil Service (ICS). The ICS

was initially led by British state officials, but in order to please the Indians, they were eventually replaced by Indian officials.

In the decades that followed, a reform movement grew into the Indian Independence movement, which was popularised in the 1920s by Mahatma Ghandi and the Indian National Congress Party. British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, when the British granted Indian Independence. Following India's independence, Jawaharlal Nehru of the Indian National Congress became the country's first Prime Minister. The Gorkhaland movement is the novel's second political underpinning. After the British granted India independence in 1947, they drew India's border in Darjeeling, resulting in the influx of many Nepalis into India.

Subhash Ghisingh started a movement in the 1980s to create a separate Indian state named Gorkhaland from the current Indian state of West Bengal. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), a violent movement established in 1986, is responsible for much of the political violence in Desai's novel. About 1,200 people were killed as a result of various strikes and demonstrations. One of the book's climactic scenes takes place on July 27, 1986, during an especially bloody confrontation.

Summary

Coming-of-Age Growing Pains

Several of the novel's major characters are affected by growing pains. Sai and Gyan go through a maturation phase as their relationship faces challenges and misunderstandings. Kiran Desai depicts young people with tenderness and realism. As she tries to make sense of her own situation, Sai becomes interested in the romantic lives of older people, especially her grandfather. Gyan, on the other hand, is perplexed and conflicted after the thrill and mystery of romance has worn off. His passion for Sai, in particular, clashes with his desire to be a man and project a "tough" picture as a Gorkhaland militant partisan.

For a long time, Sai and Gyan have struggled with remorse, guilt, and rage. Biju, the cook's sibling, is another character who has to deal with growing pains. He arrives in America at the age of 20 and works in low-wage restaurants. It's a hard life, with poor working conditions, low wages, and racial and ethnic prejudice resulting in insults. Biju manages to endure this routine for several years. His instincts lead him to return to his homeland as time passes, and the explanation of that return leaves no doubt that he made the right choice. Despite the fact that Judge Patel is elderly throughout the novel's main setting, several flashbacks depict him as a student in the United Kingdom.

Despite being repeatedly snubbed and dismissed because of his Indian heritage, the judge adopts a pro-British stance. Judge Patel "grows backwards," as it were. When his condition becomes more oppressive, he digs in his heels and seeks refuge in resentment. The author's ultimate point regarding the boundaries of Anglophilia is traced in particular by the judge's storey line. His failure, in terms of his love of English culture, represents India's larger failure, which accepted the British through trade policies but failed to achieve any of the outcomes desired by the Indian people by falling in love with their oppressors. When compared to Sai and Biju, it's clear that the novel creates a place for the reader to consider India's future as young people—and, in many respects, the nation itself—struggle to mature in the aftermath of imperialism.

Displacement and Alienation

Almost every main character in the novel experiences displacement and alienation at some stage. The Inheritance of Loss is a storey set in India and the United States. The chef, Biju's father, forwards multiple petitions to his son for assistance in the immigration process, demonstrating the widespread desire to leave India for "greener pastures."

The tale emphasises the plight of refugees in their never-ending attempts to gain legal residency in the United States by obtaining a green card. However, it is undeniable that life as an immigrant comes with its own set of challenges. Biju isn't known for being particularly nostalgic. But even he, who is willing to put up with endless biases and harsh living conditions, becomes restless and returns to India. Judge Patel's scenario, on the other hand, is special. As a student in England, he feels out of place, but he welcomes the chance to join the ranks of the British overlords of India.

When he is ultimately rejected by this establishment, his displacement takes on a new shape. In his own country, he feels isolated. Displacement and isolation are also a part of Sai's life. She is orphaned at a young age and is sent to live with her strict grandfather by fate. For a while, Gyan's romance piques her interest, but she knows she must leave Cho Oyu before too much time passes.

Fear and Love

Love is an emotion in The Inheritance of Loss that entails unanticipated uncertainty. Sai and Gyan's romance, for example, seems promising at first. However, both characters have reservations, particularly Gyan, who believes his masculinity is jeopardised by his feelings for Sai. Gyan's reservations lead him to betray Sai and her family to his revolutionary comrades. They also obstruct a long-term reconciliation between the two following their bitter feud over "running after the West." The emotion of love also frightens Judge Patel.

As the judge bids his father farewell in Bombay early in the book, he is portrayed as never experiencing love without the presence of another, conflicting emotion. The judge's cruel treatment of his wife, which culminates in her abandonment, stems from his adamant reluctance to compromise to give up his pride and status for the sake of another person Only his approval of Sai brightens this otherwise bleak and bleak image of the judge.

Discrimination and Cultural Conflict

The clash between India and the West is the novel's most influential cultural dispute. This tension underpins Judge Patel's experiences in England, as well as Gyan and Sai's disagreements. But conflict is also popular within India: Lola and Noni's prejudices against Nepalis, the GNLF's rebellion against the dominant Bengali authority in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling area, and so on.

and the judge's profession in India is marked by caste divisions—or hereditary social groupings. Discrimination against Indians is particularly pronounced in the United Kingdom and the United States. When the judge arrives in Cambridge as a student, he finds it difficult to find a rented bed. Biju is the target of discrimination in New York several years later.

Globalization and Colonialism

The Inheritance of Loss is set in the 1980s, and it alternates between two worlds: the judge and Sai's austere, upper-class home at the foot of Mount Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas, and a variety of New York City restaurants where Biju works. The book examines the impact of colonialism and globalisation in India, which is still establishing itself as an independent nation less than 40 years after the end of British colonial rule, and in New York, which is still experiencing waves of immigration.

Desai's novel is full of cynicism about globalisation, portraying it as a negative result of colonialism and demonstrating how it affects all of the characters in the novel, both economically and socially, regardless of social status. Globalization, according to the judge, causes a lack of individuality and an intense sense of self-hatred among those who have firsthand experience of colonialism and owe their careers to the British.

When the judge is nineteen years old, he enrols in Cambridge to prepare for a career in the civil service. He soon becomes lonely, however, and even the lowest members of English society look down on him and say that he stinks of curry. As a result, he begins to deny his Indian heritage. His coursework and exams are solely focused on British cultural icons such as trains and British poets. When he passes these exams and is appointed to the Indian Civil Service as a judge, he is showered with praise and regarded as a "man of integrity." He starts to admire the English and despise the Indians.

Despite this, he sits alone on the train back to India, reading "How to Speak Hindustani." He is not uncomfortable with English, but he does not speak the language in which he will be assigned as a judge. Globalization has been shown to be especially dangerous for Indians in positions such as the judge's because it encourages them to idealise a society in which they are never truly accepted and in which their own people are exploited. Because of its isolation, the judge moves to the house at Kanchenjunga (built by a Scotsman) after his education and career are completed and India gains

independence. “The judge could live here, in this shell, this skull, with the comfort of being a stranger in his own country, for this time not learning the language,” Desai writes.

Even after colonisation is no longer in place, his complete isolation from both British and Indian societies demonstrates the long-term and profoundly negative consequences of colonisation. Sai, the judge's granddaughter, moves in with him years after he relocates to Kanchenjunga. She and her upper-class neighbours claim that their international imports, such as Swiss cheese, Italian opera music, and Russian paintings, are simply a way for them to express themselves in the new, globalised era. They are unaware, however, that their interests stem from the British's deep-seated cultural elitism, which ultimately damages them as well.

The judge's neighbours, Lola, Noni, and Sai, all speak English and watch the BBC. They have a selection of Russian aristocrat paintings and a Jane Austen book collection. They are enthralled by the fact that chicken tikka masala has surpassed fish and chips as the most popular takeaway dinner in the United Kingdom, and find it amusing that the British prefer tikka masala. Their laughter reveals their prejudice: they seem to believe that British food is superior to Indian food. They indirectly denigrate their own cultural heritage as Indians by consistently elevating all aspects of Western culture above their own.

Eventually, due to town strikes sparked by Nepalese demonstrations, Lola and Noni must struggle to maintain their standard of living. However, as their wealth grows, they become increasingly concerned with what others could do to them or their homes. Trollope, the BBC, and Christmas, which they had previously dismissed as innocuous trappings of cosmopolitan life, became targets for robberies. Nepalis gradually begin to build huts on their property. Others tend to see their British imports as indicators of cultural elitism and economic exploitation, and their British imports become liabilities for them. Through the eyes of foreigners arriving in New York City, Biju's storyline offers an alternate viewpoint on globalisation.

Though international cultures and cuisines are fetishized and highly regarded in cosmopolitan cities like New York, Biju recognises that real immigrants are still undervalued. The food is valued more than the workers in each of the restaurants where Biju works, particularly when the food is from Western countries and the people are from Eastern (or African) countries. Customers at the French bistro enjoy the food before they learn that it is cooked by Algerians, Senegalese, and Moroccans. As a result, globalisation has the potential to devalue the citizens of some countries, especially those that were previously colonised.

Biju starts to see the hypocrisy of his own behaviour against others, both in India and in the United States. Many Indians hold prejudices against Pakistanis and black people, and Biju realises the irony of his appreciation for white people, despite the fact that they "arguably had done India great harm." On the other hand, he was prejudiced against many other people in America (such as Mexicans, Chinese, and Japanese), despite the fact that they had never done anything wrong to India. Consequently, despite a common history of injustice under colonial rule, these societies harbour similar biases against one another.

In a globalised world, Biju's storyline highlights how one of colonialism's legacies is that people who were once its subjects always internalise the colonizer's distrust of non-whites and non-Westerners. The Inheritance of Loss is able to demonstrate the consequences of colonialism and the damage caused by globalisation firsthand since it covers a long period of time and two continents. Globalization visibly perpetuates the patriarchal legacy of colonialism, whether it exposes latent biases, contributes to a rejection of one's own society, or engenders feelings of self-hatred. Since it is perpetuated even by those who are harmed by it, it becomes an especially sinister type of oppression—one that, according to the novel, seems difficult to eradicate in the modern world.

Privilege vs. Poverty

The characters in Desai's novel come from various economic backgrounds, ranging from the judge's privilege to the cook's poverty. The chasm between those with extreme wealth and those living in poverty is commonly seen in The Inheritance of Loss to be a direct result of colonialism's legacy. Though privilege takes many forms, Desai depicts the vicious and self-reinforcing cycle of class privilege by demonstrating how those who have it continue to accumulate wealth and social status, while others without such advantages live in poverty, exacerbating their disadvantage.

Colonialism strengthens India's rigid class system by enabling those who already have privilege while disadvantaging those who don't, all while claiming a meritocratic attitude toward poverty and privilege. The Nepali people living in India are at the core of the novel's cultural and economic

struggles. Gyan and his family exemplify the traditional experience of those who have been displaced and are trapped in a cycle of poverty as a result of their caste status.

According to the protestors, the British granted India independence in 1947 and founded the Muslim nation of Pakistan, but did not make provisions for Nepalis in India. Despite the fact that they make up 80% of the population in Kalimpong, they have no Nepali-run schools or hospitals, and jobs are not provided to Nepalis. They are farmers who frequently serve as servants. Despite the fact that they are the majority, they do not control the capital, and as a result, they remain largely helpless because no one can provide them with opportunities. On a more personal level, Gyan is ashamed of his house, which is modern but on the verge of collapse.

Desai observes that this isn't "picturesque poverty," but rather something much worse. Gyan is ashamed of being with Sai and taking her back to his house as a result, causing a rift between them. He's a hypocrite, she says, because he eats cheese and chocolate at her house but doesn't eat them with the Nepalis because he can't afford them. What she doesn't know is that he's criticising the fact that some people live in comfort while others are starving. Despite the fact that the judge did not come from a rich family, the opportunity to attend school in Britain generates a cycle of increasing wealth as well as a chance for his future generations After attending Cambridge University, the judge passes the British exams needed for admission to the Indian Civil Service and membership in the government's judiciary.

The judge's pay rises from ten pounds a month to three hundred pounds a year as a result of this. He and another Indian friend make the decision to leave their Indianness behind and avoid the other Indian students. They become even more alienated from their society when they begin to equate Indians with poverty. When the judge's daughter (with whom he had no contact) and her husband move to Moscow, her daughter Sai is sent to a convent and grows up to be as well as being "Anglicized."

Sai explains that she had only ever learned how to make tea in the English manner; she had never learned how to make tea in the Indian manner. When she leaves the convent, she discusses some of the implied lessons she had learned: cake is better than laddoos (an Indian confection); silverware is preferable to using one's hands; worshipping Jesus is preferable to worshipping a phallic symbol; and English is preferable to Hindi. But she only knows these lessons because the judge can afford to send her to convent school. The nun who is accompanying Sai on the train to Cho Oyu (the judge's residence) criticises people who defecate on the train tracks.

As a result, they are not only too bad to have a plumbing facility, but they are also chastised for wanting to go to the bathroom—a simple human need. Biju offers a similar viewpoint on poverty and privilege among immigrants to America, noting that those who are fortunate continue to be fortunate, while those who are disadvantaged continue to be unfortunate. Biju notices at the immigration desk that the more desperate people are, the more likely they are to be turned away by embassy officials.

Many who are wealthy enough to travel, on the other hand, will claim that they will not remain in America illegally because their passports show that they have already travelled abroad. Stamps from places like England, Switzerland, the United States, and New Zealand, as well as return dates, show that they consistently return to India. As a result, the more travel a person has done, the more likely they are to be able to travel again. In New York, becoming an undocumented immigrant means being relegated to a "shadow class," so people must always move, seeking new addresses, occupations, and names, even though they have hopes of social mobility. This happens to Biju as well: after securing a job, it is often jeopardised by green card checks or complaints from coworkers about his odour.

As a result, the social mobility that America promises is not applied to the poorest. The bags of everyone on the plane are lost when Biju returns to India, discouraged by this "shadow" life. The airline claims that only nonresident Indians and foreigners will be compensated, not residents of India. Residents of India complain about this inequity, claiming that those from affluent countries and those who live outside of India are treated better than those who live inside it. As the nonresident Indians wait in line for their reward, Biju comments on their good manners, thus "proving" how much they deserved their good fortune.

Poverty and privilege are both seen as received and deserving in both India and America. Though this belief system is a continuation of India's caste system prior to colonialism, it is also strengthened by colonisation and capitalism's meritocratic myths. Many who can afford and follow British culture are praised for it, and are considered to be worthy of it. This concept carries over to America, where people immigrate in search of a better life, but are largely turned down unless they

are already rich. Those with the greatest financial means are welcomed into the country with the greatest ease. This is in direct opposition to America's narrative of opportunity and social mobility, which attracts so many immigrants in the first place.

Belonging and Home

Many of the characters feel alienated from the various environments they occupy as the plot moves between two worlds and several different cultures. Each character expresses a longing for home in their own unique way. Biju looks for an Indian restaurant in New York City, while Gyan and the GNLF boys work to create a political state they can call home. The book demonstrates that home is a place defined first and foremost by a sense of belonging engendered by one's own culture, family, history, and rituals.

Cho Oyu's house and Gyan's house serve as "homes" in the novel because they represent the cultures and socioeconomic statuses of those who live there. The judge's house was designed by a Scotsman who had read accounts of the time and place, such as The Indian Alps and How We Crossed Them and Land of the Lama—accounts of Indian culture written by Englishmen. It was entirely furnished with piping, tiling, tubing, and wrought-iron gates, symbolising the judge's comfort in an Anglicized setting (which also included Sai's upbringing).

It's also worth noting that the house is decaying and being eaten by termites, a metaphor for Anglicised Indians' obsolete and rotting traditions. Gyan's home, on the other hand, is characterised as "modernity proffered in its most vile form, brand new one day, in shambles the next." The house has a tin roof, sand-corrupted cement walls, and electrical wiring that runs through the windows.

The second floor had been attempted but left incomplete, with just a few bare posts remaining. Despite its attempts to be modern, it shows how India's middle class can easily fall into poverty. Despite Gyan's desire to improve his life and the situation of Nepalis in India.

He claims that he prefers this house to Sai's because Cho Oyu reflects elitism and international luxury to him. Nepalis in India are also attempting to build a sense of identity for themselves by protesting in order to develop a state that recognises their culture. The British divided India and Pakistan after India gained independence in 1947, largely based on religious traditions in the area, but the way the border between India and Nepal was drawn resulted in many Nepalis being displaced in India. The right to create their own schools (teaching in their own language) is one of Nepalis' main demands.

They'd run their own clinics, have their own army, and teach in their own language. Even though Nepalis account for 80% of the population in Kalimpong, they feel like outsiders in India because they are regarded as servants. As a result, in this postcolonial world, they strive for their own "home," striking and protesting in the hopes of establishing a state within India that values them and their culture.

Biju, on the other hand, has been forced to leave his house. Instead, he seeks out a living space and workplace that values and validates himself and his community in order to build a sense of belonging for himself. Biju is hired to work in a steakhouse, which makes him uncomfortable because cows are considered sacred in his faith. He quits his job because he believes it is important to uphold one's faith and the values of one's parents. He goes to work in another restaurant, the Ghandi Café, after this incident. The food, the music, and, most importantly, the people make him feel at ease. What makes him feel most at ease in New York is the love for his culture, which he cannot find anywhere else. He eventually returns to India, not just because of his mistreatment in the United States, but also because he believes he has reconnected with his father.

He explains how he feels "the enormous fear of becoming a stranger ebbing—that intolerable vanity and guilt of the immigrant" when he first arrives. However, while home is more about people and culture than it is about physical location, people and culture are inextricably connected to physical locations. Biju's return shows that, despite their best efforts, people's attachment to a particular place as home always remains high. As a result, Biju is only completely at ease when he is reunited with the cook in India. “Home” becomes less of a place and more of a sensibility or notion in the increasingly globalised world depicted in The Inheritance of Loss, as people and goods from all walks of life come together.

Various histories are mixed together. The reunion of Biju and the cook, which ends on an optimistic note, seems to imply that one can never truly feel at home outside of one's immediate family and culture, which together define a group. The judge and Sai, in contrast to Biju at the end of the book,

are restless and ungrounded because they exist in the void between two cultures, belonging to none. As a result, home becomes a tangible representation of a sense of belonging to a culture, and home is meaningless without that community.

Misogyny and Gender

The Inheritance of Loss delves into the complexities of two colonial and post-colonial relationships: the judge's and Nimi's, as well as Sai's and Gyan's. Despite the fact that these relationships evolve over a period of years, they share common patterns. When the partners in and relationship are equal, the relationships remain gentle and even caring. When men in these relationships begin to assume they are superior to their female partners, any resistance to that dominance leads to aggression.

Rather than endorsing the abuse or interpreting the incidents solely from the male perspective, Desai reflects on the women in these relationships and portrays them sympathetically. As a result, the book takes a critical stance against the sexism prevalent in Indian society, revealing how it promotes discriminatory and patriarchal attitudes among its citizens. Before leaving for university in the United Kingdom, the judge is shy in his new marriage to Nimi, even allowing space for love. However, when he returns from Britain, he is armed with a sense of superiority that causes him to ridicule Nimi for her cultural context, ultimately leading to physical and emotional violence. The judge had been tentative about his new wife at first: they had married when she was fourteen and he was twenty.

He restrained himself after she screamed in horror as he wanted to have sex with her the night of the wedding. For the next few days, the judge's family mocks him and finally becomes concerned when they realise they haven't had sex, telling him to push her. Instead, the judge takes Nimi for a bike ride, which could be their only shared loving encounter. Their marriage is effectively forgotten when the judge goes away to university, but when he returns, their relationship takes a turn for the worse. Nimi inadvertently steals the judge's powder puff, and his family mocks him for being so upset when searching for it.

When the judge discovers that Nimi took it and humiliated him, he becomes enraged and rapes her. The misogyny of the surrounding community often supports these violent actions: the judge's family sees the child as "too spirited," and they lock the door to the bedroom to prevent her from escaping. He continues his abuse by pushing her head into the toilet bowl after discovering she had been squatting on the toilet seat. As a result of her suffering, Nimi's skin becomes dull and invalid, and she breaks out. She loses interest in her appearance, which gives the judge more leeway to blame her because he perceives her lack of attractiveness as an insult.

When Nimi accidentally becomes a member of an opposing political party's welcoming committee, the judge insults her, beats her, throws a jug of water in her face, and throws punches at her. She is the one who is blamed for enraging her husband when he sends her back to her home, afraid he will kill her. As a result, not only is Nimi the object of her husband's physical and emotional violence, but culture often condones the belief that the abuse is her fault.

Sai and Gyan's relationship starts out more affectionately, but Gyan's political awakening causes him to see Sai as entitled and immature, and he starts abusing her as well. As Gyan comes over to tutor Sai in math and science, the two fall in love innocently at first. During their classes, the tension builds until he asks her to kiss him, which she does. They call each other by nicknames, consider each other as equals, and seem unconcerned about the growing tide of political anger around them.

They go to different cultural institutes, hold tea parties, and look out over the valleys below. Gyan begins to feel superior to Sai, who has been protected and privileged her entire life, as he begins to see the viewpoint of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). Gyan sees a procession of protesters one day and gets swept up in it by mistake.

He is at ease in the masculine setting and is embarrassed as he recalls his and Sai's tea parties, which he regards as teenage. He becomes irritated with Sai and ultimately abusive to her as a result of his superiority and anger. By informing the GLNF that she has weapons in her home, he betrays her. This leads to an episode in which GLNF boys show up at their house and threaten to kill Sai and the judge unless they hand over their weapons and valuables from the house.

They fight when Sai goes to confront Gyan about leaving her and betraying her to the GNLF. Despite their verbal sparring, Gyan finally throws Sai into a bush and beats her with a stick. In an

effort to establish his supremacy, he used a stick. Sai is concerned that she will be labelled insane and that Gyan will be congratulated on his victory. Sai, like Nimi, is a survivor of abuse as well as social sexism, which only strengthens men's ability to mistreat women.

Despite the fact that the novel's two main romantic relationships begin under very different conditions, they both end in violence. In both cases, as the men become more invested in political causes, the relationships become more abusive, drawing a connection between the absence of women from the political sphere and domestic violence. When women want to assert equal status with their male spouses, it is seen as an insult, showing that the tradition of violently reinforced sexism has remained unchanged over time.

Desai also implies that this phenomenon of violence inside ostensibly romantic relationships is widespread, symptomatic of the society as a whole rather than unique to these particular relationships. Desai is exposing and criticising the origin of patriarchy not only in Indian society, but in all patriarchal societies, by disclosing the women's problems and describing their suffering sympathetically.

Humiliation and Power

Several characters in the novel convey feelings of shame. The majority of the time, these emotions are triggered by the acts of someone in a position of greater control. Though power and humiliation are not inherently diametrically opposed, Desai's novel The Inheritance of Loss reveals a connection between the two as he depicts a society where humiliation is used by some to maintain power over others. The novel starts with young Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) boys attempting to steal weapons from Cho Oyu (the judge and Sai's home). By intimidating and huddling the judge, Sai, and the chef, they may demonstrate their control over them.

Threatening and mocking them is one way to do so. Because of their age, the judge recognises that the boys are more dangerous, since they have an anxious need to feel superior. When they take his weapons, they also make the judge serve them by setting the table. They taunt him by telling him he can't do it on his own, showing a desire to feel proud by putting others down. The chef, who is a servant, is not treated any differently. He is forced to hide under a table and beg for his life, pleading with them not to kill him because he is just a poor man. They finish by forcing the judge, Sai, and the cook to say, respectively, "I am a fool" and "Jai Gorkha," which means "Long live Ghorkaland."

Nepalese demand for a separate state in India. Residents of Cho Oyu are thus not only humiliated individually, but they are also forced to deny their pride in their homeland in order to raise another state for the benefit of vigilante children. The judge's (flashback) experiences with his wife, Nimi, show the push and pull of power inside a marriage. The judge uses embarrassment in these encounters as a form of retaliation for Nimi's stupidity and errors, as well as to establish supremacy in the relationship. Nimi is embarrassed by his family when he takes the judge's powder puff because he is too distraught looking for it.

When he finds out that it was his wife who took it, he humiliates her and murders her. He enjoys being mean to her because it boosts his self-esteem. If she is unable to name a food item on her plate in English, it is removed from her plate. After the judge returns from a trip, the district commissioner for the Indian Civil Service tells him that Nimi was a member of the anti-colonialist Indian National Congress Party's Nehru welcoming committee. The judge is mortified, even though she did so unintentionally, because he supports imperial Britain, and as a result, he humiliates Nimi with verbal and physical violence before returning her to her house, dishonouring her kin.

The town government is not immune to corruption and the need to exert control over others, as shown by its police department. The cops' numerous acts of violence demonstrate that even (and perhaps especially) the most influential members of society feel compelled to use violent humiliation as a strategy to maintain their dominance. Even though the cook was the victim of the robbery, they treat him unfairly and violently when he goes to tell the police of the robbery at Cho Oyu, since he is far beneath them as a servant. When they arrive at Cho Oyu's hut, they accuse him of the crime and search it, revealing his poverty. Following the theft, the cops arrest a drunk for the crime purely on the basis of his inebriation. a product of boredom.

They beat him, and the louder he cries, the more he is beaten. He has blood streaming down his face, his teeth have been knocked out, he has been kicked until his ribs have broken, and the police have blinded him. When the GNLF starts a protest to burn the Indo-Nepali Treaty of 1950, an

unknown group of people start throwing rocks at them. In the midst of the chaos, police and protestors begin pelting each other with sticks and rocks, leading to police opening fire on the protestors. Thirteen local boys are murdered, and several police officers are also killed. They are escorted from the police station by their own guys, and they flee to Lola and Noni's house for protection from the mob.

In a culture where social status is so important, embarrassment may feel like an even more serious violation than physical abuse. Since lowering others to less than their perceived social status is such a serious offence, it can be used to boost one's own social status. However, since many of the victims of this degradation are already poor, this technique is symptomatic of the human appetite for dominance in its most heinous forms. Desai thus shows that those who use shame to gain control do so out of cowardice, because they can only target society's most vulnerable members.

Symbols

Puff of Powder

A powder puff is a type of pad that is used to add powder to the skin. When the judge returns from Cambridge as a member of the Indian Civil Service, the powder puff he uses for his work takes on a far greater meaning. It symbolises the judge's acceptance of British culture and rejection of Indian culture, not just metaphorically but also literally, as he uses the powder puff to whiten his face during his trials. When he returns home and discovers Nimi has stolen the powder puff, the judge's discovery of her deceit prompts him to try to "Anglicize" her as well.

He gets her a British companion, throws away her hair oils and bangles, and demands that she learn English after this episode. The powder puff also acts as a further cultural barrier between the judge and his own kin. He tries to explain what the powder puff is and what it does when he is looking for it, but they don't understand why he wants it and laugh at him for using it. This foreshadows the judge's father's later feelings as he tells the judge that he has become a stranger in the family.

Rats and other Animals

Rats appear frequently in the novel, especially in the vicinity of Biju in New York City. These creatures, as well as others, come to represent animals have come to reflect the mistreatment of society's poorest people. Animals are killed for entertainment in a variety of ways, such as when Saeed Saeed kicks a rat up into the air before it falls dead, or when another immigrant sets a garbage can on fire with a rat inside it. Some cases, such as when a goat is butchered and skinned in India, include animals that are slaughtered for food but are no less gruesome.

In The Inheritance of Loss, animals function as an extension of a human dynamic in which the most helpless individuals are the ones that are most likely to be preyed on because they are easy to exploit—as when Biju is repeatedly duped in his attempt to get to, and then stay in, America. This also emphasises the significance of the cook's assertion that Biju has always been good with animals, as it shows Biju's unwillingness to exploit others for his own gain.

Kukris

The GNLF uses a specific type of sickled knife known as a kukri. The kukris reflect both the movement's commitment and its growing brutality. Even though the GNLF is ostensibly a nonviolent movement, its participants use kukris to sever their own fingers and write blood on posters. For the young boys who join the campaign, this acts as a measure of commitment and sacrifice. However, this uprising eventually turns violent, especially during a demonstration where police open fire on the crowd. Initially, the demonstrators have only their kukris to fight back, showing the movement's structural disadvantage, just as the Nepalis in Kalimpong are institutionally disadvantaged by the Indian-run community.

Narrative Techniques

Rich, sensual descriptions abound in this novel. These can be breathtakingly stunning, as in these pictures of nature in bloom at a nearby convent in the spring:

> "Huge, spread-open Easter lilies were sticky with spilling antlers; insects chased each other madly through the sky, zip zip; and amorous butterflies, cucumber green, tumbled past the jeep windows into the deep marine valleys."

They can also be horrific, such as in descriptions of the protest march:

> "One jawan was knifed to death, the arms of another were chopped off, a third was stabbed, and the heads of policemen came up on stakes before the station across from the bench under the plum tree, where the towns people had rested themselves in more peaceful times and the cook sometimes read his letters. A beheaded body ran briefly down the street, blood fountaining from the neck …"

Morality and justice, globalisation, cultural, social, and economic injustice, fundamentalism, and alienation are all explored in The Inheritance of Loss. It takes the reader on a roller coaster ride with negative emotions. In the portrayal of the judge's adoration of his dog Mutt, whose absence shakes his whole life, there is pathos – which always goes hand in hand with revulsion – set against his brutality to his young wife. There is indignation – at the misery and poverty in which many of the characters live, including the cook's son in America; and there is shame, as shown in Sai's treatment by her lover-turned-rebel, or Lola's attempt to stifle the cook's son.

Lola, who attempts to defend herself from Nepalese bullies. Desai, on the other hand, expertly injects doses of comedy and buffoon-like figures to counteract these intense emotions. Biju's charming friend Saeed, an African (Biju "hated all black people but liked Saeed") with a slyer and more upbeat outlook on life, is one of them. Unlike Biju, who finds it difficult to strike up a conversation even with the Indian girls to whom he delivers a take-out meal, Saeed has a plethora of female acquaintances:

> '"Oh myee God!! he said. Oh myee Gaaaawd! She keep calling me and calling me," he clutched at head, "aaaiii…I don't know what to do!!"… "It's those dreadlocks, cut them off and the girls will go."'
>
> '"But I don't want them to go!"'

The under- or over-use of the English language by Indians contributes to a lot of the comedy. After finishing his university exams in Britain, the young Judge wrote home to India, "Result equivocal." "What does that mean?" everybody wondered. It sounded as though there was an issue, since "un" words were considered negative, according to those with a basic understanding of the English language. However, when (his father) consulted the assistant magistrate, they were overjoyed. Bose, the Judge's university friend, is a wonderfully positive yet pompous guy, whose overuse of British idioms makes him even more ridiculous – 'Cheerio, right-o, tickety boo, clearly smashing, chin-chin, no siree, how's that,' 'bottoms up!'

Desai's style is unique in that she uses various print types on the page almost poet-like: she uses italics for foreign words to highlight their exoticism and untranslatability, and capitals for emphasis when someone is furious, surprised, or disbelieving (a natural development of the netiquette that to write in capitals is like shouting). The Inheritance of Loss, which was published to acclaim, establishes Kiran Desai as one of our most insightful novelists.

With a tapestry of vivid characters, she illuminates the agony of exile and the ambiguities of postcolonialism: a disgruntled old judge; Sai, his orphaned sixteen-year-old granddaughter; a chatty cook; and Biju, the cook's son, who is hopping from one place to another in deplorable living conditions. The novel is set in India and the United States. Desai describes it as a book that "tries to capture what it means to live between East and West and what it means to be an immigrant," and goes on to say that it also "explores what happens when a Western element is introduced into a country that is not of the West" – something that happened during British colonial times in India and is happening again "with India's new relationship with the West."

Her third goal was to write about "what happens when people from a poor country are placed in a prosperous country." How does a person's thought and feeling shift as a result of the imbalance between these two worlds? How do these changes manifest themselves over time in an intimate,

political sphere?" "These are old themes that remain true in today's world," she says, "the past informing the present, the present exposing the past." The novel depicts the act of immigration and how the postcolonial war causes depression, resulting in a sense of alienation that each of the novel's characters inherits. Desai portrays the human dilemma in a generous, sometimes humorous, sometimes sad view. Characters face a variety of human dilemmas.

The implications of colonialism and global tensions of faith, race, and nationalism are illuminated in this majestic novel about a busy, grasping time—every moment holding out the prospect of hope or betrayal. Almost every character has been hampered by their interactions with the West. The future judge feels "barely human at all" as a student in racist England, and jumps "when tapped on the arm as if from an umbrella intimacy." On his return to India, however, he discovers that he despises his backward Indian wife. The nuggets are arguably the most beautiful parts of the novel. Desai depicts Biju, the cook's son, who makes do with the bare necessities from one minimum wage job to the other in New York City:

> "In the Gandhi café, the lights were kept low, the better to hide the stains. It was a long journey from here to the fusion trend, the goat cheese and basil samosa, the mango margarita. This was the real thing, generic Indian, and it could be ordered complete, one stop on the subway line or even on the phone: gilt and red chairs, plastic roses on the table with synthetic dewdrops,"

Desai writes about one of the Indian restaurants where Biju works.

A mutual historical legacy and a collective sense of impotence and humiliation tie these apparently disparate characters. Escape is difficult for the characters in The Inheritance of Loss, and suffering is their birthright. The son whose mother was bidding farewell earlier in this review botches his goodbye, and we learn that Sai's parents, before they die, are filled with the same loneliness as their daughter; the son whose mother was bidding farewell earlier in this review botches his goodbye, and we learn that Sai's parents are filled with the same loneliness as their daughter.

> "Never again would he know love for a human being that wasn't adulterated by another, contradictory emotion" (37). (The son grows up to be the judge, arranged into a loveless marriage that descends into rape and other abuses.)

The cook is an elderly man who has found little satisfaction in his life and is desperate for his son to do better than he did; this burden finally leads to Biju's demise. Noni, Sai's tutor prior to Gyan, is a spinster who "never had love at all" (68). The same goes for the rest of the cast. It's an old storey: "Certain moves made long ago had delivered all of them," we're told (199). Kids, criminals, and buffoons are all variations on the theme of lack of dignity. And, all too often, that is all they are – or, at the very least, the rest is concealed behind Desai's civilised writing, which obscures the nature of the brutality inflicted on their lives by circumstance.

The book's grammar, situations, and juxtapositions are amusing, but they also pose a challenge. At the same time, it's threatening, vibrant, and tender. As characters deal with a world greater than themselves, a world that only seems to embrace them marginally and rarely on their own terms, the comedic aspect was often intertwined with irony. The intricate structure of the novel transports the reader into a world of nationalism and migration that is both recognisable and unpredictable.

The chapters contrast between India and the United States, juxtaposing the slow speed of life in the hills with the hurried movements of an illegal migrant's life, keeping the reader guessing before the two narratives clash. Kiran Desai has written an elegant and insightful analysis of families, the losses that each member must face on his or her own, and the lies that each tells himself or herself to make memories of the past more bearable.

The book, though rich in details and depicting a picturesque mosaic of life, is prone to monotony and boredom at times. The mind and soul are often overburdened by darkness and internal conflict. But a good writer should be able to do that, and Ms Desai has done an excellent job of touching and stirring the depths of human emotion and feeling. In many respects, the book is incredible. The depiction of India is complex and fascinating. The characters are well-developed, and the writing is breathtaking. The overall image painted in this storey, however, leaves no space for optimism, joy, or even a smidgeon of elegance.

Key words/ Glossary

Indian National Congress – A political party in India (sometimes simply known as "Congress") founded in the late 19th century. Under the leadership of Mahatma Ghandi after 1920, it became the principal leader of the Indian independence movement, eventually leading to freedom from British rule in 1947. The first Prime Minister of India was Jawaharlal Nehru, a member of the Congress Party. When Nimi is unwittingly taken to be a part of Nehru's welcoming committee, the judge is furious because he opposes the Congress party and Indian independence, having benefited greatly from British rule.

Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) – A violent movement created in the 1980s by Subhash Ghisingh, on which much of the political conflict in Desai's novel is centered, and which Gyan briefly joins. The GNLF called for a separate state called "Gorkhaland" for the Nepalis in India, and turned particularly violent in 1985-1986. Various strikes and protests led to the deaths of over 1,200 people. An especially bloody conflict on July 27, 1986, serves as one of the book's climactic scenes.

Indian Civil Service (ICS) – The elite higher civil service of the British Empire in British-ruled India. The ICS oversaw all government activity in the 250 districts that comprised India. At first, almost all of the top members of the ICS were British, but eventually the service attempted to "Indianize" in order to appease those calling for Indian Independence. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the judge is appointed to a position in the ICS overseeing the district courts.

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1. How did The Judge deal with his disillusionment with Western culture after eventually receiving an education and being regarded as a non-Indian or non-English person?
His reaction to these disappointing events was twofold: first, he withdraws into himself, isolating himself from the source of the pain; and second, he uses the pain he feels to motivate himself to finish his law course. His second reaction to his betrayal and humiliation, on the other hand, effectively transforms him into a monster: he becomes a rough, calloused man who uses his connections, education, and wealth to gain control and leverage over everyone in their Indian culture. In a nutshell, he transforms into the very thing he despises and that has caused him so much pain: a racist of the worst kind.

2. How is the novel's theme of isolation explored?
Isolation is a theme discussed by the protagonists in the book. Each character is isolated at some stage, whether by choice, as in the case of the Judge and Sai, or by physical distance, as in the case of Biju, who is living as an illegal immigrant in the United States. As in the cases of Sai, The Judge, and Biju, isolation can also be a figurative type of isolation. Despite the fact that Sai lives in India and is surrounded by Indians and Indian culture, he is isolated—pretty much alone. Because of her Anglo-centricity, Sai is isolated—practically shunned by her fellow Indians; a matter that worries Sai little because she despises the rest of India. Biju, like Sai, is constantly surrounded by people: he lives in one of the world's most populous cities (New York), and when he works, he is surrounded by other immigrant jobs. He is lonely, despite the crowded conditions; he is regarded as a commodity and shunned, even by other migrants. Because of his resentment and deep-seated cynicism, the Judge has removed himself from the rest of the world—he simply despises everybody and isn't afraid to display it.

3.Food is frequently mentioned in the novel; how does this affect the plot? What role does food play as a literary device in the story's progression?
Food is used in the novel in a variety of ways, including as a metaphor for socioeconomic status—wealthy characters like Sai, The Judge, Noni, and Lola are able to choose British food over Indian food because they were wealthy enough to be introduced to it and wealthy enough to buy it on a regular basis. It's also used as a metaphor for the cultural difference that exists between the characters: Gyan loves Indian sweets, while Sai does not and is very outspoken about her disapproval. It also serves as a plot engine for Biju, who, as a devout Hindu, is horrified by the prospect of cooking beef for a restaurant, to the point where he is eventually persuaded to leave the US altogether and return home to India.

4. Who does Sai wait for at the beginning of the novel?

Her math tutor.

5. What does Sai serve to the judge at the beginning of the novel?
Tea.

6. Who approaches the judge's house at the beginning of the novel?
A young Nepalese men.

7. What is taken from the judge's house in chapter 1?
Guns.

8. Who is sent to the police station after the judge is robbed?
The cook.

9. Who built the judge's house?
A Scotsman.

10. Where does Biju live?
In America.

11. What is Biju's job when his character is first introduced?
Selling hot dogs.

Review Questions

1. Why did the judge in England live such a lonely existence? The judge was a different person when he returned to India. "He was envious of the English. He despised Native Americans. He served with a disdain for being English, and for what he would become, he would be hated by all, English and Indians alike" (p. 119). Discuss how the judge was affected for the rest of his life by the racism and rejection he faced in England.
2. In England, Bose was the judge's only associate. "A smile of understanding had passed between them at first sight, but also the promise that they would keep each other's secrets to themselves" (p. 118). Make a comparison and contrast between the two guys. Who was the optimist, and who was the pessimist? When they were in England, how did Bose assist the judge? Bose had improved by the time they met again, thirty-three years later. How do you do it? Why did he insist on seeing the judge once more?
3. Nimi unwittingly attended a political rally. Who accompanied her to the rally? Explain why the judge was so furious. He found himself on the wrong side of history after independence. What was going on in India politically at the time? What does the Congress Party stand for?
4. A poem by Jorge Luis Borges precedes The Inheritance of Loss. Why do you think Kiran Desai chose Borges' work as an epigraph, given what you know about him? Who are the "aspirant...highly covetous multitude"? What makes them "deserving of tomorrow"? Who am I, exactly?
5. "She had a fearful feeling of having entered a room so wide it extended both backward and forward" the first evening Sai was at Cho Oyu (p. 34). Discuss your findings. Could this possibly be a synopsis of the book?
6. Compare and contrast the concepts of globalisation and colonialism. What does it mean to bring a Western aspect into a non-Western world, or an individual from a poor country into a wealthy one? What examples would you find in the novel? Discuss them in terms of politics and economics. In what ways do Noni and Lola reflect the global middle class? See page 242 for more information.
7. The marriage of the judge and Nimi was doomed to fail. Is it true that the judge ever had feelings for his wife? Why did her family pay for him to attend school in England, and how did they do it? What happened to Nimi in the end? What did the judge make up his mind about it? Finally, does the judge regret abandoning his family "for the sake of false values" (p. 308)?
8. Talk about how the judge felt about Sai, who was "maybe the only miracle fate had thrown his way" (p. 210). Sai was handled as if she were a daughter by the chef. Talk about their friendship.
9. Talk about Mutt's importance in the judge's life.

10. Sai's parents abandoned her at the Convent of St. Augustine, and she never saw them again. What were they doing there? How do their path to and years spent in another country parallel Biju's and the judge's stories? How do India's allegiances to other countries cause such migration?
11. Tell us about Sai's first mentor, Noni. What was Noni's suggestion to Sai? What is the reason for this? See page 69 for more information.
12. Compare and contrast Gyan's and Sai's residences. Gyan's house is "modernity proffered in its most heinous form, brand-new one day, in ruins the next" (p. 256), while Sai's house was once a grand adventure for a Scotsman, but is now infested with spiders and termites, and the walls are sagging from the humidity (p. 7). What do their houses say about their personalities?
13. Compare and contrast Gyan and the judge. Both were the family's chosen sons, with a lot riding on their success and a lot expected of them. They're both sad and don't feel like they belong anywhere. Why don't they get along if they're so similar? Do you believe they will raise their sons in the same manner as they were raised?
14. How did the judge's father recognise that the Indian class structure would preclude his son from achieving his full potential, but that colonialism provided a chink in the wall? When the judge returns to India, why does he not work in his own province? What are the various forms of immigration depicted in the novel?
15. When Biju returns home, there's Biju, Saeed Saeed, the judge, Sai's mother and father, Father Booty and Uncle Potty, the Tibetan monks, the New York restaurant crew, and everyone in the Calcutta airport (chapter 48). What exactly does all of this immigration imply?
16. Was Gyan a powerful individual? How did he end up in a "procession coming panting up Mintri Road led by young men keeping their kukris aloft and yelling, 'Jai Gorkha'" (p. 156)? At the rally, Gyan was not fully persuaded. What decision did Gyan make later at Ex-Army Thapa's Canteen, which was "lit by alcohol" (p. 160)? Describe his motivations. What was Gyan's opinion of his father?
17. Gyan went to Cho Oyu the next day. What had occurred to you? After leaving Cho Oyu, he returned to the canteen. Examine his motivations for betraying Sai. " 'You despise me for major reasons that have nothing to do with me,' Sai said, as though she could read his mind (p. 260). Examine why Gyan turned down Sai.
18. 17. Talk about how Gyan and Sai are separated by unrest, betrayals, and eventually crime. How are their problems, as well as the cook's, judge's, Father Booty's, and Lola and Noni's, linked to statehood issues and old hatreds that refuse to die? Is Noni's remark, "Those bloody Brits are really unskilled at drawing borders," (p. 129) sufficient to justify the problems?
19. Biju's time in New York City does not go as planned. How do the people who came before him handle him? How do differences in class in India translate into differences in class in the United States, where none is meant to exist? "He relished the whole game, the way the country flexed his wits and rewarded him; he charmed it, cajoled it, tricked it, felt great tenderness and devotion toward it.... It was an old-fashioned romance," Saeed Saeed says of his success in America (p. 79). Why is he so prosperous when Biju is not?
20. In India, the majority of representations of Americans and other visitors are highly unflattering (pp. 197, 201, 237, 264). The majority of Indians in America are unimpressive, as shown by the students to whom Biju delivers food (pp. 48–51) and the businesspeople who order steak in the financial district restaurant (p. 135). What criteria do they use to evaluate themselves? What is Biju's opinion of them?
21. How did the judge's cook get his job? Is the cook content with his social standing? Was he able to carry out his duties despite the judge's treatment? Why did the cook embellish the details of the judge's stories?
22. Has Sai changed or matured during the months of personal and political turmoil? "What she had been told was too easy to keep up. She could never again believe there was only one storey, and that storey belonged solely to her" (p. 323). Explain what she means when she says this. Is Sai going to abandon Cho Oyu?
23. The cook isn't mentioned by name until the novel's next-to-last page. What is the reason for this?
24. Which of the characters lived "a life of purpose and pride," as Gyan puts it (p. 260)?
25. What was the cook's motivation for sending his son, Biju, to America? Discuss Biju's experiences in that place. How did he feel about the prospect of never seeing his father again? Biju returned to India for a reason. Describe how he felt as soon as he exited the airport.

Further/Suggested Readings

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Unit 13: The Anxiety of Indianness, Our Novels in English by Meenakshi Mukherjee

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To appreciate the author and her works as a seminal text
- To understand author's intention and critically analyze her essay as a seminal text
- To present typical Indo Anglican problems of writing
- To employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writers
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers

Introduction

Meenakshi Mukherjee received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003 for her book The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English. She died on September 16, 2009, at the age of 72. As a Professor of English at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, she taught English literature and critical theory. She taught at a number of universities outside of India, including the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Chicago, and the University of California at Berkeley, among others. Meenakshi Mukherjee traces the emergence of the early English novel in India, which was mainly aimed at an English audience and typically started with titles, in her extensive and insightful essay "Beginning of the Novel."

The English will be drawn to the Orient as a result of this. She claims that,

> "unlike novelists in Indian languages who were secure in a large readership within their particular field, the writer in English suffered from audience uncertainty."

Kylas Chunder Dutt, Shoshee Chunder Dutt, and others wrote earlier tracts that did not strictly adhere to novelistic practises. Later novels published in the century were more obedient to British rule and respectful of it, and many authors praised the empire and paid homage to the Queen in their works. Kamala, A Hindu Life Story by Krupabai Satthianadhan (1894).

According to her, the novels Saguna, A Story of Native Christian Life (1895) and and Saguna, A Story of Native Christian Life (1895) address current issues such as gender, caste, faith, and others, and can be considered the first female novels in Indian writing in English. The greatest accomplishment of canonical Indian English literature, according to critic Mennakshi Mukherjee, is the authors' breaking free from the constraints of the language

> "The trepidation of nineteenth-century novelists, not just about writing in an acquired colonial language but also about their readership, has been replaced by an overwhelming belief among postcolonial authors that the English language belongs to them just as much as it does to everyone else."

R.K.Narayan, according to Meenakshi Mukherjee, belongs to the group of novelists who don't

> "indulge in any generalisations about what is Indian and what is western."
> "Their characters are a strange mix of the East and the West, as are all Indians, but they fail to sift the elements,"

she continues. Kamala Markandaya's novels, as one would expect from a post-independence writer, concentrate on the evolving socio-economic landscape. Her portrayal of uprooted Indian peasants due to the threatening development of industrial society in Nectar in a Sieve (1955) and Handful of Rice (1966) and her preoccupation with the theme of hunger in Nectar in a Sieve (1955) and Handful of Rice (1966) derive their vigour from Gandhi's pleading for village economy.

There is a massive social difference between those who know English and those who don't,

> "Meenakshi Mukherjee says. Given that English is now not only a language of upward social mobility and outward geographical mobility, but also a significant tool for gaining access to higher-level knowledge."

Her book The Perishable Empire contains ten essays, the ninth of which is titled "The Anxiety of Indianness, Our Novels in English."

Subject Matter

The Anxiety of Indianness, Our Novels in English is the ninth essay in Mukherjee's book The Perishable Empire, which contains ten essays in all. Macaulay's speech on the Government of India Act of 1833, which foresees an imperishable empire of British arts, morality, literature, and laws, is referenced in the epigraph for The Perishable Empire. Meenakshi Mukherjee's book examines how much the point was validated in India's subsequent colonial and postcolonial past. The English language, on the other hand, has had an indelible impact on a wide range of aspects of our cultural history and has complicated the position of the bhashas. The other (legitimate, according to some) Indian languages English became the preferred medium for developing a pan-Indian perspective and nationhood, and it also supported India's independence movement.

The book is divided into two parts, one dealing with the colonial and the other with the postcolonial plight of English, particularly in relation to gender, caste, religion, and country, as well as oppositional structures such as colonial/indigenous and tradition/modernity. In the early years, Indian writers in English did extol the virtues of British rule in India explicitly or in a veiled way, as if in deference to Macaulay's wish. Following that, English became the language of popular discourse, while one's mother tongue was regarded as the sole vehicle of imagination, a viewpoint backed up by two colonial poets, Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Michael Madhusudan Dutt, who, after a few false starts in English, devoted themselves exclusively to writing in Bengali.

Despite the fact that Bankim's first book, Rajmohan's Wife (1864), was written in English and was seen as a powerful place for addressing important issues such as language, culture, colonialism, and representation at the time, it did not fulfil Bankim's creative urge. He was soon persuaded that the English bore the inevitability of British rule's superiority. It was a polemical language, not a creative one. Mukherjee observes that British rule was often justified in early twentieth-century novels, while Mughal rulers were demonised, and a precolonial Hindu history was carefully constructed as a foil to the present subjugation. Around this time, the concept of veerangana (the female warrior with agency and strength) was coined as a symbol of woman power, an idea that Gandhi later cultivated for the freedom movement.

It was not, however, a long-term dedication to women's empowerment, since as soon as emancipation was achieved, women were relegated to the margins and excluded from social participation either by elevating her to the level of an abstract shakti concept or by reducing her to a position of abject subordination. Women were construed in ways that made them entirely isolated and absent from the experiences that were being declaimed on their behalf, rather than being the objects of debates about them. Mukherjee's project, on the other hand, emphasises the fact that,

despite the lack of a continuous tradition of women writing in India, some women had an irrepressible desire to express their experiences during the colonial period.

She uses the example of Krupa Satthianadhan, a colonial Indian author whose two novels, Saguna and Kamala, are both set in colonial India recently revived, they offer fascinating insights into female bildungsromans. The awakening of women and their agency are dominant themes in these works, but the project's transformative social potential was not overlooked. Women were unable to break free from the double code that bound them to a profoundly rooted patriarchy at home, despite protestations of an emancipatory outlook and egalitarianism in the public sphere, so such writings lacked a progressive edge.

Toru Dutt and Sajojini Naidu, two women writers, are notable examples of women writing in English, according to Mukherjee, who claims that women were traditionally held away from using English because of its emancipatory potential, which could challenge orthodox patriarchal structures. However, even in the case of Naidu, the destructive ability of English was foreclosed when Edmund Gosse advised her to

"introduce to us the vivid property of her own voluptuous and unknown province"

— advice that, according to Mukherjee, was unfortunately taken literally by Naidu, and which, through deliberate exoticization, fell into the Orientalist pit. Poetry became a stepping stone for Naidu into politics, and she went on to become a member of the Indian National Congress.

Her ability to pursue more progressive politics was aided by the use of traditional poetic themes, which were appropriate in an orthodox society. Toru Dutt's poetry, on the other hand, values women's agency over passive obedience, and her well-known poem "Savitri" is a retelling of mythology that deconstructs a retrogressive paradigm of Indian womanhood. Mukherjee examines the constituencies and comparative success of Indian writing in English and bhashas literatures with care. Whereas a writer like Raja Rao can effectively combine myth and history, realism and fabulation, through the medium of English, most other writers are constantly worried about presenting something that is peculiarly "Indian."

Summary

In her essay "The Anxiety of Indianness," she addresses the critical issues of Indianness that have become a source of obsession for English-language novelists. The bhasha writers, on the other hand, do not need to wear the authenticity badge to announce their Indianness, which they take for granted, and neither do their readers. According to Mukherjee, since English in India refers to fewer registers, there is a stronger pull toward homogenising and essentializing truth by erasing distinctions. Perhaps to compensate for this loss, cosmopolitan writers' "anxiety of Indianness" looms large, leading to an overreliance on allegedly "Indian" themes or places, no matter how far removed they are from Indian reality.

This issue arises to varying degrees when the bhasha texts are translated into English, which invariably results in a loss of subjectivity. Despite persistent protests against English's recognition as an Indian language, the stigma of English is unlikely to be lifted. The demands on writers in today's postcolonial communities, which are exposed to the stresses of a global economy, are much more complex. In the one hand, there is an urge to be embedded in one's family, while on the other hand, one desires to be a member of the cosmopolitan crowd.

Serious writers like Amitav Ghosh and Salman Rushdie, on the other hand, are not influenced by market forces. Their distinctively individualistic art defies categorization or homogenization. Mukherjee's book reminds us that the issue of English and its relationship to the development of culture and information in colonial and postcolonial India has taken on greater importance and significance in the sense of today's cultural politics by enlightening us on certain aspects of writing.

In this essay, she argues that there are exceptions, such as Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines, in which

> "India is neither a metaphor nor a metaphysical idea...unlike most other Indian English novels published in the 1980s and 1990s. Since it tries to prove nothing and interrogates rather than describes the idea of a totalizing India, the novel exudes no anxiety."

It is unsurprising that Indian literature has been significantly deepened by writing emerging from India's margins two decades after Mukherjee's article was written. Despite the irony, it's probably no coincidence that some of the most critically praised writers –

Jahnavi Barua,

Anjum Hasan,

Anees Salim, and others – are women.

To name a couple,

Amandeep Sandhu,

Easterine Iralu,

Temsula Ao, and

Mamang Dai

are not yet widely available in Western markets.

Since Indian writers writing in non-western literary traditions have never been absorbed by or concerned with the spectre of the western reader, some of India's most beloved writers are seldom read outside of India. Few people will investigate the "Indianness" of a Marathi or Bengali novel, despite the fact that it is a widely discussed subject. When it comes to Indian fiction written in English, however, the concept of 'Indianness' emerges – either as a way to claim one's personal identity or as an obsession that exists in both the reader and the writer.

This has been attributed to the language itself – English, which is no ordinary language but rather the language of India's traumatic colonial history. It also holds all of the importance and privilege that the world associates with the language. It could not be further from the reality to say that 'English' is a 'necessary evil' that will continue to exist. Understanding the strong emotions associated with underscoring the word "Indianness" – what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls "The Anxiety of Indianness" in her famous essay – will require acknowledging this reality.

The essay aptly summarises a crucial and intriguing question about cultural identity and post-colonial transformation. It provides a logical and well-thought-out response to the debate about whether Indian writers should mature and shed their colonial baggage in order to write in their own vernacular languages, or should they continue to write in the Queen's Language and thus forge a new identity on the international stage, or should they create a new kind of English language that would be identifiable with the linguistic heritage of India. These arguments are critical in the creation of a country's own national identity. The writer starts the essay by dividing it into six parts.

With a reference to Raja Rao's Foreword in Kanthapura, which he wrote in Paris in 1938. Rao discusses the issue of language and culture dispute in the Indian context for the first time in the Foreword. The friction arises from the challenge of communicating a country's myths, legends, and cultural traditions in a language that we learn but do not inherit. The English language fits our intellect but not our emotions, making it difficult to write a regional novel in that language and then find a foreign audience for it.

Meenakshi Mukherjee attempts to demonstrate how Indian English literature differs from that of other countries in the next section of the essay from India's regional literature. When a writer writes in a regional language such as Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, or another, he or she is not burdened by the same 'history, tradition, and ethos' that an Indian English writer is. This is because, in the former case, the writer is writing to a linguistically and culturally homogeneous audience; but, in the case of an Indian English writer, the broader context comes into play due to the country's cultural and linguistic diversity.

Even though he or she may be from a specific area of the world, it becomes a difficult task for such a writer to refer to a unified culture. Furthermore, there is the nagging question of why it is important to write in the language of those who were our colonial rulers for nearly two centuries. Does this imply that for certain people, loyalty to England and its language takes precedence over patriotism? Or does it mean that these authors are more interested in gaining international fame and profit? Many of these issues are about 'intangible cultural values.'

Meenakshi Mukherjee, on the other hand, contends that Indian English writers write in English not out of anti-nationalist sentiments or to gain fame and prominence on the international stage — in reality, regional writers have a greater audience than Indian English writers — but because they have

literary competence in English, regardless of their mother tongue. Furthermore, Mukherjee points out that this pattern was not a new one in India, as Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, and others have all written in English. These writers were able to pinpoint the cultural flaws that have contributed to India's disunity — class and caste inequality in a hierarchical Hindu society, religious charlatanism — through doing so.

and the unending misery of the Indian woman in a patriarchal society who lacks identity. As a result, Indian English writers have long sought to unify the country's linguistic homogeneity in order to reflect a national identity rather than fomenting factionalism. Mukherjee delves into the reasons why English writing in India was doomed to remain in its infancy for so long, and how, in the end, such writers would depend on the 'Indianness' of their work to make a name for themselves in the international arena. The lack of proper ground conditions for literacy is one of the key reasons for this prolonged infancy or nascent period.

Where a society and its variants, a language and its dialects, centuries of oral history, and written literature' all come together to create a new text. This is because English has remained a language of influence and officialdom in India since colonial rule. Just a small percentage of the population uses it as their main mode of communication in their daily lives. And those who write in English use their native tongues in their everyday encounters with colleagues, family, neighbours, fellow travellers, and so on. For the most part, the rise of globalisation and the 'MNC culture' has resulted in constant use of the language in the workplace.

However, the cultural burden of the mother tongue has not been entirely replaced. As a result, younger writers who have been exposed to European and American literary styles through course readings, library borrowings, and international travel must rely on their connection to the country's more pressing cultural issues for recognition. This characteristic can be seen in the writings of Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and the rest of the group.

Mukherjee begins section four of the essay by attempting to track the rise in popularity of the Indian English novel. Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie demonstrated how vibrant this form of literature can be. This novel defied many post-modernist tenets by not only altering the literary map of the world in order to address a non-western cultural problem, but also by demonstrating that the English language is not only for the English and Americans to modify. Rushdie depicted India's recent past in a lighthearted and inventive manner, while also globalising the situation. The novel delves into the delicate nature of Indian culture, as well as the various binary oppositions it depicts. For the first time, Salman Rushdie was able to put an Indian literary work in the discursive sense of the literary world.

For too long, the literary canon has been reserved for the elitists of the Western world. In Section V of the article, titled "Anxiety of Indianness," Timothy Brennan's 1989 classification of a new "third world cosmopolitans" is discussed. Significant African, Asian, and Latin American novelists are among those who have originated from non-western cultures and made their mark in the international arena. These cosmopolitans, also known as post-colonials, use colonialism as a motif or metaphor in their work. This kind of theme is useful for tracing the origins of modernity in non-western cultures.

As a result of the successful manipulation of western modes of fabulist myths and a post-modernist style of mythicising local legends with contemporary reality, it also gives rise to cultural hybridity. As a result, these works are replete with references to rootlessness and displacement. However, a new and distinct distinction is emerging between non-western authors, especially those who write while rooted in their homeland and those who have become 'global citizens.' The issues of culture and colonisation are metaphorical for the latter, but true and present for the former.

The essay's final segment compares and contrasts the older generation of writers like Anand, Raja Rao, and Narayan with the younger generation of writers like

Upamanyu Chatterjee,

Sashi Tharoor,

Amitava Ghosh,

and Vikram Seth

on the idea of "anxiety of Indianness."

While the former tried to break free from their rooted Indianness and put the country's culture on a global stage, creating a new identity that was totally distinct from colonial impositions, the latter have tried to stay rooted to our Indianness, owing to market pressures.

As a result, there is now a perception that in India, English appears to be the only language used for literary events and intellectual debates, whereas the other languages seem to have taken a backseat or have completely lost their significance. Because of the changing social aspects, this is the case. In a globalised setting, the cosmopolitan youth find it difficult to relate to the 'bhasha' writers because their own lifestyles either conform to or aspire to the affluent upbringing of Indian English novelists. As a result, shifting social structures play an important role in the creation of our modern literary values and approaches.

However, using A Suitable Boy by Vikram Seth as an example, the essayist also claims that certain authors have their own distinct personalities and may stand out from the crowd in order to make a name for themselves. Unlike the works of other novelists, who are driven by publishing companies with a profit motive in mind, Seth has ensured that his novel does not become a purely commercial endeavour. Amitava Gosh's Shadow Lines were discussed by Meenakshi Mukherjee at the end of the essay. She points out that this is a book that isn't trying to prove anything, so there's no anxiety in it. In the context of this book, topics like'marginalisation,' 'hybridity,' and others are meaningless. Its classification as a 'first' or 'third' world wonder the task of creating a 'third' planet turns out to be ridiculous. Ghosh has depicted a 'absolute' India, devoid of any metaphors.

Key words/ Glossary

Adapter – power cord

Allopathy – western medicine

Alphabets – letters; *Can you say your alphabets?*

Anticlockwise – counter-clockwise

Any doubts? – "Any questions?"

Arranged Marriage – A marriage where the parents/family members initially find suitable brides/grooms for their children

At the rate – the @ sign; *My mail ID is Ravi at the rate bigcompany dot com.*

Avail – get

Bandh – a strike or protest by workers

Batch – a group of participants that goes through a class/training at the same time

Batchmates – those in your batch

Bhava – slang term for someone from the Parsi community

Bike – nearly always a motorcycle; a bicycle is a "cycle"

Bills – "handbills", or any small sign that can be posted; as in "stick no bills"

Biodata – biographical information

Biscuit – a hard wheat cracker usually had with tea; also the term used for a *cookie*

Bong – slang term for a Bengali

Burger – a general term for an edible patty served between two buns; it does not usually refer to any beef

Canteen – cafeteria

Cent percent – 100%

Challan – an official receipt of payment given by the government

Chappals – sandals

Clubbing – to join two things together; *They are clubbing their bids, let's see how it looks*

Co-brother/Co-sister – For a man, his wife's sister's husband is his co-brother. For a woman, her husband's brother's wife is her co-sister (More South Indian)

Come home – come over to my home

Cot – bed frame

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1- Song of Radha, the Milkman is written by
A- Sarojini Naidu
B-K.P Dutt
C-R.C Dutt
D-Aru Dutt

2- Manmohan Ghose was the elder brother of
A- Sri Aurobindo
B-ICR Ghose
C-R.G Dutt
D-S.C Dutt

3- Name the poet who composed the Ancient Legends and Ballads of Hindustan
A- Toru Dutt
B-Sri Aurobindo
C-Sarojini Naidu
D-R.C Dutt

4- A critic said that Toru Dutt was "a classic writer" who placed her country and was the first to do so on the international map of letters ho was the critic?
A- Padmini Sen Gupta
B-M.K Naik
C-K.R.S Lyengar
D-Sri Aurobindo

5- Who among the following poets was influenced by Kabir and rendered some of his verses into English?
A- R.N Tagore
B-Sri Aurobindo
C-Sarojini Naidu
D-Toru Dutt

6- Identify the correct group of poets who were influenced by Tagore's mysticism and poetry.
A- Harte Crane- Ezra Pound
B-Robert Frost-Wallace Stevens
C-W.H Auden
D-None

7- In 1913 Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for the English translation of
A- The Gitanjali
B-Fruit Gathering
C-Lover's Gift
D-None

8- Savitri an epic in blank verse was written by
A- Sri Aurobindo
B-R.N Tagore
C- Toru Dutt
D-Sarojini Naidu

9- Who is the first celebrated poet in Indian English poetry?
A-Henry Derozio

B-Nissim Ezelkiel
C-B.M Malasbari
D-None

10- Nissim Ezekiel "was the first Indian poet to express a modern Indian sensibility in modern idiom" Who said
A- K.N Daruwalla
B-A.K Ramanujan
C-Jayant Mahapatra
D-Dilip Citra

11-" I regard myself as an Indian poet writing in English" Who said these words about his own poetry?
A- Nissim Ezekiel
B-Dom Morals
C-K.N Daruwalla
D-Kamala Das

12- K.N Daruwalla was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for ––in 1984?
A- The Keeper of the Dead
B-Landscape
B-Crossing of Rivers
D-Apparition in April

13-A professor of physics turned a poet at the age of forty in 1968 Who is the poet.
A- Jayant Mahapatra
B-Shiva K Kumar
C-Nissim Ezekiel
D-None

14- Which of Mahatma Gandhi's works is one of the imperishable classics of our time?
A- The story of My Experiments with Truth
B- Hind Swaraj
C-Young India
D-None

15-Who is the author of Glimpses of World history and the discovery of India?
A- J.L Nehru
B- MK Gandhi
C-Rajgopalchari
D-B.G Tilak

Self-Assessment Answer

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

Review Questions

1- R.K Narayan created the region known as
A- Malgudi
B-Lake District
C-Waverly
D-Wessex

2- Ramaswamy is a character in

A- Raja Rao's serpent and the rope
B-R.K Narayan's The Guide
C-Anand's Associate Play
D-None of the above

3- Kamala Markandaya is the pseudonym of
A-Kamala Purnaiya Taylor
B-Kamala Das
C-Madhavi Kutty
D-None

4- Nathan and Rukmani are characters hi Kamala Markandya's
A-Nectar in A Sieve
B-A Handful of Rice
C-A Silence of Desire
D-None

5- Who is the author of Bye-bye Blackbird?
A-Anita Desai
B-Kalama Das
C-Ruth P Jhabvala
D-Kamala Markandya

6-Bianca was written by
A- Toru Dutt
B-Aru Dutt
C-R.C Dutt
D-S.C Dutt

7-Madhavi Kutti is the maiden name of
A-Kamala Das
B-Anita Desai
C-Bharati Mukherjee
D-None

8-Salman Rushdie won the Booker of Bookers Award in 1993 for
A- Midnight Children
B-The Satanic Verses
C-Grinus
D-Shame

9-Bhabani Bhattacharya was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for his famous novel
A-Shadow from Ladhak
B-A Goddess Named Gold
C-So Many Hungers
D-None

10- Which is the latest novel published in 2005 of Salman Rushdie?
A- Shalimar the clown
B-The Moor's last sigh
C-The Satanic Verses
D-Fury

Review Questions Answer

1.	A	2.	A	3.	A	4.	A	5.	A
6.	A	7.	A	8.	A	9.	A	10.	A

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Unit 14: The Cost of Living by Arundhati Roy

CONTENTS

Objectives/Expected Learning Outcomes

- To present typical Indo Anglican problems of writing
- To employ an insight about the oeuvre of Indian writers
- To compare the historical context in which these texts were written
- To illustrate the various writing dimensions of Indian writers
- To appreciate the author and her works as a seminal text
- To understand author's intention and critically analyze her essay as a seminal text

Introduction

Arundhati Roy was born in 1961 in the Bengal area of northeastern India to a Christian mother and a Hindu father. She grew up in the Kerala town of Aymanam, which is the setting for her first novel, The God of Small Things. Roy was homeschooled by her mother, Mary Roy, until she was 10 years old, when she began attending conventional classrooms. She has been hesitant to speak publicly about her father because she has spent so little time with him during her childhood; instead, Roy focuses on her mother's influence on her life. In Kerala, political activist Mary Roy scored an unparalleled win for women's rights. The Supreme Court allowed Christian women in Kerala the right to have children as a result of her perseverance.

She spent her adolescent years at a boarding school in Southern India before graduating from Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture with a bachelor's degree in architecture. Roy supported herself after graduation by teaching aerobics and refining her literary talents. She went on to write a number of film scripts that are known for their intricate structure and incisive social critique. Roy wrote and starred in the film In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones, and she also authored the screenplay for Pradip Krishen's Electric Moon. Both films developed cult followings, paving the way for Roy's career as a fiction writer. The script for In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones was published as a book in 2004.

Roy began to express her political views loudly even while she was a low-profile writer. She mobilised public support for Phoolan Devi, a politician and former Robin-Hood criminal who she believed was being portrayed in the film Bandit Queen (directed by Shekhar Kapur). Roy took time to create her first novel, The God of Small Things, when the hoopla surrounding Bandit Queen died down. She received a half-million-pound advance on the book, ensuring its high-profile release well ahead of schedule. The novel won the renowned Booker Prize after its release in 1997, making Roy the first Indian woman and non-expatriate Indian recipient who is not an expatriate.

Roy is well-known for her political involvement in addition to her writer abilities (perhaps along the lines of a Noam Chomsky).

'The End of Imagination' (1998),
'The Greater Common Good' (1999),
'The Cost of Living' (1999),
'Power Politics' (2002),
'War Talk' (2003),
'The Checkbook'
the'Cruise Missile' (2004, with David Barsamian), and

'An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire' (2005)
are among her nonfiction books (2004). She also took part in the World Tribunal on Iraq in June 2005. She was given the Sahitya Akademi award in January 2006 for her collection of essays, "The Algebra of Infinite Justice", but she declined to accept it.

Subject Matter

Arundhati Roy has published two passionate, inspirational pieces that make up "The Cost of Living" since her novel, The God of Small Things, brought her to the notice of the entire world in 1997. She describes the battle of the inhabitants of the Narmada Valley in Central India, who have been battling the Indian government's plan to build 3,200 dams on a single river, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, for the past fifteen years. Roy wrote The End of Imagination (1998) in reaction to India's nuclear weapons testing in Pokhran, Rajasthan, as a protest of the Indian government's nuclear policies. It was included in her book *The Cost of Living*(1999).
She also spoke out against India's huge hydroelectric dam projects in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, which are located in the country's central and western states. The Sardar Sarovar Dam, which would effectively reroute the Narmada river ninety degrees north of its natural flow, is the most contentious of these. Roy dives deep into the heart of Indian politics in order to confront this outmoded, Stalinist concept of "progress." She poses the big questions, such as, "Who pays?" Who stands to gain? Roy also discusses India's decision to "go nuclear" in "The End of Imagination." The storey of Modern India is told in the "Cost of Living."
Arundhati Roy's second book includes two previously published magazine essays. "The Greater Common Good," which appeared in the Indian magazine Outlook, argues against the construction of a controversial dam on India's Narmada River. According to Roy, tribal people make up 60% of the 200,000 people who will be relocated by the project, many of them are illiterate and would lose their original livelihoods and land. Roy critiques the World Bank, the Indian government, and a political system that favours special interests at the expense of the poor, based on studies and official and court papers. "The End of Imagination," the second essay, is a critique of India's decision for the Nation released an article in September 1998 about a nuclear weapon test.
When more than 400 million Indians are illiterate and live in abject poverty, Roy wonders why India built the bomb. It's a reasonable question, but over a fifth of the piece is devoted to a friend telling Roy that she's grown so famous that the rest of her life will be "vaguely unsatisfying"—a fair summary of the book. Roy has a lot of insightful things to say about India. However, as a political critic, she is not quite as accomplished as she is as a novelist. This effort, which is undermined by generic attacks on "the system" and personal digressions that divert the reader's attention away from the main points, is superficial and ineffective.
According to Roy, India, with all of its schisms and divisions, is a made-up country established by the state to legitimise itself. Once the fantasy is in place, the government may defend its acts in the name of the common good, regardless of how harmful they are in fact. So it is with India's huge dam and irrigation projects, as well as its successful nuclear weapon detonation, the themes of the two articles in this volume. The bomb is used in the second article as an example of state arrogance and folly, with evident and horrific repercussions.

Summary

Roy focuses her emphasis on the Naramada valley, which is home to 325,000 individuals, largely from minority groups, in 'The Cost of Living,' which will likely be more revelatory to American audiences. When a succession of massive dams is finished, the valley will flood, and everyone will lose their houses, giving rise to the acronym PAPs: Project Affected Persons. PAPs will be transferred to deplorable camps or urban slums, putting a stop to a way of life. Roy, on the other hand, shows that it is far from apparent that the initiative will accomplish what it is designed to. It may consume more energy than it produces, or it may ruin more farmland than it creates.
Those who are supposed to obtain drinking water may never receive a drop. The Indian state continues on its pompous path, rejecting all questions with ease. Despite this, the residents of the Naramada valley have banded together and resisted, and Roy is inspired by their determination. She believes that it is the resistance, not the state, that is the home of Indian democracy, and she encourages the fight to continue (royalties from the book are going to the organisation heading this struggle). Roy masterfully paints the faces of both foolishness and courage with lyrical indignation and meticulous study.
Arundhati Roy's account of governmental (and international-agency) hubris is told in this text highhandedness, corruption, and idiocy are all words that come to mind when thinking of high-

handedness, corruption, and advocacy. The Narmada Valley in northwestern India is home to 25 million people (roughly half the population of the United Kingdom), and successive federal and state governments have been intent on forcibly evicting these people since the 1970s in order to build a series of massive dams that will, in theory, allow irrigation to bring water to those who need it in the region's cities, allow the land to bear different crops, and improve the region's water quality. Roy takes on two of India's main illusions of progress in this vigorous polemic:

- the vast dam projects that were supposed to bring this enormous subcontinent into the modern age—but instead displaced untold millions of people
- and the detonation of India's first nuclear bomb, with all its attendant Faustian agreements

Roy strips away the mask of democracy and wealth to reveal the true price concealed beneath in her essay 'The Cost of Living,' combining her distinct style with a huge moral fury and imaginative breadth. For those who have been entranced by her vision of India, here is a charred sketch of the country's twisted civilization, where the lives of the many are sacrificed for the comforts of the few.
In the syllabus, there is a brief introduction to the writers.

- Nissim Ezekiel was a poet, actor, dramatist, editor, and art critic from India. He was a key role in postcolonial India's literary history, particularly in the field of Indian Poetry in English.
- Krishnaswami of Rasipuram R. K. Narayan (Iyer Narayanaswami) is best known for his works set in the fictional South Indian village of Malgudi. Along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, he was a significant author of early Indian literature in English.
- Khushwant Singh is an Indian politician, author, lawyer, diplomat, and diplomat.
- Mulk Raj Anand is an English-language Indian author known for portraying the lifestyles of the lower castes in traditional Indian settings.
- In India's traditional society Kiran Desai was a pioneer of Indo-Anglian literature, winning the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award in 2006. The Economic Times named her one of the 20 "most important" Indian women in the world in January 2015.
- Meenakshi Mukherjee was a Sahitya Akademi Award recipient and litterateur (a person who is interested in and knowledgeable about literature).
- Suzanna Arundhati Roy, the 1997 winner of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. She is also a political activist who works on issues such as human rights and the environment.

Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian

In India, an Anglo-Indian is a citizen with mixed Indian and European heritage through the paternal line. From the mid-eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, the phrase specifically refers to British workers in India. Anglo-Indian literature is distinct from Indo-Anglian literature. The former is an English-language genre produced and created by Indians; the latter is a genre written by Englishmen on topics and issues relating to India. The body of work by Indian writers who write in English and whose native or co-native language is English is known as Indo Anglian Literature.

It's possible that it's one of India's many languages. It is also linked to the writings of Indian diaspora writers such as V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, and Jhumpa Lahiri, who are of Indian heritage. Indo-Anglian literature is a term used frequently to describe it. This work falls within the broader category of postcolonial literature, which includes works from nations that were previously colonised, such as India. In general, Indian works in English are the result of a one-hundred-and-ninety-year historical interaction between the two cultures—Indian and Western. It's not as though Indians were unaware of the influence of foreign cultures.

During the reigns of several foreign kings, it did so. However, the distinction between British rule and the nature of the economic system that emerged in Europe after the Renaissance, which Marx referred to as the capitalist system, resides in the nature of the economic system that emerged in Europe after the Renaissance. Prior to British control, India had a feudal economic structure, under which the vast majority of the country's people, who were of many religious beliefs and adhered to the caste system, attempted to live their lives, sometimes fatalistically and sometimes stoically. It was, above all, a secluded community with a strange

cultural xenophobia. In truth, India had been waiting for a political and cultural shift for quite some time.

After the Moghul Empire's collapse and collapse, this became required. First and foremost, British control in India resulted in the dismantling of that closed society's barrier. The establishment of four institutions and the implementation of a western educational system had the largest cultural impact. The English language, of course, gave the natives with access to western literature and culture. English education produced a class of native bourgeoisie, the bulk of whom returned to their home tongue while creating a national literature based on western aesthetic standards.

However, a handful of them felt it was okay to communicate their sentiments and experiences in English. As a result, a unique body of Indo-Anglian literature arose, whose themes were Indian but whose medium of expression was English. The following names have been given many interpretations, implying various nuances and shades of meaning.

1. Anglo-Indian Literature
2. Indo-Anglian Literature
3. Indo-English Literature
4. Indian writing in English
5. Indian-English writing
6. Indian English Literature

Post Colonial Literature

When one thinks of Indian English Literature, one can't help but think of how difficult it is to come up with a term for it. We've all heard the term "colonial" as history students. We also know that the Industrial Revolution is where the seeds of modern-day economic prosperity in first-world countries were sown. Several major changes in the means and techniques of production occurred as a result of this movement's arrival in 17th-century Europe. The mediaeval economic model of feudalism was supplanted by capitalism with the arrival of mechanical assistance and, eventually, industrialization. The then-dominant idea of utilitarianism fueled capitalism.

Ideologues like Jeremy Bentham have influenced me. This movement's main concern was

"the greatest good of the greatest number."

Not only was this 'goodness' entirely material in origin, but it also shattered all belief in morality or correct behaviour. As a result, the pursuit of material gain became the primary priority of those who controlled the means of production, i.e. the capitalists.

The arrival of industry resulted in the rapid manufacturing of enormous quantities of items. To begin with, this appeared to be a welcome departure from the previous labor-intensive and time-consuming techniques of manufacturing. However, the capitalists were soon plagued by a new problem: the problem of depleted domestic markets and a scarcity of raw resources.

Simultaneously, another development occurred: the growth of geography, which was aided by the arrival of sophisticated sea boats and tools such as the magnetic compass. This meant that the capitalists could not only find new markets and areas to sell their mass-produced goods, but they could also discover hidden jewels of low-cost raw materials. Thus began an unequal relationship between these two types of nations: one, largely European, looking for markets and raw materials as a result of the Industrial Revolution, and the other, belonging to Asia, Africa, and America, waiting to be exploited.

This exploitation, which lasted more than two centuries, was not only material in nature. It took on new shapes, becoming ideological, cultural, and spiritual in nature. In the case of India, colonial economic exploitation comprised the methodical destruction of established Indian industry as well as the exploitation of the country's abundant raw materials, which included cereals, minerals, and metals. In this regard, Dadabhai Naoroji, the first Indian to denounce Britain's egregious exploitation of India as a colony, observed that Britain had acted like a "sponge," sucking out all that was valuable year after year with impunity and dumping the spoils on its shores.

The Raj's ambition grew over time, and what they ultimately intended was to subjugate the colony culturally and spiritually. They enforced English as a technique of instruction and introduced 'the classics of English Literature' into Indian classrooms in this regard. This utter exploitation of India continued until 1947, when India gained independence. Many of these former colonies gained independence after WWII, partially as a result of persistent Popular Movements against foreign control and partly as a result of the economic ramifications of WWII, when most of these colonies were unable to finance abroad authority.

The experience of colonialism has become a crucial reference point in comprehending these countries' recent history in Asia, Africa, and South America. We study Post-Colonial literature when we see this view in the literature of these countries. Bill Ascroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin write in their book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) that while historically Post-Colonial means "after colonisation," in literature it refers to "all the experience affected by the colonial process from the beginning of colonisation to the present day." The famous Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literature was edited by John Theime (1996).

Two key concerns of post-colonialism are discussed:

(i) Examining Eurocentric cultural ideas;
(ii) Examining old canonical orthodoxies of "English Studies."

The perception of European supremacy and native people's inferiority has always influenced the methods, modes, and means of processing information, perceiving life events, and forming institutions under colonial control. With the arrival of Post-colonialism, the centralization of Europe as a paradigm came to an end. These new nations' cultural systems and ethos are now being studied not by an external European norm, but by their own.
It's as though the control centre has changed from outside to inside. In India, there was talk of changing the English department's curriculum, which was initially placated by the addition of a perfunctory paper on Commonwealth Literature. The rising consensus on syllabus revision, on the other hand, cannot be ignored for long. In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the content and methodology of teaching English across the country. More Indian writers writing in English, as well as Indian writers writing in regional languages translated into English, have been included in the syllabi.
Though we have not gone as far as the famous Nigerian author Ngugi Wa Th'ongo in suggesting the "abolition of the English Department," we have certainly considered rereading the prescribed English texts as well as new Indian and Other World writings with a renewed sensibility in which we are no longer the subjects. Indian English writing today must shed the western imprint it has worn from its inception and begin establishing its credentials more truly.

Key words/ Glossary

Purse – wallet
Query – a question
Queue – a line of people
Revert – get back; *Kindly revert*
Saloon – a place to get your hair cut; not a bar
Schemes – This word has no negative connotation unlike in other places. It might also be called a 'program'. *What do you think about the new government scheme for helping poor children?* OR *I just saw a great new investment scheme.*
School – education only up to Plus 2; "School" does not refer to college/university. Do not ask someone who is in an MBA program, "How is school going?"
Sitting on her head – forcing someone to do something
SMS – text message; literally "short message service"
Snap – picture; *Let's take some snaps before we leave*
Spinster – an older woman who has never been married
Standard – grade, as in level of schooling; *I am going into 8th standard*
Sweet – "a sweet" is any Indian dish usually made with sugar and ghee
System – computer; *I need a new system to complete the work*
Take a class – often means you are teaching a class or giving a lecture
Take leave – to ask for time off, or to leave a place; *I need to take leave on Friday OR Ok, I'll take leave now (leaving a party)*
Tambram – slang term for a Brahmin from Tamil Nadu
Tariff – Charges, or a rate card
Tie-up – a partnership. *We have a tie-up with several good distributors*
Tight slap – a really good slap; *I wanted to give that boy a tight slap*
Time waste – waste of time
Too good – extremely good, NOT excessively good
Topper – the highest scoring student in a class
Two-wheeler – a motorcycle or a scooter (occasionally a bicycle)

Tuition – a private, one-on-one class
Vessels – Indian cookware, usually steel pots and pans
Visiting Card – business card
Wheatish – another skin colour term; a lighter brown
Write an exam – to take an exam (not produce one); *I am writing my exam on Friday*

Self-Assessment/Evaluation

1-Which of the following works is not written by Dr. S Radhakrishna?
A- The Future Poetry
B-The Hindu View of life
C-Kalki
D-An Idealist view of life

2- Who wrote My Days and My Dateless Diary?
A**-** R.K Narayan
B-Dom Morals
C-K.M Pannikar
D-Frank Morals

3- In which year Khuswant Singh's Truth, Love, and A little Malice appeared?
A**-**2002
B-1999
C-2000
D-None

4 - Who among the following novelists translated from Bangla into English The Lake of Palms and The Slave Girl of Agra?
A- R.C Dutta
B-S.B Banerjee
C-Bankim Chandra Chatterjee
D-None

5 - K.S Venkatramani's novel Kandan, The Patriot which is akin to Pearl S Buck's The Good Earth is set against the background of
A- Civil Disobedience Movement
B-Salt Satyagrah
C-Quit India Movement
D-NONE

6 - Which is the debut novel written in 1935 by Mulkraj Anand?
A- The Untouchable
B-The Road
C-Coolie
D-Two Leaves and A Bud

7 - Bakha is the central character in Anand's
A-Untouchable
B-The Road
C-The Bubble
D-Coolie

8 -Who was the winner of the first Sahitya Academy Award?
A- R.K Narayan
B-Raja Rao
C-K.S Venkatramani
D-Mulkraj Anad

9 - Mulkraj Anand was awarded the Sahitya Academy award for
A- Morning Face
B-The Bubble
C-The Big Heart

D-None

10 - Who among the following novelists pioneered the regional novel in the Indian English novel?
A- R.K Narayn
B-K.S Venkatramani
C-Mulkraj Anand
D-None

Review Questions

15 -The Company of Women and Delhi are novels written by
A- Khushwant Singh
B-Chaman Mahal
C-Manohar Malgonkar
D-Vikram Seth

16- Who among the following novelist was included by Camu, Sartre, Kierkegaard the Gita and Mahatma Gandhi
A- Arun Joshi
B-Bhanbani Chattacharya
C-Upmanyu Chatterjee
D-None

17-Vikram Seth's famous biography two lives was published in
A-2005
B-2002
C-2004
D-2006

18-English August An Indian Story is a famous novel written by
A- Upmanyu Chatterjee
B-V.N Arora
C-Vikram Seth
D-Ranga Rao

19- David Davidar in his debut novel The House of Blue Mangoes created a fictional region know as
A- Chevathar
B-Malgudi
C-Hark Pradesh
D-Brij Bhumi

20--Name of the author of the following novels one Night at the Call center and Five points someone
A-Chetan Bhagat
B-Vikram Chandra
C-Pico Lyer
D-Anurag Mathur

21- Attia Hossain's only novel is the story of Laila's revolt against the joint family system name the novel
A- Sunlight on a Broken column
B-A stronger climate
C-The Zigag way
D-None

22-Arundhati Roy's debut novel The God of mall Things appeared in
A-**1997**
B-1998
C-2000
D-2001

23- G.V Desai's Hali is
A- An autobiographical playing poetic prose
B-A political and social play
C- A Romantic play on love in verse
D-None

24- Shiva K Kumar wrote
A- Last Weddin Anniversary
B-Jakhoo Villa
C-Tiger's Claw
D-None

25- Who among the following dramatists introduced documentary and critic technique in Indian English drama?
A-Asif Currimbhoy
B-G.V Gesani
C-J.M Billimoria
D-Nissim Ezekiel

26-Grish Karnard's Tughlaq and Tale Danda are
A-Historical Plays
B-Realistic Plays
C-Romantic Plays
D-None

27-Identify the plays in which Karnad uses folk tales
A-Hayavadana- Naga Mandala
B-The fire and the rain
C-Tuglaq-Tale Danda
D-nONE

28- Mahesh Dattani got the Sahitya Academy Award in 1998 for his famous play
A- Final Solutions
B-Do the Needful
C-Tara
D-None

Answer

1.	A	2.	A	3.	A	4.	A	5.	A
6.	A	7.	A	8.	A	9.	A	10.	A
11.	A	12.	A	13.	A	14.	A	15.	A
16.	A	17.	A	18.	A	19.	A	20.	A
21.	A	22.	A	23.	A	24.	A	25.	A
26.	A	27.	A	28.	A				

Further/Suggested Readings

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