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## **Literary Cross Currents**

For UG 4<sup>th</sup> Semester

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## Unit – 2: On His Blindness

### Structure

#### 2.0 Introduction

#### 2.1 Objectives

#### 2.2 *On His Blindness*

##### 2.2.1 Summary

##### 2.2.2 Critical Study

##### 2.2.3 Themes

##### 2.2.4 Style

##### 2.2.5 Poetic Devices

###### 2.2.5.1 Symbolism

###### 2.2.5.2 Personification

###### 2.2.5.3 Allusions

###### 2.2.5.4 Other Poetic Devices

#### 2.3 Learning Outcomes

#### 2.4 Glossary

#### 2.5 Sample Questions

#### 2.6 Suggested Readings

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### 2.0 Introduction

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As the name of the sonnet suggests it is about blindness which is highly autobiographical. In this sonnet John Milton has highlighted his feelings and emotions as a blind poet. The very tip of the sonnet is suggestive of the fact that poet deems it impossible to serve God as he is unable to see. But as the sonnet progresses, he realizes that it is the will of God to keep doing his work keeping aside the fact it was due to his work that he has lost his sense of sight. At the end of the sonnet, we are informed that the poet is satisfied with the fact that he is serving God the way angels are doing in heaven. Apart from these the sonnet has a numerous

Biblical hints that are indicative of Milton's persistence and faith in God and religion and it is due to Biblical notes in the sonnet it is also considered as a religious poem by few critics.

John Milton was a renowned English poet, deemed by some as the second greatest English writer after Shakespeare. He became blind at the age of 44 in 1652. This disability poses a great threat as far as his intellectual ability to write is concerned and hence the relationship between him and God becomes intricate. He is not able to comprehend what is the motive of God behind taking his sight. At the tip of the sonnet Milton is seemed depressed when he articulates "*that one Talent that is death to hide*" (line 3). In the later part of the sonnet a realization is dawned upon him that it is the will of God that the poetry of Milton must be to glorify and tribute his God. After losing one of his strong and sharp sense the poet is seemed a bit depressed as he deems it will prevent him to do justice in serving God the way He deserves to be glorified and projected:

.... though my Soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account.... (lines 4-6).

The tone and diction of the poem are highly religious and biblical. Most of Milton's poetic verses are all about the relationship between God and man. He deemed it as his imperative duty to unearth the mysteriousness of God clear and obvious for the common people which will make them to honor and glorify the deeds of God. After losing sight at first he was unable to comprehend the logic of it and then wanders whether it will still be possible for him to do justice with God in his poetic vision. Finally, he realizes that if he will not be able to do the similar justice to Him, he will not be brought to account by God due to his disability to see. The second section of the sonnet is more composed and calm as compare to first. In that part Milton is able to visualize that there are numerous modes of serving and honoring God. It is the inner self, intent and grace that are counted worthwhile before God.

John Milton, a renowned English poet, man of letter, polemicist and civil servant was born in 1608. The period in which he was active in his creative writing was a turmoil of political instability and religious mutability. The most illustrious work that Milton has done is *Paradise Lost* which was written in 1667 blank verse. Most of his themes are relevant to political and

religious condition of his time. In addition, personal and patriotic themes along with self determination and thirst for liberty are also there in his poetic works. His poetic work gets started after publishing *On Shakespeare* in 1630, *Comus* in 1637, *Lycidas* in 1638 and after blindness his master piece *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667. Due to the poetic and literary stature that he carried throughout before and after his blindness William Hayley considered him as “greatest English author” and “as one of the preeminent writers in the English language.”

He is deemed to be the forerunner of the poetic genre termed as sonnet. He was perfect in writing sonnets on diverse types i.e. political, personal, elegiac and occasional sonnets. As he was born in a well to do family and held the position of the official secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Commonwealth Council of State later on so his knowledge about classical learning and especially outstanding grip over numerous languages such as French, Italian, Greek and Latin was matchless and these have marked their impression in his poetry. As a poet he is ranked among the top most poets of not merely of his age but of English poetry. But his poetic vision is threatened by the infliction of blindness which he deemed as a hurdle in justifying the ways of God, though his master piece *Paradise Lost* was written after his blindness. *On His Blindness* deals with the frustrated feelings and later salvation. As in the word of Joshua “Milton places the emphasis, not on his suffering or disability, but rather on his fear of being punished.”

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## 2.1 Objectives

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After having gone through this unit the students will be able to achieve multiple objectives which are quoted below.

- They will be able to have a thorough know how about the sonnet in general and the types of sonnets that Milton wrote in specific.
- They will be able to have glimpses of the recurrent ideas in the sonnet “*On His Blindness*.”
- They will be able to know the diverse autobiographical elements of John Milton’s life and his blindness.
- They will be able to analyze the sonnet from different perspectives i.e. its language, style and structure.

- The readers will be able to draw literary as well as poetic devices from the sonnet “*On His Blindness.*”

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## **2.2 On His Blindness**

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### **2.2.1 Summary:**

The sonnet under analysis is all about the personal disability that the poet undergoes at the age of 44. He loses his sense of sight much earlier as compare to the age when it is expected to lose senses. At the losing of sight everything becomes dull, dry and gloomy for him. Before this, it is dawned upon him that being a poet and creative is the gift that God has bestowed him with. But now he thinks that this talent and gift will go useless and he will not be able to do justice with God as he will not be able to see and describe the mysterious glories of God that are prevailing everywhere in the world. At the same time though he thinks that his gifted and inborn poetic and artistic abilities will be with him but he will not be able to utilize his creativity as he used to do before his blindness.

At the same time as God has taken aback his power to see and outer visualization but at heart his realization and trust in God has manifolded. He becomes committed to serve, honor and glorify God even more than before who has gifted him with such a unique and flawless talent. Since then his devotion and poetic vision entirely shifted towards God, His praise and justification of His ways. He is committed to do so that after death he may not be brought to account by God for not justifying his talent and poetic vision. He is afraid that he may not unearth the mysteries clear to the people that are clearer and obvious to him as dawned upon him by God. Though, there is a mild tone of inquiry before God that how can he do as much justice to his talent as a man with sight can yet he leaves no stone unturned to do justice with his talent and justifying the ways of God to men all through life afterward.

At this point of time his own conscious comes to rescue and consoles him by saying that God is great and he does not expect anything from men neither does He needs anything. His empire is too big and fabulous. He has numerous and countless angels as His servants who are always ready to carry out his directions and commands. His servants execute and accomplish his direction on land, on sea and in space everywhere without failing or getting tired. Men being mortal cannot serve and glorify God in the same fashion, they can only seek His mercy. At this

point he has come to realize that those like him who are unable to do justice with their talent due to any reason must not lose heart rather they need to be patient and seek mercy and kindness from God.

### **2.2.2 Critical Study:**

The sonnet under discussion is deemed to be one of the most crafted pieces of verse in English poetry. It is a story of a person who is a renowned poet and has become blind. His story of blindness has been narrated by him in this poem. He turned blind at the age of 44 in 1652. Hence then his life becomes a story of grim, gloom and sadness. But as he was a learned and an intellectual so his study about religion and biblical know-how comes to save him from that pathetic situation. That is why Milton's faith is getting much stronger in God and religion and this sonnet apart from being personal and autobiographical is also termed as religious sonnet.

He has realized that what is done by God is done due to one or the other reason. Man may not be able to comprehend but God has a definite motive behind everything and we are to serve God in whatever situation or condition we are in. Hence, after this realization, the faith and commitment towards God increases manifold and he became more devoted to justify and glorify God so that he may not be punished once he is presented before him after his death. When his inner self comes up with a complain before God that being a blind how can he be equal to the task of expressing His glory, his conscious comes to console him and teaches him to be patient and it is what keeps him in the right track.

The notion of patience is being personified in this sonnet. It is that persona that soothes him that he should not worry about the work he will not be able to do due to his blindness. He will not be held responsible for it as God has countless agents in the form of angels who are committed to carry out his instructions and commands. They are never tired or get bored of their jobs. Patience further consoles him that one should be calm and compose in either pain or pleasure. One should not mere enjoy pleasure rather he should face pain with patience as well. The concluding line is the message or the objective of the sonnet for which it is being written. Milton is of the view that a person should work to his full abilities and leave rest to God. He must be in patient state of mind and beg for His mercy. True devotees don't complain rather they wait for His mercy without losing temper.

There are two dynamics of the sonnet; in the initial part there was mourning and lamentation on the part of the speaker, being poet and translator, planned lots of things but would not be able to do due to being blind. He was upset because he was under the belief that if God has granted someone with abilities or skills, he must be held responsible if one has not done justice to it. But his blindness will not allow the speaker to execute all in befitting manner. But in the second part considering his knowledge more than God as a blasphemous act the speaker tried to control his emotions and meant for correction. "Patience" is an allegorical term being utilized to console speaker asserting the fact that God doesn't need any work or job from human being. There are angels who are doing his jobs perfectly. Man has only one thing to do and that is to obey the will of God and seek his mercy. In addition, God can be served and glorified through faith, trust and belief rather than any work done to him.

### **2.2.3 Themes:**

As is stated above that the sonnet has a religious touch hence the basic and fundamental theme of the sonnet is to accept the absolute dominance and supremacy of God and bow before him. It is mandatory for a man to have complete trust and faith in Him without being complaining in either condition i.e. pleasure or pain as both are from God. It is due to this recurrent idea this sonnet is considered to be one of the purest and noblest of entire English poetic verses. At first, a complain is raised by inner self of the speaker as it is highly personal sonnet but then his own conscious comes to his rescue and puts him in the right track and doesn't let him stray away. In this way, according to theme the poem can be divided into two parts i.e. complain and its solution both within one's own self.

Acceptance the ways of God is another significant idea of the sonnet. God is our creator and he has all the rights to either put human in pleasure or pain. We have to bow and accept the reality with absolute faith and trust in Him. Trust and faith in God are something that must not be shaken in whatever condition one is in. The underlying message of the sonnet is that only those people who have unshaken trust and don't complain are the ones who are dear to God and they will be equally rewarded in due course of time in numerous ways not necessarily in the temporary world. It is due to this unshaken faith that his major and prime poetic work is exclusively composed when he was blind. Milton can never be forgotten in the literary and religious world for his master piece "*Paradise Lost*" which too is written in the period of blindness.

Another theme that can be traced in the sonnet is the revelation that the speaker goes through. In the initial part, the tone and articulation were something that needs to be amended and corrected which the speaker does in the second part of the poem. Submission to will of God is associated with patience and dignity in bowing before God. The trauma that initiated with lamentation, concluded in regret, doubt and questioning later is anti-climaxed in the end through solace and complete surrender before God. That is the moral victory that has heightened the impact of the sonnet manifold. Patience, will power and strength of faith stand as a mighty force in between blindness and regret. The revelation has transformed the inner self and conscious of the speaker to the apex which is the most illustrious part of a man's life.

#### **2.2.4 Style:**

One of the rarest qualities of Milton is his diction and way of narration which is deemed as his "grand style." This grand style marks its glimpses in this sonnet as well. The diction and pattern that has been implied by Milton to convey his message and inner self is unique and is far away from the familiar and common style of writing of his time. It is a unique and supreme amalgam of Latinism, archaism and Italian expressions and phrasing which are indicative of his learned abilities and his craftsmanship to utilize them in an ample and befitted manner.

It is due to his expression, diction and variety that this sonnet is deemed as intellectually allusive. It comes from the mind of a highly learned man possessed of highly sophisticated poetic narrational power. It presents the flow of constant echoes from inner self, conscious and mind. In addition, there are self-realization, consolation and suggestions as well. The impact does not lie in what is being narrated but in what is being suggested. The style that Milton has used in composing this sonnet is Petrarchan. As Petrarchan sonnets have fixed and strict tone of narration so is the tone of *On His Blindness*. The initial eight lines are termed as Octave and the concluding six lines are Sestet. The rhyming pattern that this sonnet has followed is abbaabba cdecde.

The poet has utilized very simple and concise diction in order to convey his personal agony, transformation and imperative message at the end of the sonnet. The sonnet is in the form of monologue which has added charm and fascination to the poem. The meter and the note that the poet has used are matchless. The Sonnet is written in Petrarchan style and there is a break in the mid of eight line. But like a typical Italian or Petrarchan sonnet there is discontinuity between the two parts of the sonnet i.e. octave and sestet. The submission to the will of God has

an ever-lasting impact on the mind of the readers. The language and underlining message coincide and are catchy.

## **2.2.5 Poetic Devices:**

### **2.2.5.1 Symbolism:**

Symbol is used by the poet in the very first line of the poem when he says “light is spent.” Light is a symbol that stands for his sense of sight which has gone forever and marks as not mere physical disability but a mental and visional disability as far as his intellectual and poetic vision is concerned. “Light” has yet another symbolic significance as God is always allied with light in Bible. Right after the creation of the universe, light was the initial most thing that was created by the creator. The concept of pioussness and sin is essentially interlinked with light and darkness respectively. Hence, lose of light is not merely restricted to the physical lose of sight it has much deeper connotation. It may refer to lose of faith and trust in God. It may disrupt the connection between man and God. So, light has been utilized in a much deeper and broad canvas.

“Dark” mentioned in the second line is actually the opposite of light. Once the light has gone there was a complete darkness all-round the speaker. In addition, it is also indicative of the problems and hurdles that he is going to face after becoming blind. Once the places and things which were familiar to him, will no more be familiar now. On the deeper note the word dark is symbolically utilized by the poet. It is symbolic of presence of sin and absence of God. As God is linked with light and light is linked with pioussness. So, mentioning dark is actually a hint towards darkness inside that can be seen in the first half of the sonnet as well. In addition, it is symbolic of the fact that the world is a place of sin and darkness and one has to be very careful and have strong faith in God to seek His mercy to be saved for heaven.

### **2.2.5.2 Personification:**

As it is seen in line 7 when the speaker poses a question “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?” which is deemed to be blasphemous in nature, there is an advent of “Patience” in the sonnet. The rest of the sonnet is about the negotiation between the speaker and the patience. But it is to make clear that the very advent of patience is not the arrival of some new character in the sonnet to pacify the speaker. Rather it is the very inner self, conscious or part of his mind

who came to his rescue on two level; to save him from blasphemy and to pacify his inner regret and frustration after becoming blind. Hence patience has been implied as a personification. It came to argue, point and to disregard the initial attitude of the speaker. Hence, patience acts as an independent being who disregarded at one hand and became part of it once he is pacified. In addition, personification is indicative of the notion that the battle is not mere limited to outward physical disabilities rather it throws light on internal mental conflicts, fears, regrets, doubts and worries.

### **2.2.5.3 Allusions:**

As it is clear from the very theme and tone of the sonnet that it has religious connotation and it imposes the terms how is expected by God from being a Christian. Hence, sonnet has numerous implicit and explicit allusions to Bible. For instance, to some critics' loss of light or sense of sight that the speaker loses in the sonnet is something that is folktale of "Ten Virgins" in the "*Book of Matthew*." In this tale ten virgins took out lamps to see the bridegroom but "five foolish virgins" forget to take oil for the lamps and in the middle of the night they were unable to lit their lamps to meet bridegroom. Here speaker too is worried that in the absence of light he will not be able to meet his bridegroom that is obviously Christ. Similarly, the hint of "talent" can be fable of Ten Virgins from the same *Book of Matthew* where a rich man, before going to journey, distributes his money which is talent in biblical tone among his servants to use it wisely, two of them did so but third one buried it in the ground and hence was punished by his master. In the same way the speaker who will not be able to utilize his talent and account of hiding it he will be punished.

### **2.2.5.4 Other Poetic Devices:**

Apart from above mentioned there are other numerous devices that the poet used in the sonnet *On His Blindness* to enrich its linguistics, semantics and impact value. One of the devices is alliteration that has been utilized to dress up his thought in a plain and explicit manner. In addition, he has consumed alliteration to juxtapose different ideas like in "**p**atience, to **p**revent" in line 8. Other instances of alliteration are

**d**ays in this **d**ark **w**orld and **w**ide (L 2)

Lodg'd with **m**e useless, though **m**y soul **m**ore bent (L 4)

my Maker (L 5)

exact day-labour, light denied (L 7)

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state (L 11)

o'er land and ocean (L 13)

serve who only stand (L 14)

Although, Milton has adopted a simple and plain style, discarded all the ornamental devices yet, there are devices like assonance has been employed here and there. Instances are subsequently quoted;

I consider how my light is spent (L 1)

in this dark world and wide (L 2)

And that one talent which is death to hide (L 3)

true account, lest he returning chide (L 6)

“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?” (L 7)

But Patience, to prevent (L 8)

That murmur, soon replies: “God doth not need (L 9)

man's work or his own gifts (L 10)

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding (L 12)

And post o'er land and ocean (L 13)

“Spent, / Ere”, “wide, / And”, “hide / Lodged”, “bent / To”, “present / My”, “chide; / “Doth”, “prevent / That”, “need / Either”, “best / Bear”, “state / Is” and “speed / And” acted as an instances of enjambment in the sonnet. “Denied?” (L 7), “rest:” (L 13) and “wait.” (L 14) mark their emergence as end-stopped line. And apostrophe is also visible in L 7 & 8 “Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?” / “I fondly ask.”

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## 2.3 Learning Outcomes

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Bearing in view the objectives of the unit there are subsequent learning outcomes that will be accomplished once gone through the unit. The readers will be able to:

- Have exclusive comprehension of the term sonnet in general and types of sonnets Milton wrote in specific.
- Encompass the two layers of thoughts that have been depicted in the sonnet *On His Blindness*.
- To catch few glimpses of the personal meditational notes of Milton once he became blind.
- Completely comprehend the themes, styles and different devices that have been utilized by the poet.
- Underline several literary and poetic devices used in the poem.

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## 2.4 Glossary

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**Blank Verse:** A poem in unrhymed iambic pentameter.

**Spent:** Gone out

**Ere:** Before

**Half my days:** Half of the age

**Talent:** Poetic talent

**Maker:** Who makes (here God)

**Doth:** Does

**Chide:** Scold

**Exact:** Demand

**Light denied:** Blind

**Fondly:** Foolishly

**Yoke:** A wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull. (here it means ‘problem’)

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## 2.5 Sample Questions

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### 2.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. John Milton was an ... poet.

- (a) Irish
- (b) American
- (c) English
- (d) Indian

2. John Milton was born in

- (a) 1708
- (b) 1778
- (c) 1608
- (d) 1652

3. *On His Blindness* is a/an

- (a) Ode
- (b) Elegy
- (c) Sonnet
- (d) Epic

4. A sonnet contains

- (a) 12 Lines
- (b) 10 Lines
- (c) 13 Lines
- (d) 14 Lines

5. *On His Blindness* is a

- (a) Shakespearean sonnet
- (b) Petrarchan sonnet
- (c) None of the above
- (d) Both of the above

6. Petrarchan sonnet contains

- (a) Three quatrains and one couplet
- (b) One octave and one sestet
- (c) Two quatrains and one sestet
- (d) One sestet and two quatrains

7. Milton became blind at the age of

- (a) 34
- (b) 44
- (c) 54
- (d) 32

8. Milton became blind in

- (a) 1608
- (b) 1674
- (c) 1642
- (d) 1652

9. The sonnet *On His Blindness* was published in

- (a) 1673
- (b) 1670
- (c) 1678
- (d) 1664

10. In the poem *On His Blindness* Milton was saved by

- (a) Ego
- (b) Patience
- (c) Anger
- (d) Frustration

**2.5.2 Short Answer Questions:**

1. How can you say that *On His Blindness* is a Petrarchan sonnet?
2. What are the themes of the poem?
3. Identify the biblical references in the poem.
4. What does the poet mean by 'death to hide' in the poem?
5. What is the problem identified in octave? What solution is given in sestet?

**2.5.3 Long Answer Questions:**

1. What is sonnet? Discuss in detail.
2. How does Milton justify the ways of God to men in *On His Blindness*?
3. Critically analyze the sonnet *On His Blindness*.

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## 2.6 Suggested Readings

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## **Unit - 3: Romanticism: Characteristic Features**

### **Structure:**

- 3.0** Introduction
- 3.1** Objectives
- 3.2** Characteristic Features of Romanticism
  - 3.2.1** Glorification of Nature
  - 3.2.2** Theme of Artistic Beauty
  - 3.2.3** Celebration of Artistic Creativity and Imagination
  - 3.2.4** Theme of Solitude
  - 3.2.5** Use of Personification
  - 3.2.6** Acceptance of Emotions
  - 3.2.7** Use of Spiritual and Supernatural Elements
  - 3.2.8** Writing about Self and Autobiography
  - 3.2.9** Function of Romanticism
- 3.3** Learning Outcomes
- 3.4** Glossary
- 3.5** Sample Questions
- 3.6** Suggested Readings

### **3.0 Introduction**

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of the dominant movement in literature particularly in music and painting. Although many dates are given for the rise of the romantic age, the publication of Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth and S T Coleridge in 1798 is mostly marked as the beginning of the romantic era and the period ends with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. It was the age of revolution in both the history of politics as well as literature and was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and future. Thus there was a craving for freedom by throwing away of long accepted rules.

In its most lucid premature form, as it appeared in the 1790's in Germany and Britain, Romanticism is generally treated under the head 'the Romantic Movement' or ' Romantic Revival'. The focus was mainly on freedom of individual self-expression. The ordered rationality

of the preceding Augustan Period was viewed as mechanical, impersonal and artificial. The new concerns came to be sincerity, spontaneity and originality. These reinstated the well mannered classical models upon which neo-classicists like Dryden, Pope and Johnson placed much value. The general consideration of seeing an artist as a ‘prophet’ or a genius also came in wake of this. Moreover the Romantic poets envisaged themselves as free spirits expressing their own imaginative truth.

### **1.1 Objectives**

In this unit we shall offer you broad details about general concerns that shaped British nineteenth century romanticism. This unit has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode format and allows a simple pattern. Understanding the characteristic features of romanticism in literature can help you to interpret romantic literary texts and can give you a leg on literary essays and discussions based on the period. As this period in literary history is fascinating and dramatic, understanding the concepts will help you to identify works that typifies it.

### **1.2 Characteristic features of Romanticism**

Romanticism which was popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was a literary movement that emphasized nature and the importance of emotion and artistic freedom. Romantic movement dates its origin since the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth in 1798 and it was preceded and accompanied by the change of literary styles. It was noticed as a reaction to the industrial revolution and was concerned with the age of Enlightenment. Renaissance, the supreme romantic movement in English literature had brought about a transformation not only in England but also in European life. Writers of this era were rebelling against the attempt to explain the world and human nature through science and the lens of industrial revolution.

Romanticism as a literary and artistic movement started in reaction against the age of Enlightenment and partly to the industrial revolution was embodied strongly in visual arts, music and literature. This period was coincided with the revolutions in France and America and hence is also known as the ‘Age of Revolutions’. The French Revolution was a revolt against the monarchist dictatorship’s unfair laws and unequal distribution of resources. It was also a battle to achieve equality and remove oppression. People were angered by increasing taxation,

oppressive feudal system, crop failures and economic crisis. All these socio-political factors led to the outbreak of French revolution.

The French revolution was began in 1789 and the effect of it did not confine itself only to France, but also spread to England. It has crucial influence on British, intellectual, philosophical and political life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The writers of the period were also inspired by the ideas of French Revolution. They are also focused on different aspects of Romanticism. Although Romanticism had influenced the writing style of authors, not all writers of this period worked in this style.

There are certain characteristic features and style that make a piece of writing a part of the Romantic movement. Moreover you won't find all the characteristic features present in every piece of Romantic literature.

### **1.2.1 Glorification of nature**

Nature plays a crucial role in romantic literature. Most of the romantic poets glorified the beauty of nature in their writings and showed how one can find inspirations through the magnificent natural world. Nature is sometimes seen as the opposite of the rational is one of the most powerful symbol in literature from this era. Romantic writers give personal and deep descriptions of nature and its wild and powerful qualities. Poets like John Keats in his poems such as *To Autumn* celebrating Autumn by symbolizing the beauty in ephemeral by realizing that his life and career is very short he was dying of consumption.

*Where are the songs of spring? Ay Where are they?*

*Think not of them, thou hast thou music too,-*

*While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,*

*And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue; (23)*

Coleridge also shared Keats' love for nature and upheld his adoration to the nature by showing the interaction between man and nature by focusing on human characters and natural forces. In his poem *Kubla Khan* he underlines the difference between man and nature by presenting caverns as a symbol of everything in nature that we can't understand and dominate and are measureless to man.

*"Through caverns measureless to man (4)"*

Likewise he also refers the humans sacred relationship with the rivers, streams and springs by saying “*Through wood and dale the sacred river ran*” (26). In his another poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* he presents nature as more powerful and terrifying than man can comprehend.

*As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.  
Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.*

### **1.2.2 Theme of Aesthetic Beauty**

Aestheticism or pursuit of beauty and elevation of taste was an important part of romantic literature. Romantic writers explore the theme of aesthetic beauty, not just of nature but as an intertwinement and juxtaposition of the ephemeral and eternal. They give descriptions about female beauty and praised woman of the romantic era for their loveliness rather than artificial or constrained. Byron’s *She Walks in Beauty* is an example for this.

*She Walks in Beauty, like the night  
of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that’s best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;*

### **1.2.3 Celebration of artistic creativity and imagination**

Creativity and imagination are the most prominent aspects of romantic poetry. When previous generation focused on reason, writers of the Romantic movement explored the significance of imagination and the creative impulse. They employed the power of imagination and the creativity, as well as the artistic viewpoint. They knew that artists and writers can look at the world differently. Thus they celebrated that vision in their work. Wordsworth by observing the power of imaginations defines imagination as ‘The mean of deep insight and sympathy, the power to conceive and express images removed from normal objective reality’. Romantic authors and poets offered mental images to the readers that are not literally existed. So many images such as cloud at the sunset, blue and black sky, shining stars, tall-green mountain, river banks at the sunset, elliptical galaxy, and many other imaginary visuals filled the mind of readers. As imagination is the result of experiences or ideas in the mind, it has great value in

romanticism. When Shelly treated poetry as the expression of imagination, Keats supposed that only in the imagination the ultimate reality is to be found. However Romantics believed that creative imagination, genius and nature are closely related with one another.

#### **1.2.4 Themes of Solitude**

Romantic writers believed that creative inspiration came from solitary exploration. They exulted the feeling of being alone and found loneliness is much needed to think and create. *The Solitary Reaper*, *Tintern Abbey*, *The Immortality Ode*, and *To the Cuckoo*, all seem to have been composed upon the emotions recollected in tranquility. In his *Tintern Abbey* his visit is reflected through powerful lines.

These beauteous form,  
Through a long absence,  
have not been to me  
As in a landscape to a  
blind man's eye.

Romantic poets believed that one gets peace and tranquility by being alone. Wordsworth, Mary Shelly, and William Blake and many other writers went through this experience of being alone and this could create them most celebrated works. The poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, opens with the speaker recalling a particular experience where he was alone. Likewise he feels utmost happy when he see the bliss of solitude'. When solitude is represented as a ground for the heightened state of being the poet enjoys. Solitary figure became prominent important in Romantic prose and poetry as the masses could relate to the solitary figure as it was unanimous unlike the poet. Solitary figure Wordsworth created for *Tintern Abbey*, Solitary characters in Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* are examples for this.

#### **1.2.5 Use of Personification**

Romantic era poets loved the use of personification to call their readers to attention and make them return to nature. Most of the romantic writers used this technique for giving immanent objects human characters to allow the readers to better identify with what is portrayed on the stage. We can see personification of everything from birds and animals to natural events or aspects. In many poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the Westwind*, and *To Skylark*, poet use personification to show the like between nature and the individual spirit. Similarly, in Byron's poem *Darkness* he personifies war.

*And War, which for a*

*moment was no more*

*Did glut himself again* (38).

### **1.2.6 Acceptance of Emotions**

Most of the Romantic writers used emotion over reason in daily life. Emotion played a crucial role in nearly all writing from the Romantic period. While reading works written in this period we will be able to see feelings described in all forms. The earlier writers of the Enlightenment believed that all knowledge was attainable through human reason. Many attitude characteristic of the Romantic era were directly opposite to the Enlightenment period. They believed that using emotions over reason was the more righteous choice. Therefore they presented their emotions such as fear, love, sorrow, loneliness through their writings. This focus on emotion dissented the notions of rationality and made romantic poetry extremely readable and relatable.

*The Last Duchess* and *Ulysses* are best examples for this as the characters in it are employing their emotions to dictate important situations and emotions.

### **1.2.7 Use of Spiritual and Supernatural Elements**

Romanticism movement strictly rejected rationalism as a constraint for creativity and imagination. They did not turn away from the darker side of emotion and the mysteries of the supernatural. Moreover they considered an artistic skill as God gifted or faculty. Thus writer, painter, sculpture were free to construct their own world by mean of their own imaginations. Many of the writings has Gothic motifs and supernatural elements which served as symbols for emotions of guilt, depression and other darker feelings. For instance Byron's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* narrates about a supernatural women with whom a knight falls in love. In the same way in Coleridge's' *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, spirits both heavenly and malevolent interfering in the natural world. In this way writers were given a new freedom to explore their imaginations. The supernatural elements together with other elements such as innocence and wisdom of children, continuous desire to explore, enigma of death and existence made romanticism one of the far reaching literary movement.

### **1.2.8 Writing about the self and Autobiography**

Most of the works of romantic era often explored the self of the writer and are mostly personal in nature. We will be able to see autobiographical elements in prose and poetry of this period. Writing about the self is an important indicator of the transition from culture of the Enlightenment to romanticism. The importance placed on creativity and feelings was one of the

major characteristics of this period. The source of most of the works were the background and life surroundings of the writer. In Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, he says 'that a man should battle so much about himself'. The lines from Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium Eater* 'No precedents that I am aware of' is an example for this.

### 1.3 Function of Romanticism

Literary romanticism values universal human emotions like love, loss, triumph and failure. The works published during romantic era works did not center on valiant religious statements or scientific theories; instead, they bring to light a collective sense of morality and right versus wrong. They existed as accessible piece of literature that highlighted common man as a reader. Romantic works also stressed the value of nature in the richness of human experience as well the need for isolation to achieve emotional or spiritual growth.

### 1.4 Contrasts with Neoclassicism

Neoclassicism and Romanticism are often viewed as reactionary movements that ascend from different historical periods. Neoclassicism, a response against the renaissance, was a Western cultural movement in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music and architecture that drew inspiration from the art and culture of classical antiquity. When Neoclassicism focused on objectivity, reason and intellect, romanticism stresses on creativity, nature and emotions. The major differences between Neoclassicism and Romanticism are given below.

Neo-Classicism Vs Romanticism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greek/Roman influence</li> <li>• Emphasis on society</li> <li>• Age of Reason (Rationality, Philosophy, Deism)</li> <li>• Used a calm, rational tone</li> <li>• Euro-centric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medieval/Oriental influence</li> <li>• Emphasis on individual</li> <li>• Age of passion (Emotion, imagination, Spirituality)</li> <li>• Used a spontaneous, sometimes moody tone</li> <li>• Interest in the Exotic</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject matter was mostly cities and urban life</li> <li>• Era of The Enlightenment (Science)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject matter was mostly Nature: pastoral and wild</li> <li>• Era of Revolution (Social Justice)</li> </ul>
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### **1.5 Famous Romantic Age Writers and their selected works William Wordsworth (1770-1850)**

*The Lyrical Ballads, The Prelude, Tintern abbey, Ode on Intimations of Immortality, The Solitary Reaper, The Daffodils, Upon Westminster Abbey*

#### **Walter Scott (1771-1832)**

*Ivanhoe, The Black Dwarf, life of Napoleon, Lives of the Novelists, Old Mortality*

#### **Robert Southey (1774-1843)**

*Joan of Arc, Life of Nelson, Roderick, A Vision of Judgment*

#### **S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834)**

*Biographia Literaria, Kubla Khan, Dejection: An Ode, Table Talk, Christabel*

#### **Lord Byron (1788-1824)**

*Child Harold's Pilgrimage, Don Juan, Lara, The Siege of Corinth*

#### **P.B Shelley (1792-1822)**

*On the Necessity of Atheism, The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, Adonais, Ode to a Skylark*

#### **John Keats (1795-1821)**

*Endymion, La Belle Dame Sans Merci, Ode to a Nightingale, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Isabella*

#### **Jane Austen (1775-1817)**

*Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Emma, Mansfield Park*

#### **Charles Lamb (1775-1834)**

*Essays of Elia, Tales from Shakespeare, The English Comic Writers, The Old Familiar faces*

#### **William Hazlitt (1778-1830)**

*The Round Table, The Spirit of the Age*

#### **Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859)**

*Confessions of an Opium Eater, Joan of Arc, English Mail Coach*

## **1.6 Conclusion**

Romanticism era witnessed a shift from faith in reason to faith in the senses, feelings, and imagination. Their focus shifted from urban society to the rural and natural and were more concerned about subjective poetry than public, impersonal poetry. Romantic writers were bothered about the individual, intuition, and imagination. Imagination and emotion are more important than reason. Romantic writers tend to cultivate a love for nature, a respect for primitivism, and a valuing of the common man. They also romanticize country life and convicts that many of the ills of society are a result of urbanization.

Romantics were also engrossed in the Medieval past, the supernatural, the spiritual, the “gothic,” and the exotic. They were concerned with human rights, individualism, freedom from oppression. Their main focus was on introspection, psychology, melancholy, and sadness. The art often dealt with death, humanity and mankind’s feelings about these things. The artist was an extremely individualistic creator whose creative spirit was more important than the traditional procedures.

## **1.7 Learning Outcomes**

Upon reading this unit the student should be able to

1. Understand the characteristic features of English Romanticism
2. Evaluate various thematic perspective and styles within English Romanticism
3. Identify major authors and texts of Romantic literature.

## **1.8 Glossary**

Ephemeral: Something which lasts for a short period of time

hue: Form, Color

Stubble: The short stalks left in a field after crops have been harvested

Cavern: A large cave

Malevolent: having an evil or harmful influence

## **1.9 Sample Questions**

1. The Romantic movement is also called ‘The Romantic Revival’ because it revived
  - A) The value of classical school of Poetry
  - B) The Values of Greek Poetry

- c) The values of Roman Poetry
- D) The Values of Elizabethan Poetry

2. Who were the author of Lyrical ballads

- A) Wordsworth and Southey
- B) Wordsworth and Shelley
- C) Wordsworth and Coleridge
- D) Wordsworth and Walter Scott

3. Who wrote the poem The Rime of Ancient Mariner?

- A) Wordsworth
- B) Shelley
- C) Coleridge
- D) Byron

4. What historical movement sparked the romantic movement?

- A) Industrial revolution
- B) World War II
- C) The Vietnam War
- D) Political affairs

5. Romanticism is closely associated with

- A) Drama
- B) Novel
- C) Poetry
- D) Prose

6. Lyrical Ballads was published in ....?

7. Who is the author of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*?

8. What major event coincided with the Romantic movement?

9. How is imagination significant to Romanticism?

10. The Romantic period ends with the accession of ?

**Short answer questions:**

1. What does romanticism in literature mean?
2. Who were the most famous writers during the British Romantic era?
3. What is the main idea on Romanticism?
4. What is the theme of nature in Romantic literature?

**Long answer questions:**

1. What are the characteristics of romanticism
2. Compare and contrast between Neoclassical Age and Romantic Age in English literature.
3. The Influence of The French Revolution Upon British Romanticism.

**1.10 Suggested Readings**

Daiches, David. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. Orient Longman. 1956.

Abrams, M H. *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Oxford University Press, 1953.

Eliot, T. S. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. Faber and Faber, 1933.

Wellek, Rene. *A History of Modern Criticism*. Jonathan Cope, 1955.

Wimsalt and Brooks, *Literary Criticism : A Short History*. Roubledge Kegan Paul, 1957.

## Unit – 6: *My Last Duchess*

### Structure

#### 6.0 Introduction

#### 6.1 Objectives

#### 6.2 *My Last Duchess*

##### 6.2.1 About the Poet

##### 6.2.2 Summary

##### 6.2.3 Critical Study

##### 6.2.4 Themes

###### 6.2.4.1 Jealousy and Self-importance

###### 6.2.4.2 Discernment Hierarchy

###### 6.2.4.3 Art and Truth

##### 6.2.5 Dramatic Monologue

##### 6.2.6 Poetic Devices

###### 6.2.6.1 Imagery

###### 6.2.6.2 Language and Form

###### 6.2.6.3 Irony

#### 6.3 Learning Outcomes

#### 6.4 Glossary

#### 6.5 Sample Questions

#### 6.6 Suggested Readings

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### 6.0 Introduction

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The poem ‘My Last Duchess’, a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning was published for the first time in 1842 in his poetic collection entitled *Dramatic Lyrics*. It is an illustrious instance of Browning’s masterpiece contribution to dramatic monologue. As in the poem, duke of Ferrara is indicating the portrait of his late wife to the representative of count, whose daughter duke is intended to remarry. Through the description of different events and ideas, the inner self of the duke is revealed to the readers. The poem is opened with duke’s description of the portrait

of his late wife who was very kind, courteous and can easily be pleased by anybody. It seems flattery on the part of duke at the beginning but later it becomes evident that duke does not like the manners and the likes of her wife and that is why she is murdered. The culmination of the poem indicates the intention of the duke who is now interested to remarry with the daughter of count.

The poem 'My Last Duchess' is set in Italy during Renaissance but it tells more about Victorian notions towards the era. The narration in the poem is a dramatization of Spanish nobleman, Alfonso II, who was duke of Ferrara in Italy during 16<sup>th</sup> century. The name of his wife was Lucrezia who died three year after her marriage. The poem 'My Last Duchess' is one of the most illustrious poetic pieces which has represented pure and authentic technicality by means of the characters in it. The poem is the inner voice of the speaker, duke, who out of jealousy and pride is showing the art gallery to his would-be father-in-law's agent. At one hand it shows the gentle aspect of his life but as soon as he starts talking about his late wife the inner resentment, jealousy, pride, and cruel nature of the duke is started making its presence in the poem.

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

*"I gave commands;*

*Then all smiles stopped together."*

Robert Browning, an illustrious poet, was born in Camberwell, London in the year 1812. At the beginning he was instructed by private tutor but later on he went to London University. *Pauline* was the first long poem by him that was published in 1833 but it was not before the publication of *Men and Women* which was published in 1855 that made him a famous and well-

known poet. In 1846, he was married to Elizabeth Barrett and after that next 15 years of his life was spent in Italy. It was the period when most of his poetic works were inspired and composed by him. The poem 'My Last Duchess', one of his best dramatic monologues, got published in *Dramatic Lyric* in 1842. Initially, it was titled 'Italy' but later it was altered and given the title 'My Last Duchess' in 1849.

Browning's utilization of diction can be best termed as "monstrous angels" in the words of John Schad and hence can be "most obviously approached in Browning by his recurring interest in the play, or movement, between monster and angel, ape and god." While talking about the language of the Browning Amrollah Abjadian is of the view that "Browning was ... very individualistic. Therefore, he allowed himself considerable license with the language. His English was not that of the universities, and it appeared eccentric to his contemporaries ... Browning's grammar is his own. His sentences are frequently interrupted by a long parenthesis. His most characteristic punctuation is the impatient dash. He omits articles and relative pronouns, and he likes to heap alliterations on his verse".

In addition, his style of narration is also distinctive as compare to his contemporaries and the ambiguity and complexity from his poem can also be intricate to take out. In the words of Wilfred L. Guerin, style or manner is more significant than the words present on the pages when he says, "Only to the extent that the reader understands that what the Duke is saying is revealed largely by how he says. It can he really fathom the full implications of the Duchess' story. One of the beautiful ironies of the poem, after all, is the reader's awareness of implications that the Duke does not consciously intend".

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

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

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## **6.1 Objectives**

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There are multiple objectives of this unit. After going through the unit, students are supposed to:

- Know the dramatic monologue, a poetic form.
  - Comprehend the nature of elite in the Renaissance age.
  - Understand the dominance and cruelty of patriarchal society towards women.
  - Analyze and appreciate a literary work from various angles.
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## **6.2 *My Last Duchess***

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### **6.2.1 About the Poet:**

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) who was a Victorian poet, playwright, and a matchless master of dramatic monologue. Some of his other well-received dramatic monologue poems are ‘The Last Ride Together’, ‘Porphyria’s Lover’, ‘Fra Lippo Lippi’, ‘Andrea Del Sarto’, and ‘The Laboratory’. He married Elizabeth Barrett Browning, an illustrious poet and six years older to him. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is best known for her 1850 *Poems*, a collection of poems. Immense popularity of this collection made her a serious contender for the position of Poet Laureate in 1850, after the death of William Wordsworth. Eventually, the position went to Alfred Lord Tennyson. Due to the health issues of his wife, they

moved to Italy after their marriage and resided there till the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. After her death, Browning came back to England with his only son. Few of the best known works of Robert Browning are *Men and Women* (1855), a poetic collection, *The Ring and the Book* (1868), a long blank-verse poem, *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper* (1876), a poetic collection, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Saviour of Society* (1871), a long poem, *Bells and Pomegranates No. III: Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), a poetic collection, *Bells and Pomegranates No. I: Pippa Passes* (1841), a play, *Bells and Pomegranates No. II: King Victor and King Charles* (1842), a play, and *Bells and Pomegranates No. IV: The Return of the Druses*, (1843) a play.

### **6.2.2 Summary:**

The poem ‘My Last Duchess’ is a dramatic monologue. While discussing about dramatic monologue, we readers must remember three characteristics- there will be a single speaker, audience may be one person or more than one, even the reader can be the addressee, and while talking the speaker reveals his/her personality consciously or unconsciously. The poem begins with a subtitle articulating the very tone and setting of “FERRARA”. In the very initial line of the poem, the speaker points toward a portrait of his last duchess which is affixed with a wall. The phrase ‘last duchess’ in the first line is indicative of the notion that the speaker in the poem is the “duke of Ferrara” and he is talking about his deceased wife. The duke is very much fascinated by the artistic skills of the artist Fra Pandolf who has painted such a portrait and asked the messenger to take a seat. The duke is delighted that every stranger including the addressee who when looks at the portrait poses a question to him with regard to “depth and passion” of duchess expressional charm. At this point, the duke draws the attention of the readers that he keeps the portrait behind the curtain with an objective that only he may cast aside her.

In the second stage, the duke answers the question posed earlier. He hints out the “spot of joy” on the cheeks of duchess and the blush she was having was not merely due to his presence over there. As the painter was working on the portrait, she might have covered her wrist and later on it might be noted that portrait is unable to depict the exact “half blush” of her cheeks. Then, the duke notices that duchess had a heart “too soon made glad.” And hence she did not have any discernment and reacted to each and every one with the same note of joy and enjoyment. Here, duke quotes some instances of things that might have got her appreciation such

as compliments with regard to her breast, the scene of sunset, “cherry branch” that was gifted to her, and the mule she used to ride on. These objects might have the favorable look, blush or sign of approval from duchess. Duke, then mentions the most cherishable gift given to her, others than the gifts she is given by men, and that is the “nine-hundred-year-old name.” It was meant more to her than all the gifts and treasures that was even given to her by duke.

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

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

### **6.2.3 Critical Study:**

There are diverse elaborations of the poem ‘My Last Duchess’, as duchess seems to be presented as a victim of an outrageous act on the part of duke who slayed her and “no god came to the rescue.” Secondly, the dramatic monologue has ironic role to play in the poem. The duke outbursts and the more he talks about the more sympathies of the readers he loses instead of

gaining any favor from them. It is necessary to note the use and ability of Browning to inculcate the technique of monologue in order to portray the inner and psychological trauma going inside the character is brought to light through the use of dramatic technique and we come across the feelings and intention of the speaker. It is further shown how a particular person acts and behaves in a specific situation when he or she is entangled in it.

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

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

Duke thinks it as his disregard that instead of appreciating and giving worth to the precious gifts that he gave to her, she is pleased with trivial and ordinary things like branch of cherry, mule, a tame horse, and things like that. A psychological critic summed up the concept as "Her according the natural phenomenon, a common enough event, and the mark of his special grace equal status the Duke interpreted as a diminution of his assumed perfection; such notice would be for the Duke psychologically intolerable." Another characteristic of duke's personality is that he is always class and status conscious but duchess is least concerned about these things

rather she is pure and genuine at heart. Lastly, the dismay and frustration of duke can be seen at apex when he comes up with the remark:

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

## **6.2.4 Themes:**

### **6.2.4.1 Jealousy and Self-importance:**

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

*“’twas not  
Her husband’s presence only, called that spot  
Of joy into the Duchess’ cheek.”*

The amount of jealousy and dismay on the part of duke can be measured from the very fact that whatever pleases and gives solace to duchess gives duke discomfort and displeasure. From this perspective a psychological feature of pride, jealousy and displeasure arises in the life of duke from “favor at her breast”, delightful sunset, gifted cherry bough and beloved mule, a pet which are sources of pleasure for duchess. These later leads duke to self-projection and resentment. On the other hand, he shuns the idea that all these activities of duchess are of trivial nature but still he is unable to “stoop to blame.” Another point that shows her pride is that he

does not show his feelings for duchess as he deems it will lower his esteem before her. All these resentments later lead him to slay duchess as is the implied meaning of the poem. Hence, the poem can be taken as a study of consequences that unchecked pride and jealousy can lead a man even to take the life of his beloved.

#### **6.2.4.2 Discernment Hierarchy:**

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

*“Too easily impressed; she liked whate’er*

*She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.*

*Sir, ’twas all one!”*

Same is in the case of all the things that favor and please her leads him to anguish and dismay. Although he articulates these things trivial but these have drawn him mad and he murders his beloved wife. There is implied meaning that this strict discernment on the part of duke is due to his elite background. He is aware of his social class and hence deems the value of discernment allied with the values of one own self.

#### **6.2.4.3 Art and Truth:**

Last but not the least is the recurrent idea in the poem is the concept of art and truth. *My Last Duchess* is a piece of art and its truth. The idea of art is reflected through duchess and the bronze Neptune and how these pieces of art have multilayered truths of contradictory nature. The very portrait of duchess contains such contradictory truths and the prime among them is the concept of life and death. Although, it is a fact that she is physical dead as she is slayed by her own husband but she stays alive in the portrait. The concept of this life is figurative in nature yet the duke repeatedly articulates as “as if she were alive”. This is in fact indicative of the fact that she used to live in her imagination and he has never come out of her thought. Blush and smile

too have contradictory influence, on the part of duchess this is a tool of pleasure and getting favor while it puts jealousy and resentment in duke on the other hand. Another contradictory truth is that duke is pleased with the portrait of Neptune and is pleased but the things that please his wife is not acceptable for him and it untimely leads him to slay her.

### **6.2.5 Dramatic Monologue:**

It is related with the concept of the poem where there is a solo speaker and a specific listener or listeners who is termed as addressee or addressees and it is essential for the readers to read in between the lines to comprehend what he or she is trying to convey. From these two angles we realize that duke of Ferrara is the speaker of the poem. One, through the setting of Ferrara a city in Italy and two, from the concept of “last duchess.” And the specific listener to who the speaker is conveying his tale is the agent of “count.” It is dramatic in the sense that the poem is like a drama and play where one character is talking to another and there is a certain action going on. Hence, we can say that Browning has utilized the concept of dramatic monologue here to give vent to what he wants to express. It is made known to the readers about the death of duchess in the poem. As the poem opens, we come across that the duke, who is the speaker, is talking to someone and hinting him towards the portrait of the duchess.

While admiring the painter who has painted it the duke is of the view “That's my last Duchess painted on the wall.” Then the speaker talks about the reaction of the people when they come across to this portrait and he also tries to guess the reaction from the addressee. But the readers are unsure about how far the duke might be right about the calculation of duke towards the reactions and feedback of the people with regard to the portrait of the duchess. It is also significant to note that perhaps he observes in other people's eyes what he himself tries to visualize. This is significant aspect to keep in view while listening to the tale of the speaker, duke of Ferrara.

Then, the tale of the speaker continues and he talks about her late wife and even criticizes her for pleasing and seeking favors from all and sundry. To him, she is easily be pleased and he calls it “spot of joy.” He also points towards those things that please her i.e. gifts from men, sunset, pet mule and the branch of cherry gifted to her. As the tale goes on the readers come across the idea about the personality of the duke as well other than the duchess whom the speaker is narrating. Then he informs the readers about the natures and likes of her lady when he

says “too soon made glad.” So, to sum up we can say that through the use of dramatic monologue Browning was able to obtain two purposes. One, he reveals the character traits of late duchess and on the other hand the psychological state of the duke, who is the speaker.

## **6.2.6 Poetic Devices:**

### **6.2.6.1 Imagery:**

The analysis of the poem based on critical reading reveals that Browning has consumed numerous poetic and figurative devices to make his idea more refined which has added aesthetic flavor to this poem. The utilization of concrete images makes the context of this poem more absorbing. Subsequent are the instances of the imagery in the poem “*My Last Duchess*”

*“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,”*  
*“ ..., Notice Neptune, though”*  
*“Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity”*  
*“Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!”*

However, it is noted that no metaphor has been utilized by the poet in *My Last Duchess*. However, there is an instance of consuming simile in the poem when the duke reveals that his late wife is seemed alive in the painting.

*“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall”*  
*“Looking as if she were alive.”*

### **6.2.6.2 Language and Form:**

The language that the poet has consumed to convey his thoughts and feelings is simple, conventional and direct. However, there is a utilization of interrogative poetic expressions that are found in the poem *My Last Duchess*.

*“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall,”*  
*“Will’t please you sit and look at her? I said”*  
*“The curtains I have drawn for you, but I)”*  
*“Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet”*  
*“She had /A heart--how shall I say?”*

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

### 6.2.6.3 Irony:

The poem has hints of irony. We are informed that duke gave mere a day to painter to finish the portrait. It is not because he has some busy schedule rather it was only due to the doubts that duke has in his mind that duchess might be carried away by the painter. When duke talks about the follies of duchess and later comments that he will not complain to duchess as these are trivial matter, it is also ironic because it was not a trivial matter. Rather it has given vent to feelings of dismay, resentment and displeasure in the heart and mind of the duke which ultimately led him to murder his wife. When duke says that duchess was easily pleased by any one and she is carried away by men, implied meanings are that he is projected her as unfaithful but ironically in the culminating point of the poem we are informed about his own intention to remarry with the daughter of count.

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## 6.3 Learning Outcomes

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There are various outcomes of the unit. By now the students are expected to:

- Know about the poet Robert Browning.
  - Understand dramatic monologue, a literary form.
  - Analyze and appreciate a literary work, particularly a poem.
  - Realize the pathetic condition on women in patriarchal society.
  - Know the penchant for art in the age of English Renaissance.
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## 6.4 Glossary

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**Duchess:** The wife of duke

**Fra Pandolf:** A fictitious artist

**Countenance:** Appearance, expression of face

**Earnest:** Intense, sober

**Glance:** Look

**Durst:** Dare

**Mantle:** Cloak

**Laps:** A border or loose part of a cloak

**Flush:** Blush, glow, redden

**Courtesy:** Politeness, civility

**Favour:** Gift

**Officious:** Wearisome, meddlesome

**Trifling:** Trivial, petty

**Forsooth:** Indeed, really, truthfully

**Count:** Earl, male ruler of a county

**Munificence:** Generosity, Kindness

**Neptune:** The God of the ocean and of earthquakes

**Claus of Innsbruck:** A fictitious sculptor

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## 6.5 Sample Questions

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### 6.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Robert Browning was a poet of

- (a) Romantic Age      (b) Modern Age  
(c) Victorian Age      (d) Elizabethan Age

2. Robert Browning was born in

- (a) 1822                  (b) 1812  
(c) 1912                  (d) 1712

3. My Last Duchess is a/an

- (a) Epic Poem            (b) Elegy

- (c) Dramatic monologue (d) Sonnet
4. The poetic collection *Men and Women* was published by
- (a) Elizabeth Barrett Browning (b) Robert Browning  
(c) Alfred Lord Tennyson (d) William Words Worth
5. The setting of the poem 'My Last Duchess' is
- (a) London (b) Greece  
(c) Italy (d) Rome
6. Who is the speaker in the poem 'My Last Duchess'?
- (a) The envoy (b) The Duchess  
(c) The duke (d) None of these
7. Fra Pandolf was a/an
- (a) English sculptor (b) Fictitious painter  
(c) Musician (d) Singer
8. 'My Last Duchess' was first published in the year
- (a) 1842 (b) 1942  
(c) 1824 (d) 1855
9. In which poetic collection 'My Last Duchess' appeared for the first time?
- (a) *Men and Women* (b) *Dramatic Lyric*  
(c) *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper*  
(d) None of the above
10. How many years was Robert Browning younger to his wife?
- (a) 8 years (b) 10 years

(c) 6 years

(d) 4 years

### 6.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

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

### 6.5.3 Long Answer Questions:

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

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## 6.6 Suggested Readings

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1. Bloom, Harold (2001) *Bloom's Major Poets: Robert Browning*. New York: Infobase Publishing.
2. Browning, Robert (1898) *Dramatic Romances*. New York: Crowell and Company.
3. Fletcher, Huntington. (1908) *Modern Language Notes* "Robert Browning's Dramatic Monologue" The Johns Hopkins University <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2916938>.
4. Friedland, S. Louis (1936) *Studies in Philology* "Ferrara and My Last Duchess" The University of North Carolina Press <http://www.jstor.org/stable/417234>.
5. Sasikala, R. (2020). THE POWER OF THE DUKE IN "MY LAST DUCHESS". *Scholar: National School of Leadership*, 9(1.0).
6. Thompson, L. (1983). Browning's My Last Duchess. *The Explicator*, 42(1), 23-25.

## Unit - 10: Life and Works of Gabriel García Márquez

### Structure

#### 10.0 Introduction

#### 10.1 Objectives

#### 10.2 Life and Works of Gabriel García Márquez

##### 10.2.1 Gabriel García Márquez: A Brief Life Sketch

##### 10.2.2 Notable Works and Awards

##### 10.2.3 Writing Style of Gabriel García Márquez

##### 10.2.4 Themes in Gabriel García Márquez's Works

##### 10.2.5 Gabriel García Márquez as a Journalist

##### 10.2.6 Conclusion

#### 10.3 Learning Outcomes

#### 10.4 Glossary

#### 10.5 Sample Questions

#### 10.6 Suggested Readings

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### 10.0 Introduction

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

success by him which ultimately nominated him for Nobel Prize in 1982. This piece became a classic in literary horizon and turned him as one of the most influential literary figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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

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

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

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## 10.1 Objectives

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There are multiple objectives of the unit. After going through the unit, the students shall be able to:

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

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## 10.2 Life and Works of Gabriel García Márquez

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### 10.2.1 Gabriel Garcia Marquez: A Brief Life Sketch:

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

Though he studied law but he was of the view that law has nothing to do with justice. In the meanwhile, due to the civil war that broke up he had to discontinue his studied and joined the profession as a journalist. In between 1950 to 1955 he wrote column with the name “The Giraffe” for *El Heraldo*. His initial tone of writing was replete with irony and humour that later on set the tone of his fictional writing. Due to civil war he had not only to discontinue his study but had also to shift to Barranquilla. Here he had association with newsmen and journalists. He

also joined journalistic tutorial over there which polished his skills and abilities as a journalist. Till 1954 he worked there as a columnist then he moved back to Bogota as a film critic and news reporter in *El Espectador* which was a Columbian newspaper.

As he was brought up by his grandparents especially the influence of his grandmother stories was far reaching as far as shaping the persona of his fictional depiction and style is concerned. The folk tales and exaggerated tales of his grandmother were paramount, particularly for the development of his magic realistic notion as a novelist and short story writer. He himself admitted the influence of these factors as a contributor towards his literary nourishment as “the most decisive literary influence for me. After the death of my grandfather [when García Márquez was eight years old], nothing really happened to me anymore.” When a reporter once asked him where he got his rich, yet pungent style, he replied: “It's the style of my grandmother.” The influence of his grandfather was also eminent in his work as we saw his presence in his novels and short stories as he had partaken in the civil war termed as “The War of Thousand Days.” The reference towards the real village Aracataca and Macondo is also highly autobiographical in his writing.

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

### **10.2.2 Notable Works and Awards:**

His first collection of short stories got published in a liberal magazine named *Espectador*. These stories were published with the title *Eyes of a Blue Dog*. The initial success was diminished due to the incident that suddenly took place. The president of Columbia Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated. He left everything during civil war and became a journalist as

an Investigating reporter. In 1954, he got published a story about the sailor who just managed to survive in a shipwreck of Columbian Navy. This news later turned into a scandal and García Márquez was exiled to Europe where he continued his journey as a journalist and magazine writer. In addition, he also continued himself as a writer of short stories. In 1955, he got published his first novel with the name *Leaf Storm*. It was written much earlier but he could not find publisher before.

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

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

### **10.2.3 Writing Style of Garcia Marquez:**

Garcia Marquez inherited the traditions of tales from his grandmother who used to relate exaggerated tales in such a manner that these tales looked real. He adopted such a narrative style

that juxtaposed unusual and unnatural events in such a way that these looked natural and real. For that reason, he is deemed to be the founder and pioneer of the genre magical realism. In addition, he utilized a language that was mostly derived from folklore and cultural dynamic of the place and people of Arcata. Another Significant aspect is that he wrote about the events happened in Colombia mixing them with supernatural events in such a way that these events of his fictional work looked real.

It was obvious that he never boasted off as the pioneer of magical realism he merely hinted out that such elements existed in Latin American Literature. But none can deny the fact that no one prior to him had used this genre with such masterful manner and depictional power. It was owing to his contribution as a magic realistic that had later inspired the writers to exert in this genre. He was of the view that reality is also the myth that existed in the mind of common people. And hence reality centered around everything that is linked with the life of common people and places.

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

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

of Garcia Marquez had established him not only the greatest Columbian novelist but also one of the greatest novelists and fictionist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to his superb craftsmanship he has not only attained fame among his readers but also received much appreciation from literary critics.

#### **10.2.4 Themes in Garcia Marquez's Works:**

There are numerous ideas that reoccurred time and again in Garcia Marquez's fiction. One of the chiefs among them is the utilization of solitude. He utilized it in individual characters as well as in overall development of themes. At time he incorporated the technique of interior monologue to further intensify the theme of solitude. Through monologue he also projected the actual dialogues between the characters. Through them he showed that people are least concerned about the lives of others, they are just concerned about themselves. To him, solitude is something that cannot be disintegrated from human lives. In one way or the other one has to suffer from it in any stage of one life. It is the language, culture, and social background that assist in responding to the situation termed as solitude or loneliness.

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

Macondo is yet another recurrent idea in many of his fictional writing. It was the name of the village which he referred as Macondo time and again. He had used the history, cultural, and geographical setting in abundance in general sense, not in a specific term. He himself clarified the utilization of Macondo as "Macondo is not so much a place as a state of mind, which allows you to see what you want, and how you want to see it." Hence, this literary and fictional town had attained much significance in his writing. As in the words of Stevens about Macondo, "its

geography and inhabitants constantly invoked by teachers, politicians, and tour depicts agents...” made it “... hard to believe it is a sheer fabrication.” His most renowned novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* took place in the same imaginary town and delineated about the town from its foundation to its doom.

Last but not the least with regard to the recurrent ideas in his work Garcia Marquez was among chief of those who set the real tone of genre of literature known as Magic Realism. It was a genre which combined magic with reality in a single piece of fiction. This affiliation with magic and ghosts primarily came from his grandmother fairy tales, veracious history of Latin American dictators, and romantic revolutions. It was also associated with hunger, illness and long-standing violence in the world. Garcia Marquez himself commenting on this aspect of fiction as “Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination. For, our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable.”

#### **10.2.5 Garcia Marquez as Journalist:**

He was not the first artist or novelist who was also a journalist. He utilized the journalistic tools to achieve more impactful and authentic piece of fiction. His investigating persona assisted him a great deal in exploring the true sense of his characters. Most of his personal experiences as a journalist and his topics as a columnist later turned out to be the subject matters of his fictional works. Standard journalistic tools such as chronicling can be seen in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* reporting techniques of witness and sources can also be traced. His narrators often made use of quotes and commentary just like the tone of a reporter or investigator. The utilization of anachronistic movement during narrative account can also be accessible in his fictional writing truly in line with his journalistic tone. Like a journalist he was of the opinion that the opinion of a writer is never biased or prejudiced but there is no denying the fact that in few cases it is there in the form of narrators.

He began his journalistic career in 1947 with *Universal* as a reporter. He worked till 1952 for *El Herald*, for *El Espectador* till 1955, worked for *Momento* Magazine in 1958 and 1959. Formed Prensa News agency, worked as correspondent and reporter in Cuba, New York and Havana. He had also honorary membership of “American Academy of Arts and Letters.” During his journalistic career he contributed columns, reports, news stories, short stories, and essays. He

also contributed as film critics and investigating reporter. He also utilized this forum for the projection of his political ideology. In addition, he expressed his opinion on current issues. He also did editorial and advertising-based projects other than screen plays and films. He also tried his luck in production but did not receive much prominence in the said field. Through utilizing journalistic medium he also worked for social justice which was duly recognized by Swedish Academy while bestowing him Nobel Prize for Literature.

There was a striking fascination as far as combination of literary and journalistic flair is concerned in his works. His journalistic exposure had undoubtedly influenced his literary career. The comparison was not limited to mere expression or utilization of vocabulary as his style was literary. He amply made use of literary expressions like metaphor, similes and replete adjectives which are journalistic in nature but are frequent as far their utilization in fiction is concerned. His anxiousness towards both the genre was due to the realization or fulfillment of objective and purpose for what he was writing. Garcia Marquez was of the opinion that journalist can learn from writers and writers from journalists. General and common tools can be adopted from either field and can amply be used by either journalist or by a writer of fiction.

As far as his political intents were concerned, which came out mostly through his journalistic medium, he was always an ardent supporter of left wings. He had support and personal link with Columbian communist party though he never joined it as a member. He also offered financial support to Venezuelan political party. It was due to these political affiliations he was denied the visa of united state of America. In addition, his ties with Mr. Castro also had unrest among intellectuals, political thinkers, and human right activist. He was so tired of such criticism from these corners that he termed this attitude as “Americans’ almost pornographic obsession with Castro.” Throughout his literary career he projected political ideology though sometime unintentionally.

#### **10.2.6 Conclusion:**

Garcia Marquez was an outstanding figure and a matter of great pride for Columbia. He won Nobel Prize for Literature which painted Columbia on the map of literary height. He also outdid other contemporaries. His works also redirected the bias against other parts of the world on the part of critics especially on the part of Latin American. In addition to his literary and journalistic talent he had great admiration and support for film and cinema. Though most of his

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

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

Keeping in view the literary services and stature of Garcia Marquez it is hard to imagine how the world of literature would have been without him. He was not only the greatest artist of Columbia but also one of the renowned names of literary horizon of all Times. His fame and repute were not limited to his own country or region rather it had changed the entire face of literature. He was known as “Gabo” in his native land and in all the other parts of the world as the pioneer of magic realism and fabulous novelist, short story writer, and journalist. Due to his contribution in magic realism his work had attained wide range of viewership, exceptional commercial success, and considerable appreciation from critics of not only of his time but also transcended the boundaries of time and space. The influence of Garcia Marquez had influenced numerous writers of the world belonging to all nationalities i.e. from Isabel Allende to Salman Rushdie. Last but not the least he was a political and social activist as he deemed that a writer

must speak the view of the public. He was having leftist view. He was also emotionally attached with the tragic political upheaval in his own native country.

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### 10.3 Learning Outcomes

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The unit tried to fulfill various objectives. Few of the learning outcomes of this specific unit are mentioned below. After going through the unit, the students are expected to:

- Know the life sketch and socio-political scenario of Gabriel García Márquez, the Colombian author.
  - Comprehend the writing style of the author.
  - Understand different themes consumed by Gabriel García Márquez in his writings.
  - Know the author's contribution in journalism and literature.
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### 10.4 Glossary

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

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

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

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

**Illustrious:** Well-known, famous, memorable

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

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

**Supernatural:** Ghostly, paranormal

**Robert Kiely:** A Loker Professor of English and American Literature and Master of Adams House at Harvard University, Cambridge

**Prestigious:** Important, prominent, esteemed

**Intertextuality:** The relationship between texts, especially literary ones

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

**Mr. Castro:** A Cuban revolutionary, lawyer, and politician who was the leader of Cuba from 1959 to 2008, serving as the prime minister of Cuba from 1959 to 1976 and president from 1976 to 2008. Ideologically a Marxist–Leninist and Cuban nationalist, he also served as the first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba from 1961 until 2011

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## 10.5 Sample Questions

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### 10.5.1 Objective Questions:

1. Who received the Nobel Prize in literature in 1982?  
(a) T.S. Eliot                      (b) D.H. Lawrence  
(c) Garcia Marquez      (d) Ezra Pound
2. Gabriel Garcia Marquez received Neustadt International Prize for literature in...  
(a) 1882                              (b) 1872  
(c) 1972                              (d) 1982
3. Gabriel García Márquez was a/an ... writer.

- (a) English                      (b) American  
(c) Irish                          (d) Columbian
4. Gabriel García Márquez was born in...
- (a) 1827                          (b) 1927  
(c) 1972                          (d) 1900
5. Who penned the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*?
- (a) Shakespeare                (b) J.M. Synge  
(c) G.B. Shaw                    (d) Gabriel Garcia Marquez
6. Macondo is a mythical town created by...
- (a) Thomas Hardy              (b) R.K. Narayan  
(c) William Faulkner         (d) Gabriel Garcia Marquez
7. Who is affectionately known as Gabo by Latin Americans?
- (a) Garcia Marquez            (b) Robert Frost  
(c) William Faulkner         (d) May Angelou
8. *Eyes of a Blue Dog* is a collection of ... by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
- (a) Poems                        (b) Short Stories  
(c) Letters                        (d) Essays
9. Which is the first novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez?
- (a) *Leaf Storm*                 (b) *Marriage and Family*  
(c) *Fame*                         (d) *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
10. Which is the mother tongue of Gabriel Garcia Marquez?
- (a) English                        (b) Spanish  
(c) French                         (d) Arabic

### 10.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Which is most celebrated text of Gabriel Garcia Marquez? Why?
2. What is magic realism?

3. Mention few notable works and achievements of Garcia Marquez.
4. Write a short note about Garcia Marquez as a journalist.
5. Why was Garcia Marquez exiled to Europe?

### **10.5.3. Long Answer Questions:**

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

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## **10.6 Suggested Readings**

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# **Unit – 11: Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon**

## **Structure**

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon
  - 11.2.1 Plot of the Story
  - 11.2.2 Characters in the Story
  - 11.2.3 Class Conflict in the story
  - 11.2.4 Pretense and Dissimulation
  - 11.2.5 Description of Cage
- 11.3 Learning Outcomes
- 11.4 Glossary
- 11.5 Sample Questions
- 11.6 Suggested Reading

## **11.0 Introduction**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia on 6th March 1927. He is a Spanish novelist, short story writer, screenwriter and journalist. He is popular with his nickname, 'Gabo' or 'Gabito' in countries of Latin America. He is considered as one of the most influential writers in Spanish Literature and one of the significant writers of 20th century in world literature because of wide range of translations of his works in various languages which has made his writing accessible for non-Spanish readers around the world and which has contributed in spreading his fame around the globe. He is the recipient of the prestigious Nobel Prize for literature on 10th December 1982. He was the first Columbian and fourth Latin American to receive this award. Before that he won the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1972. In his early days of life, he left law school and opted for a career in Journalism. Though a journalist, he wrote many acclaimed non-fiction books and short story collections but he gained global fame with his novels; One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967), Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1981) and Love in the Time of Cholera (1985). These novels and his other works were very successful both critically as well as commercially.

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

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

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

trilogy, *Living to Tell the Tale* (*Vivir para Contarla*). He died on 17th April 2014, at the age of 87. In his obituary of Garcia Marquez, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos called him "the greatest Columbian who ever lived".

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

His works include six novels: *In Evil Hour* (1962), *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), *The General in His Labyrinth* (1989) and *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994), four novellas, *Leaf Storm* (1955), *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981), *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) and 6 Short stories collections, *Eyes of a Blue Dog* (1947), *Big Mama's Funeral* (1962) *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972), *Collected stories* (1984), *Strange Pilgrims* (1993), and *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (1968). He has also published 9 non-fiction books of critical acclaim.

### **11.1 Objectives**

The objectives of this unit are:

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

### **11.2 Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon**

#### **11.2.1 Plot of the Story**

*Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* is a story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez which was published in 1962. It is unique in a sense that it can be interpreted in two ways; either it is simple or it is ambiguous. Individuals can interpret it in two ways. Either it can be interpreted reading in a plain way or one can find a deeper meaning which seems hidden and it is necessary to have a close study of the text. The story, *Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon* is basically written in Spanish and has been translated from Spanish to English and thus it has reached audiences

making Garcia Marquez an iconic figure in the history of Literature. Surprisingly, the name of the Balthazar's which has been taken from the Bible. Though it is not clear whether it is intentional or coincidental.

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

Though he was not able to sell his hard work to one of the wealthiest men as he wished, he felt content because he was able to hurt the ego of one of the richest men of his town. His wife, Ursula, is unaware of all these happenings. She has a notion that he might have sold it and received a fair amount. Though Balthazar didn't receive any money, he felt himself a winner and celebrated his victory in the bar with a crowd buying drinks for them with no money in his pocket. He lies to the people that he extracted money for the cage. In his drunk state, he also declares that he is about to begin a large enterprise to create "million cages" and suggests the crowd to work quickly before all the rich die as the rich can't even get angry anymore. The title of the story is his celebration in the bar which resulted in a marvelous afternoon because he acquired enough recognition for selling the cage which he didn't sell. Ursula was waiting for him at night with a good dinner. She didn't believe it when someone told her that Balthazar is drunk

and buying beers for everyone in the hall, but she didn't believe it because he never used to drink.

Later Balthazar ended up in the Brothel, excessively drunk but immensely happy for the first time in his entire life. He gave his watch as a pawn to secure payment for the bill to take it the next day. He then spent his night on the street unaware of the fact that his shoes were being stolen and in the morning, the ladies passing by who were going to the Church thought him to be dead.

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

### **Check your Progress**

1. When did Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon get published?
2. Did Balthazar sell his cage?
3. Was Balthazar really happy?

### **1.2.2 Characters in the story**

#### **1. Balthazar**

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

#### **2. Ursula**

Ursula is the lady who has been living with Balthazar for four years. They are neither married, nor have children. But she looks after him as his wife and does all the household chores. She is always concerned about him and worries about his health and work. She pursues him to demand more money on the artistic pieces which he makes. She praises his work and encourages him always to do more creative work. Sometimes, she seems to be critical of Balthazar's behaviour just for his betterment. The most relevant thing is that she trusts Balthazar so much that she didn't believe it when people told her Balthazar had drunk.

### **3. Chepe Montiel**

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

### **4. Narrator**

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

#### **Check Your Progress**

1. Why did Balthazar didn't sell his cage to Doctor Octavo?

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

### **11.2.3 Class Conflict in the story**

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

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

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

Gifted of the cage instead of selling is an act which is symbolically an illusion of freedom. This results in his celebration which is termed a marvelous afternoon. Though just for one day he lived like a rich man. Before this incident, he was a simple human being but Montiel's house episode had dehumanized him and he changed his attitude. This is an example

of how money and power changes a person's attitude from simplicity to ambiguity. It diverts a person's attitude from creative expressions towards enjoyment. Balthazar goes to the bar, drinks excessively, buys drinks for the crowd and goes to the brothel. This is an unexpected behavior on his part. In the morning, he is found on the street lying dead which is somewhat a punishment for his dehumanized behavior and his lies about selling a cage. Earlier, he was a famous carpenter who was very much liked by his town people because of his artistic skill especially because of making a beautiful cage.

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

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Is Marxist element present in Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon?
2. Is the portrayal of Chepe Montiel, a symbol of capitalism?
3. Is gifting of a cage, symbolically an allusion of freedom?

### **11.2.4 Pretense and Dissimulation**

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

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

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

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

### **Check Your Progress**

1. What is the main incident of the story?
2. Is Chepe Montiel a hypocrite man?
3. Was it a pretense on Balthazar's part to hide the gifting of the cage?

### **11.2.5 Description of Cage**

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

of his craftsmanship. Everyone in his area was eager to see what amount he would receive by selling the cage and to whom he would sell it.

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

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

### 11.3 Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students will be able to understand that:

- Gabriel Garcia Marquez's writing
- Class-conflict in the story
- Everyday struggle of a common man
- Writer has used a simple style to voice his concern

### 11.4 Glossary

Capuchin	:	a cloak and the hood formerly worn by women
Bristly	:	having a stiff and prickly texture
Hammock	:	a bed made of strong cloth (canvas) or rope, which is hung up between two trees or poles.
Muttering	:	to speak in a low, quiet and often angry voice that is difficult to hear
Incoherencies	:	the quality of being illogical, inconsistent or unclear

Stifling	:	making one feel constrained or oppressed
Cicada	:	a large homopterous insect with long transparent wings, found chiefly in warm countries
Auctioning	:	
Troupial	:	a gregarious songbird of the American oriole family, typically having orange and black plumage and yellow eyes.
Resonant	:	deep, clear and continuous sound
Specifications	:	an act of identifying something precisely or of stating a precise requirement
Shrugged	:	dismissed something as unimportant
Templated	:	a shaped piece of rigid material used as a pattern for processes such as cutting out, shaping or drilling
Crammed	:	completely filled to the point of overflowing
Obsession	:	an idea or thought that continually preoccupies or intrudes on a person's mind
Siesta	:	an afternoon rest or nap, especially one taken during the hottest hours of the day in a hot climate
Clamour	:	a loud and confused noise, especially that of people shouting
Decorous	:	polite and restrained
Candor	:	the quality of open and being honest; frankness
Grandstand	:	the main stand, usually roofed, commanding the best view for spectators at racecourses or sports grounds.
Surgical	:	done with great precision, especially with reference to a swift and highly accurate military attack from the air
Perplexedly	:	Surprisingly
Serenity	:	calm, peaceful and serene
Emitted	:	produce and discharge
Guttural	:	produced in the throat; harsh sounding
Pacify	:	put an end to anger, agitation or excitement
Jukebox	:	a machine that automatically plays a selected musical recording when a coin is inserted
Toasted	:	cooked or brown by exposure to a grill fire or other source of

		radiant heat
Delirious	:	in an acutely disturbed state of mind characterized by restlessness, illusions and incoherence; affected by delirium
Smeared	:	
Rouge	:	a red powder or cream used as a cosmetic for coloring the cheeks
or		
		lips
Pawn	:	to use something as collateral when you're borrowing money
Spread-eagled	:	lying or standing with arms and legs outstretched.

## 11.5 Sample questions

### 11.5.1 Objective Questions:

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

- (a) Peru
- (b) **Columbia**
- (c) Chile
- (d) Dominican Republic

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

- (a) French
- (b) Italian
- (c) German
- (d) **Spanish**

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

- (a) 1980
- (b) **1982**
- (c) 1985
- (d) 1983

4. Garcia Marquez gained global fame with which novel?

- (a) **One Hundred Years of Solitude**

- (b) Chronicle of a Death Foretold
- (c) Love in the time of Cholera
- (d) In Evil Hours

5. Which US President lifted ban from him

- (a) Barack Obama
- (b) George Bush
- (c) **Bill Clinton**
- (d) Donald Trump

6 ..... called Balthazar as Capuchin

- (a) **Ursula**
- (b) Octavio Giraldo
- (c) Pepe Montiel
- (d) Chepe Montiel

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

- (a) Thirty one
- (b) Thirty five
- (c) **Thirty**
- (d) Thirty three

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

- (a) Peter
- (b) **Pepe**
- (c) Petey
- (d) Pip

9. Chepe Montiel was ..... in terms of money

- (a) **miser**
- (b) generous
- (c) kind

(d) spendthrift

10. Balthazar pawns his .....

(a) house

(b) chain

(c) ring

(d) **watch**

### **11.5.2 Short Answer Questions**

1. What is the message of the story in Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon?
2. What is the symbolic significance of the cage in Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon?
3. Is Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon about magical realism?
4. Is Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon an escape from existing realities
5. Explain the moral dilemma in Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon?
6. Irony in Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon

### **11.5.3 Long Answer Questions**

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

### **11.6 Suggested Reading**

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## **Unit-13: Introduction to African Writing (Short Story)**

### **Structures**

#### **13.0 Introduction**

#### **13.1 Objectives**

#### **13.2 Concept of Short Story and Its Beginning**

##### **13.2.1 Nature and Thematic Domains of African Short Story**

##### **13.2.2 Apartheid: Contact and Dichotomy between Black and White People**

##### **13.2.3 Diversity in African Short Story**

##### **13.2.4 Violence as a Ubiquitous Subject in African Short Story**

##### **13.2.5 Style and Substance Coordination**

#### **13.3 Learning Outcome**

#### **13.4 Glossary**

#### **13.5 Sample Questions**

#### **13.6 Suggested Readings**

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**13**

### **.0 Introduction**

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African literature is a corpus of creative and artistic writing produced by native people of African continent. It incorporates literature in various indigenous languages as well as literary productions in many colonial languages viz English, French and Portuguese. Like literatures of all other formerly big colonized countries- India, Canada and Australia, African writing has its own background in the form of oral and recorded literatures extant in multiple endemic languages. Such literature manifest the growth of Africa with all its traditional values and cultural nuances in terms of changing political scenario, religious ethos, economic challenges,

social reality and psychological motivation of the native people. The literature provides the record of overall existence in a renewed manner and thereby reflects the shifting realities of Africa. As literatures of other countries, it is segmented into various categories based on the time periods, thematic concerns, and literary developments and movements. Moreover, this literature is found in almost all big recognized genres like poetry, drama, novel, short story and non-fiction prose tracts and essays.

African literature has started to gain artistic recognition and critical acclaim at the global level with the publication of slave narratives such as *The Interesting Narratives of Life and Adventures Of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Varsa, the African* (1789). Though the Africans in the beginning have written literature in their native languages, yet they have also produced resistant literature against colonial hegemony. Since the inception of 20<sup>th</sup> century, African literature has experienced many innovations and developments. The Negritude Movement from 1930s onwards launched by Leopold Sedar Senghar, Lean Damas and Aime Cesaire, has served a vehicle for the nascent nationalist aspiration in Africa. After World War II, Africans have augmented the intensity of struggle for freedom. This is reflected in Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri Camera Kaye and Ngugi Wa Thiongo in the form of poetry, novels, plays, short stories and critical essays. This literature in European languages demonstrates the conflict and difference between African and colonial cultures and sensibilities. It shows the African pride, their future prospect and the rejection of illegal subjugation. In South Africa, apartheid has remained an omnipresent theme in the writings of Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee and Dennis Brutus. The contemporary African literature displays disillusionment with the existing developments. *Before the Birth of the Moon* (1989) by V.Y. Mudimbe, projects the doomed love affair in a society ravaged with corruption and hypocrisy. In this way, African literature covers all- precolonial, colonial, postcolonial and contemporary socio-cultural, political, economic and ethical dimensions of the concerned society in a very realistic and striking manner.

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### 13.1 Objectives

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I. To develop an overall consciousness among the students about African literary tradition.

- II. To familiarize readers with the concept of short story and its inherent components.
- III. To introduce the students with temporal development of African short story and its various dimensions of style and subject.
- IV. To highlight the main themes of African short story and its shifting scenario.
- V. To show the readers the innovative styles of some established writers to create an exact compatibility with the substance they portray.
- VI. To make known the great landmarks in African short story and their acceptance and acclamation at world level.

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### **13.2 Concept of Short Story and Its Beginning**

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

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

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

### **13.2.1 Nature and Thematic Domains of African Short Story**

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

Chinua Achebe, a lovable fiction writer of Nigeria and others point out that there do exist a distinction between African short story and its counterpart in Europe and America in terms of form and content. They add that novel and short story in Africa have derived their inspiration and sources from a common oral literary heritage. Yet Stephen Gray does not attempt to separate the short story, the myth, the fable and the legend. He emphasises that such classification are mutually inclusive. He looks upon them as one whole- interdependent and overlapping and the writers have excess to them always. Gary Spackey writes that “the contact between oral literature and short story have been and must remain minimal”. It implies that despite sharing certain traits and components of nature and structure, the African oral literature and newly emerged short story have distinctive identities and are independent entities. It is also pertinent to differentiate between the tale and short story in African literature in order to have clarity of concepts in mind. The tale is described as a loosely, fragmented story with an ostensible didactic purpose. It deliberates more on incidents and episodes by bringing them together without showing the complexities of the characters and their changing temperaments. Such creations adhere closely the tradition of oral literature. On the other side, the proper short story designs characters and contents on social reality and human psychology without giving undue space to moral teachings. It develops plot with conflict and maintains conflict throughout in a complex manner. It fallows the law of probability and necessity in spirit and does not compromise the requirements of art and aesthetics. There is a compact temporal and spatial unity and also a

correspondence between form and content. In Africa artless tales have been held very high and crafty short stories looked down upon for a very long time in the past. But the priority has not changed now. The art of short story is now very popular and acclaimed one. The motifs in African short story is commonly seen in the form of needs, aspirations and anxieties. The tradition and modernity are at loggerheads and are never reconciled and compromised. According to Ulli Beier that “by far the greatest number of African writers are interest in depicting present day situations and problems. The past traditions held little interest to them”. Generally tradition is seen in relation with modernity in writings done in other parts of the world. In African short story, the two concepts are poles apart and in perpetual clash. Therefore, they cannot be abridged and made one. Besides, these recurrent motifs and tradition-modern conflict, the omnipresent themes and concerns in African short story may be identified as: colonialism and its ramifications; war and its consequences; Religion and witchcraft; political high handedness and corruptions; the urban and rural life; hunger and privation; love, treachery and like many subjects.

### **13.2.2 Apartheid: Contact and Dichotomy between Black and White People**

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

One of the main concerns of African short stories written by English knowing writers is the identification of the contact between black and white people. This has been demonstrated in diverse ways with the involved implications. The stories highlight the barriers between the people of different colours. These hurdles create a tension in the social life and weaken the efforts to establish a sociable cordial contacts based on mutual equality, dignity and harmony. It is due to ever mounting tension and widening hiatus that the hopelessness and sadness arise in the short stories. Alan Patan’s story “A Drink in the Passage” projects this racial tension and segregation. There are two characters- a black and white tied together out of their mutual gumption for art and beauty. The white Van Rensburg having deep impression and regard for the

black Simelane, invites him for drink. But due to taboo of not eating and drinking together, Van Rensburg summons his companion at his home. But even within walls, the drink is consumed hurriedly in a cold passage. This shows the stigma of the society where the relation between the two races is at the first place- prohibited, and secondly it is considered below dignity to treat other one humanly. Though the story treats both characters uniformly and with homogeneity which is very rare, yet the psychological reality of the characters gets revealed. Alan Patan usually in his writing inducts the expressions and sentences of moral implication, yet reserves his moral judgement. Through the characterization of Simelane and Van Rensburg, the writer refer to the circumstances not allowing two fellows to touch each other whether of affection or fellow-feeling. The same can be witnessed in Don Jacobson's "The Box". A young white boy in the story pulls apart the handiwork made by their black servant painstakingly. The pigeon box is absolutely redundant for the white boy's purpose of breeding and sheltering his birds. At this when Jan, black servant cries, the narrator comes to pacify him by asserting: "Stop crying, Jan. You can make another box". He adds that he could not touch him and put his arms around him due to Jan's black colour. As in Patan's story, the two characters in "The Box" cannot share their mutual feelings and thereby comfort each other due to their colour difference. As the white character conceives it in a queer manner: "He was still black".

One of the unique responses of white South Africans to their black country fellows is that of fear. The rationale of this feeling of fear is complex and it is rooted in historical consciousness of white settlers who have displaced people with dark complexion. The subject is well expressed in Jan Rabie's Afrikaan's story "Droogte". Moreover, the suppression and violence springing from the truncation of contact between black and white people is the main thrust of "Chasm" written by Macphail. Here the young British woman Elizebeth Ross is raped by a black man called Izak. Basically, the white woman is not familiar with the contemptuous behaviour shown by whites to black people. So when Izak is wounded during the work at her home, she treats him humanly and compassionately which the black worker misunderstands for love. When Izak is asked in court by the judge about the circumstances of the rape incident, he replies: "It was the fault of the white woman. She encourages me. She made overtures at me. She took my hand in her hand. She played with my fingers. She wanted me.". The implications of this plainly brute story are comprehensible and understandable for all having an eye on African social reality. It is reminder of encounter between the young white woman and black man in Gordimer's story "Is There Nowhere else Where we can Meet". Macphail's title metaphorically refers to the gap being

identified between the characters of opposite colour. The stunning impact of the denouement of the story is that Izak is seeming right in justifying the wrong deed, yet his violent behaviour in the bedroom is also unpardonable. To conclude, it is evident that there are plots in South African stories where black and white people communicate and contact with each other and result is the reciprocal benefit and goodness. But Macphail's "Chasm" projects the usual if not necessarily a violent pattern of black and white encounter in the country. All such cited illustration and like situations are behind the dichotomy between the two races which impede the process of establishing a close contact and rapport between them.

### **13.2.3 Diversity in African Short Story**

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

works of Nadine Gordimer such as “A soldier’s Embrace”, “Oral History” and “Something out There” are journalistic in nature and presentation. The subjects of these stories are bush-wars, urban terrorism, and infringement of the Immoral Act. These are usually the domains of journalism.

Sheila Roberts writes that “ the very ambience of South Africa causes people, who begin challenging the overall unfairness and injustice to start examining other situations where similar injustices exist. It think it must be impossible to be critical of the situation and not all that criticism to ripple out in other areas of one’s life”. One of the domains into which female writers such as Sheila Roberts, Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head have let ‘criticism to ripple out’ is that of the plight undergoing women in South Africa. Sheila Roberts in “Knobs and Nikes: A Tale of Revenge” does a something singular in African fiction. She reveals a nexus between the cruel treatment of man to his wife and his adherence to African nationalism. The story suggests a connection between the man’s political preferences and his macho notion of himself as a master in bed. Ruff is very negligent and languid lover. After gratifying his sexual thirst, his wife the narrator of the story tells how much reprehensible and remiss Ruff is in fulfilling his part of the bargain: “ I don’t mind doing this for him after I have been taken care of, so to speak. But more and more these days, geysers first and then his whole body begins to exude a sweat of self righteous doing my duty labour. He cannot rise up like a helium- balloon twice...”. The stories like this dealing with sexual harassment and sexual injustice faced by women add a new dimension to African short story. The woman writers such as Roberts, Head and Gordimer do explore such concerns of urgently required correction.

#### **13.2.4 Violence as a Ubiquitous Subject in African Short Story**

When African literature in English started its onward journey, the writers have tremendously borrowed ideas, themes, techniques, know-how of using settings and exploiting characterization from European and American literatures. After learning the art of writing the fictional literature from foreigners, the African writers began to concentrate seriously on native issues and concerns and have incorporated local events, situations, and personages in order to accomplish the objective of national literature adequately. This endemic projection can nowhere be discerned more comprehensively and closely than in the treatment of the subject- violence. The violence existing in African domestic and social environments has been mirrored right from the very

inception, yet the short stories of 1970 onwards are replete with it. The writers have fictionalized it in different ways as per their sensibilities and potential.

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

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

### 13.2.5 Style and Substance Coordination

As true with other New Literatures written in former European colonies, the African English writers have utilized English language very judiciously and skilfully to create a balance between form and matter, and style and substance. It has helped them to achieve the purpose of expressing native sensibility in the foreign language. The African writers have tamed English as per local demands of social reality, human psyche and overall cultural ethics. By doing so, they have been able to overpower the barriers of apartheid and tribalism. The English language has been employed just like their mother tongue with all literary devices such as metaphors and imagery. One of the omnipresent themes in African short story is violence and it has been presented in the same phrases and words denoting hostility and aggression. In La Gumas's "A Walk in the Night", the characters speak the language exuding the emotions of anger and fear. At the very outset, the readers are told that Michael Adonis is "nursing a little growth of anger the way one caresses the beginnings of a toothache with the tip of the tongue". Afterwards in the story when he is targeted by the police, his mind is disclosed in like manner: "deep down inside him the feelings of rage, frustration and violence swelled like a boil, knotted with pain". In this way the writer produces a compatibility between content and words. Similarly "Waiting for Leila" evokes the social trouble and unrest with exact imagery of violence and turbulence. The jackhammers used for breaking down buildings are matched with crows picking at a person's guts, and the hearts of the people left in "District Six" are likened with empty shop windows. This type of fictional prose loaded with dense imagery is a peculiar feature of black African writers. Moreover, Themba another black writer plunges into highly poetic language and creates literary echoes with exciting imagery. In "Crepuscule" Themba reflects the sophistication of his age and of the social ambience of the place before the government destroys it. As reminiscence of Dickens' opening passage in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Themba's prose is poetically hyperbolic and full of contrasts:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that

some of its noisiest authorities insisted on it being received for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

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

### **13.3 Learning Outcome**

Through this unit, an effort has been made to cover the maximum facets of African short story in terms of themes, techniques, form, characterization and content in order to enable the students to be familiar with this form of literature in general. The reading of this chapter would enlighten the concerned students with temporal shifts of African short story as it has undergone rapidly to keep pace with changing circumstances. The concepts have been explained with textual illustrations and references with a view to give it the scholarly touch and thereby make it a reliable source for students. Overall, this piece of writing incorporates all the necessary descriptions prerequisite for having an adequate information about African short story.

### **13.4 Glossary**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Queer:** Weird, odd or strange.

**Quintessential:** Being perfect example; ultimate; prototype.

**Ramification:** Offshoot, consequences, or result, outcome.

**Redundant:** Superfluous; insignificant.

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

**Segment:** section, part, organ, incomplete.

**Spatial:** pertaining to space or place.

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

**Temporal:** Pertaining to time; transient.

## 13.5 Sample Questions

### 13.5.1 Objective Type Questions

I. Which one of the following constituents elements does not belong to Short Story?

- a) Character
- b) Conflict
- c) Song
- d) plot

II. Who among the following American writers does call Short Story “a national art form”?

- a) Frank O’Connor
- b) Edgar Allen Poe
- c) Washington Irving
- d) Nathaniel Hawthorne

III. Identify the meaning of word ‘Apartheid’:

- a) Sadness
- b) Hopelessness
- c) Darkness
- d) Separateness

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

- a) Nadine Gordimer
- b) Sheila Roberts
- c) Bapsi Sidhwa
- d) Bessie Head

V. The short story “ A Drink in the Passage” is written by:

- a) Allan Patan
- b) Dan Jacobson
- c) Jack Cope
- d) Peter Wilhelm

VI. Who does not belong to Negritude Movement?

- a) Léopold Sedar Senghar
- b) Lean Damas
- c) Aime Cesaire
- d) Dennis Brutus

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

- a) V.Y. Mudimbe
- b) Nadine Godimer
- c) J.M. Coetzee
- d) Chinua Achebe

VIII. Choose the odd one:

- a) Fable
- b) Drama
- c) Exemplum
- d) Parable

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

- a) Gary Spackey
- b) Ulli Beier
- c) Stephen Gray
- d) Alan Patan

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

- a) Jan Rabie
- b) Jack Cope
- c) Christopher Hope
- d) Nadine Gordimer

### **13.5.2 Short Answer Type Questions**

- a) Describe the concept of short story.
- b) Define the terms ‘plot’ and ‘character’ as used in fiction.
- c) What do you mean by the idea of ‘apartheid’?

- d) What does 'conflict' mean in short story or novel?
- e) Distinguish between Novel and Short Story as two forms of fiction.

### 13.5.3 Long answer type Questions

- a) Elaborate the nature and thematic domains of African short story.
- b) Explain in detail the concept of short story and its constituents elements.
- c) Critically describe the theme of violence in African short story.
- d) "Lack of contact and communication between white and black people in African fiction is a noticeable feature". Illustrate this statement with textual references.
- e) African short story is characterized by its diversity. Depict this diversity with examples and illustrations.

### 13.6 Suggested Readings

1. Achebe, Chinua, and C.L. Innes, eds. *African Short Stories*. London: Heinemann, 1985.
2. Aidoo, Ama Ata. *No Sweetness Here*. Longman Drumbeat, 1970.
3. Beier, Ulli, ed. *Black Orpheus: An Anthology of African and Afro-American Prose*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Longman, 1964.
4. Balogun, F. Odun. *Tradition and Modernity in the African Short Story: An Introduction to Literature in Search of Critics*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991.
5. de Grandaigne, J., ed. *African Short Stories in English: An Anthology*. London: Publishers, 1985.
6. Ekwensi, Cyprian. *Lokotown and other Stories*. London-Ibadan-Nairobi: Heinemann, 1975.
7. Gray, Stephen, ed. *The Penguin Book of Southern African Stories*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1985.
8. Kimenyi, Barbara. (1965). Kalasanda. London: Oxford University Press.
9. Kwabena, Annan. *Modern Short Stories*. London: Faber & Faber, 1964.

10. Larson, Charles R, ed. *Modern African Stories: a Collection of Contemporary African Writing: Fontana/Collins*. Fontana-Collins, 1977.
  11. Mphahlele, Ezekial. *The African Image*. London: Faber & Faber, 1962.
  12. Mphahlele, Ezekial. *Writing in Africa Today (an anthology)*. London: Penguin Books, 1968.
  13. Mulikita, M. Fwanyanga. *A Point of No Return: a collection of short stories*. Lusaka: Neczam, 1968.
  14. Mungoshi, Charles. *Coming of the Dry Season*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1972.
  15. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. *Secret Lives and other Stories*. London-Nairobi-Ibadan-Lusaka: Heinemann, 1975.
  16. Nicol, Abioseh. *The Truly Married Woman and other Stories*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.
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## Unit 16: 'The World Renowned Nose'

### Structure

- 16.0: Objectives
- 16.1: introduction
- 16.2: About the author
- 16.3: Basheer as a writer
  - Biodata
  - Style and language
- 16.4: *The World Renowned Nose*
  - 16.4.1: Summary

16.4.2: Critical Analysis  
16.5: Satire Humour and Pathos  
    16.5.1: Satire  
    16.5.2: Humour  
    16.5.3: Pathos  
16.6: Glossary  
16.7: Sample Question  
16.8: Suggested Readings

### **16.0: Objectives:**

- 1) To make you acquainted with the author and Malayalam literature.
- 2) To make you understand the genre of satire and its various aspects.
- 3) To make you able to analyze the story 'The World Renowned Nose'.
- 4) To guide you to appreciate the underlying meaning of the text.

To help you assess critically the use of different techniques such as pathos and humour to highlight the social and political follies

### **16.1: Introduction**

The World Renowned Nose is an ironical, satirical story of a 24 year old man who lives with his mother. The man works as a cook to meet their both ends. The unsophisticated man can neither read nor write and remains mostly confined to the kitchen where he works. The 24th year turns to be ominous for him as his nose starts to grow unusually, reaching his chin first, and then it grows to his navel. He returns home, stays with his mother in their hut where people continue to throng for getting a glimpse of his nose. He has nothing to survive on but no visitor ever asks him if he needs anything, despite knowing that he has been fired from his job. Fed up with this, he requests his mother not to let anybody in to see his nose. People, on the other hand, acting differently, start bribing his mother for venturing in. The mother takes these notes delightfully and lets the people in to see the nose of the Long Nosed One. This sharp practice unfolds their lot. The man becomes rich. The hut turns into a big guest house. His popularity grows. Poets sing him, biographers write his biographies, and film-makers give him roles in movies. He soon becomes a celebrity with lots of prospects.

This man now employs two beautiful female secretaries, besides managing all affairs very cleverly and tactfully both of them love him. His popularity grows to such an extent that the govt.

starts taking him seriously. The president honours him with the title “Chief of the Long-nosed one”, and also presents a gold medal to him. The political parties also try garnering support from his fame. One political party comes up with the name ‘the party of the Long-nosed one’. The other party becomes the opposite one and tries to tarnish the image and fame of the Long-nosed one.

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

### **16.2 About the Author:**

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

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

In the jail Basheer experienced tortures and atrocities at the hands of colonizers' forces. The inhuman behavior he met with in the jail brought radical changes in him. He did away with the Gandhian philosophy of Ahimsa and embraced the extremism of Sardar Bhagat Singh and Raj Guru whom he considered his role models for fighting against the imperialists (the Britishers). After the govt. shot a second arrest warrant against him, he went into hiding. The police started searching him. To evade arrest he travelled all over India for the next seven years. In his sojourns he reached as far as shores of Arabia. He resorted to several disguises viz; palmist, astrologer, magician's assistant, private Tutor only to prevent himself from being recognized. Besides these, he worked as a waiter and also took several other jobs.

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

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

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

### **16.3 Basheer as a Writer:**

#### **Biodata:**

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

Basheer went to Madrass where he wrote extensively for *Jayakevlam*. His career as a writer and journalist witnessed a strong boost. He came back to Ernakulam where he

Opened a small book store which began as a circle book house. This was later renamed as Basheer's Book Stall.

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

### **Style and Language:**

Basheer's works started making an impact in Malyalam literature in the period when Progressive Writes Movement in Malyalam literature had already begun. Writers were writing on the socialist themes like poverty, hunger, unemployment so on and so forth. Basheer being socially conscious also dealt with these subjects but with his own flavor and experience. He had experienced and savored all such things himself. His adventurous life provided him ample material for his stories. Having much experience of life and its different aspects to deal with, his stories enjoy uniqueness in Malyalam literature. He experimented with his own style by using rustic language of common parlance. His use of language enabled him to portray social fabric in its real costume. Unconventionally, he portrayed the rogues, the prostitutes, the eunuchs, the pickpockets, the wicked as well as the innocents with same colour scheme and ironic humour. His treatment of his characters showcases the suffering of marginalized population of the society.

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

## **16.4. The World Renowned Nose**

### **16.4.1. Summary:**

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

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

In the 24th year of his life his nose started to grow in length. It did not make him feel uncomfortable as he could breathe in a normal manner. However, he faced embarrassing situations as people would visit him to see his unusually grown nose. This irritated his master who fired him from the job. In this way his grown up nose costed him his job. The poor man returned his home where he stayed with his mother. No one extended a helping hand to the duo. No political party came forward to condemn his dismissal, no philanthropist turned to their way, no lover of humanity remembered them. They starved in their hut. They faced all sorts of miseries and lived a lowly life. However, people continued to visit them to have a glimpse of his nose. Photographers, news reporters and others would throng their hut, but one asked them ever if they had taken anything. They had not a penny in their pockets. The long nosed man was convinced that his nose had acquired great publicity. The long nosed man was fed up with the prevailing conditions

and told his mother to keep these people out from his room. He had felt very much irritated.

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

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

The long-nosed man employed two beautiful secretaries who also loved him and cared about him besides managing all his affairs professionally. But, taking care of two beautiful women simultaneously was as hard as putting two swords in one sheath. Later on, one among them invited a lot trouble for him. On the other hand, other people also liked him very much. The long-nosed one's nose had reached to his navel and it was seen as a sign of greatness. He became a celebrity. His comments and opinions on important national or international events were received delightfully and warmly. The newspapers also published his view even on sensitive issues. People would wait for the long-nosed one's comments with regard to different subjects. Anything about which the long-nosed one had not commented would be thought insignificant and meager. The long-nosed one reached the zenith of fame and prosperity.

Meanwhile, several people had started hatching conspiracies to capture the long-nosed one. At the first place, the govt. played a confidence-trick to garner the support of the

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

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

One morning the President, reacting very angrily, sent army who beseeched his mansion and arrested him and took him away. Afterwards there was complete lull there and

people forgot all about the long-nosed one as if confirming the saying 'out of sight is out of mind'. After the long and profound lull news, with the magnitude of an explosion hit the front pages of the newspapers, about the continuing trial of the Chief of the long-nosed one's. The news revealed that on 9th of March a team of expert doctors, representatives of 48 countries would examine the nose of the long-nosed one. The papers further revealed that news channels of the world would be allowed to film the event. People were advised maintain peace and wait for the findings.

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

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

On the other hand, the opposite parties joined their hands under one banner 'The United Front' and incessantly demanded the resignation of the ministry. That is how an ordinary cook reached the parliament, became a lawmaker despite being unworthy.

#### **16.4.2. Critical Analysis:**

The story 'The World Renowned Nose' has been written to highlight the follies prevailing in the Indian societal setup. The author, using myriad techniques to satirize the social,

political as well as the behavioral patterns of Indian community. It has been written in first person considering the tradition of historical writing, the narrator begins from the beginning i.e., from the age of 24th year of the hero, Mukoon.

In the year, the nose of the hero started growing unusually. This unusual and abnormal growth of a body part lead to his dismissal from the job. He was made to pack his bags for none of his own faults. The author mocks at the behavioral pattern of the people who never accept their fellow beings with the slightest of their abnormalities. He uses ironic and sarcastic tone to mocks at the historical personages, history and historical writings. He says that in the 24th year of one's age some crucial changes occur and this phenomenon of change has been left unnoticed so far by the historical writers who could have observed much more if properly deliberated upon it.

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

The story tells us that the nose of the man reached to his naval and he got very disturbed by visitors and their indifferent attitude. Although, he was satisfied that his nose had become much popular. The author employed the techniques of hyperbole, exaggeration, and fantasy in order to bring out humour as well as pathos from what seemed to be an ordinary stuff. The hero plunged into deep despair for a period of time and then the clouds started to scatter. His mother readily accepted bribe from the visitors. This was the turning point of their life. This provided them a chance to better their lot. They kept taking bribe from the visitors, the sharp practice allowed them to transform radically. The days of poverty and misery ended, prosperity and happiness knocked their door. On the other hand several conscious people voiced their concern for this deceitful dealing but they neither had an answer from any quarter of the society nor from govt.

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

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

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

### **16.5.1. Satire:**

It is one of the oldest literary genres. It is an instrument of attack with which the writer or the speaker equips himself/herself in order to set right the situations that they think are undesirable. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary says that satire is a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution in which you use humour to show their faults or weaknesses. This can be employed directly as in the form of taunts or jibes or indirectly using irony. While employing

this technique, the writer often describes a completely different situation and references to the things we know, so that we realize what it is that the writer is intending to criticize. It is used to highlight or ridicule the weaknesses, evils, follies, faults of a man, group community, or setup: social, political in nature. The aim of satire is to correct the unethical conduct by mocking at them, using criticism and wit with humour and sarcasm or preventing people from going astray.

#### **16.5.2. Humour:**

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

#### **16.5.3. Pathos:**

It's the most powerful and strongest tools that a writer or the speaker has to persuade his readers or listeners. A writer employs this tool to appeal the readers' emotions because it is all about emotions or heart and we are often swayed by our emotions. While reading a work of art we pity or sympathize with those characters who are the worst sufferers or who go through troubles and tribulations. This empathetic attitude or feeling sad about victim is what we call pathos. Using this technique the writer convinces his readers to go by

#### **16.6. Glossary:**

Unsophisticated: not sophisticated; lacking education or enlightenment.

Ominous: that gives indication of coming ill.

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

Tarnish: blacken; disgrace or dishonor.

Parlance: a particular way of speaking or using words.

Costume: appearance of characteristics of a particular period.

Eunuch: castrated human male; an ineffectual person.

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

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

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

Unanimous: uniform; fully in agreement.

Follies: faults; thoughtless action resulting in tragic consequences

Sarcastic: containing sarcasm; mocking (often using irony).

Philanthropist: lover of mankind; kind; very generous person.

Mundane: ordinary; commonplace.

Naïve: showing a lack of experience, wisdom or judgement emotions and not by logic as pathos is about heads not hearts

### **16.7. Sample Questions:**

A: .Multiple Choice Questions:

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

a) 24

b) 21

c) 25

d) 20

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

a) He was not a good cook.

b) He was ignorant.

c) The visitors disturbed the peace of his master.

d) His mother would receive his salary.

3). Long-nosed one spent his life.....after his return to his home.

a) Peacefully

b) Delightfully

c) Miserably

d) Proudly

4). what did the people do when they were not allowed to see the long-nosed one?

a) Donated money to help them live a better life.

b) They used force to have a glimpse of his nose.

c) They resorted to violence.

d) They bribed his mother and got the permission.

5). who the long-nosed one consulted when he was offered to join politics?

a) His mother.

b) The President.

c) His Secretary.

d) None of these.

6). One of the secretaries put an egg on the long-nosed one's face. How?

a) By calling him a fool.

b) By saying that his nose was unreal.

c) By charging him for taking bribe.

d) By labeling him an agent of the govt.

7) The title the long-nosed one received from the govt. was:

a) The chief among the long-nosed ones.

b) The most clever man in the world.

- c) The most generous to the entire populace.
- d) The peace-loving and caring man.
- 8) The long-nosed one became the cause of much destruction and violence. T

This reflects that the masses do not use their... .

- a) Strength.
  - b) Money.
  - c) Reason.
  - d) Tools.
- 9) How was long-nosed man's nose tested for ascertaining its genuineness?
- a) He was taken to a super specialty hospital for the test.
  - b) He was sent outside the country to get examined by expert doctors.
  - c) Doctors from 48 countries were summoned and they tested his nose in presence of the president and the ministers.
  - d) The tip of his nose was cut.
- 10) In the story the author uses several devices to satirize the social setup. To achieve his goals he mostly makes use of:
- a) Irony-sarcasm-exaggeration-humour-pathos
  - b) Metaphor- imagery-simile-sarcasm
  - c) Alliteration-pun-hyperbole-simile
  - d) Imagery-personification-mimicry- metaphor

#### B.Short Answer Type Questions:

- 1) Why was the man (Mukoon) thrown out of his job?
- 2) How far his mother was responsible for his becoming a popular man?

- 3) How was his nose tested?
- 4) What did the extra-long nose bring to the man?
- 5) How did the controversies arise in the story?

C. Long Answer Type:

- 1) The man's decision to keep the visitors away from him proved helpful to him. How do you know?
- 2) What does the story tell us about the psychology of the masses?
- 3) There was great confusion in the minds of people about the nose of the man. How was the confusion created in their minds?

**16.8. Suggested readings:**

Vaikhom Mohammad Basheer's: '*The World Renowned Nose*' by Neena Gupta.

Basheer, Vaikhom Mohammad, *Me Grandad 'ad an elephant!': Three Stories of Mulim life in South India*, trans. R. E. Asher etc,al., Edinburgh University of Edinburgh Press 1980 and 'New Delhi'; Penguin India, 1992 Ravindran Vanajam ed., *Vaikhom Mohammad Basheer: Short Stories*, New Delhi:

## Unit- 18: Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar

### Structure

- 18.0 Objectives
- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Vijay Tendulkar and Life
- 18.3 Vijay Tendulkar and his works
  - 18.3.1 List of Important works
  - 18.3.2 Awards and Honours
- 18.4 Lets Sum Up
- 18.5 Learning Outcomes
- 18.6 Glossary
- 18.7 Reading List
- 18.8 Sample Questions

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### 18.0 Objectives

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This unit has the following objectives for the readers:

- To familiarise students with the life of Vijay Tendulkar.
- To highlight the important works of Vijay Tendulkar.
- To appreciate his literary contribution to Indian Writing in English.
- To recognize Vijay Tendulkar as one of the great dramatists.
- To identify the various themes that Vijay Tendulkar has employed in his works.

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### 18.1 Introduction

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Vijay Tendulkar was born in a Brahmin family on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan.1928. He was brought up in Kandevali. It was lower-middle-class family belt, there were male shopkeepers and clerks mostly. He lived in a typical house with one room and one kitchen and a common toilet. Hence

his upbringing in the lower middle class provided him the opportunity to observe the middle-class section of society minutely. Perhaps that is why he portrayed different shades on the stage. His father Mr. Dandopant Tendulkar was a clerk in a British Publishing firm called Longmans Green Company. His mother Mrs. Sushella Tendulkar was a housewife. His father was a director of amateur Marathi plays. He did not choose a career in the theatre as earlier it was not considered worthy of any honour. Tendulkar was four when he would go with his father to see the rehearsal of plays and that is how he developed the love for the theatre. Tendulkar would consider these rehearsals as 'magic shows' because he saw the human being change into characters. He was surprised that a male actor performed a female role by changing voice and movements. Tendulkar had no theatre exposure except what his father staged. Tendulkar had another brother named Raghunath and a sister named Leela. His two elder sisters died in infancy. He had two younger brothers but Tendulkar was the favourite of his parents. He was a sickly child and often suffered from cough and asthmatic wheezing therefore, his parents would take care of him for the fear of losing him in case not protected. It was for this reason that he was called by a pet name 'Papia' and was also known as 'mother's child'.

Apart from the influence of his father, Raghunath, his brother had a formative influence on his life. His brother believed in Gandhian Philosophy and would attend political congress meetings. His father wanted him to study but he was not interested. Raghunath wanted to marry Hansa Wadekar, this was unacceptable to the idealist father, hence, they parted ways from Raghunath. The family moved to Kholapur. Tendulkar would generally get gifts from his brothers like pastries, pens, or sweets. He would often accompany his brother to watch English movies in a theater. His brother died miserably because of the alcoholic habit. The later childhood of Tendulkar was spent in Kholapur in Maharashtra where he earned a name for himself. He distinguished himself by reciting English poems. He was just 11 years old when he wrote, directed, and acted in a play called *Maya Bazaar*. In this way started the journey of this veteran writer. Tendulkar has acted as a male child artist in two Marathi films.

As a teenager, the family moved now to Pune, here again he attended a new school. He felt he might have completed his matriculation. However, Quit Indian Movement had gained momentum those days only, and as communicated earlier he followed the Gandhian principle by obeying to boycott the schools. He would generally attend the meetings and campaigns against Britishers without informing his parents. When he was arrested at the age of 14 only then his family became aware of his activism in the freedom fight. He would quite often bunk his classes

and would spend his monthly school fees on watching English movies. However, those visuals had a great impact on him. It was this exposure that helped him to be one of the great dramatists of Indian theatre. In an Interview Vijay Tendulkar said:

As a schoolboy I had watched theHollywood films playing in my hometown, not once, but each one overand over again. I still remember the visuals, not the dialogues which I didn't understand. A more conscious education in what the visual coulddo came when I worked with the Rangayan Theatre group in Bombay,but watching Marcel Marceau from the last seat in the last row was anenthraling experience. Not a single word was uttered, but so much wasexpressed. After that, I wrote mimes for quite a while. I felt the visual hadunlimited possibilities, the word was useless. But I am a playwright,words are my tools, I had to use them.

At Pune, Dinakar Balkrishan Mokashi a radio mechanic influenced him greatly. He became a role model for Tendulkar. His simple lifestyle left a great impression on the mind of Tendulkar. He was also influenced by Vinayak Bokil a teacher and a writer. Tendulkar was impressed with his exuberant style. He remembers one of the incidents about Vinayak Bokil when he told his students to look at the names of students' rank holders and look where are they? Does anybody know them? He advised students to pass exams as their parent pay their fees. However, he also mentioned that securing good marks in the exam is not everything. They should instead focus on creativity and develop their personality in other directions also. This boosted Tendulkar to look for other prospects of life. Later Tendulkar dedicated one of his books to Vinayak Bokil.

### ***Check your Progress***

1. When and where was Vijay Tendulkar born?

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2. Name the two people who influenced Vijay Tendulkar in his life.

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At the age of 16, Tendulkar left school for good. He did not have any friends and no one to communicate with. He wanted to talk but with whom? All he could do was to talk to himself. He

would often put his dialogues on paper in various forms, poems, short stories, scripts, and this infused a conscious motivation of writing. At the age of 22, he wrote his full-length original play *Gruhastha*, however, did not do well and Tendulkar thereafter decided not to contribute or write any play. However, surprisingly he has written 28 full original plays and has been associated with the theatre world for the last 45 years.

Tendulkar surprisingly started his writing career at a young age. He wrote his first work while he was studying in a school. Since his father was a director, therefore, creativity was inborn in him. A lot of unpublished stuff of his father was thoroughly read by Vijay Tendulkar. Not only this he studied some great writers because of the literary environment and atmosphere at home. The seed for literature was already sown and it was just shaping now in the form of a huge tree. He had never imagined himself to be a writer. As a child, he wanted to be an engine driver or an acrobat in a circus so that he could astonish people with his daredevil acts. Later he worked as an apprentice in a bookshop. He also studied journalism and was an assistant editor of some daily newspapers of Maratha like *Navbharat*, *Martha*, and *Loksatta*. Tendulkar has contributed to Indian writing through his plays, short stories, features and, some television serials in Hindi. He has received many prestigious awards among the notable are, Padma Bhushan, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, Kalidas Samman Award, etc.

Vijay Tendulkar has always fought for cultural freedom. Freedom which is presently at stake and stifled by many forces. Tendulkar has changed the form and pattern of Indian drama by unfollowing the traditional three-act play structure of drama and creating new models. He is recognized distinctively for his criticism against the trend of hypocrisy, promiscuity, dishonesty, and many other vices that are prevalent in our society. He is one of the leading playwrights of Indian Drama writing in English. He is often noted as a screen and television writer, journalist, literary essayist, and social commentator for his bold and daring expressionism.

Vijay Tendulkar has written nearly thirty full-length plays and twenty-three one-act plays, and several of his plays have left a long last impression on the minds of the readers and viewers. Mr. Tendulkar's contribution in Marathi includes eleven plays for children, four short story collections, one novel, and five literary essay collections which have transformed the modern landscape of Maharashtra in particular and India in general to a remarkable extent. He is an important translator in Marathi. Tendulkar has nine novels, five plays, and two biographies into the Marathi language. He translated Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* (Hindi), Girish Karnard's *Tughlaqand*, Tennessee Williams *A Street Car Named Desire*. He has written the

script for eight Marathi films. Some of the popular ones are, *Samana*, (Confrontation 1975), *Simhasan*(Throne 1979), and *Umbartha*(The Threshold 1981). *Umbartha* was a groundbreaking feature film on women's activism in India.

It was during the 1970s to 80's period that Tendulkar also contributed and wrote the script for eleven Hindi movies in Bollywood. Films like *Akrosh*, *Manthan*, *Nishant* and, *Ardhya Satya*, etc had taken the script from the expertise of Tendulkar. His contribution to Marathi theatre and service in Indian Cinema has earned him recognition and brought him the Maharashtra State Government Award and Filmfare award for the best screenplay for *Akrosh* in 1980 and *Ardhya Satya* in 1983. His lifetime achievements in different domains of life were recognized and he was conferred with *Padma Bhushan* by Govt. of India in the year 1984.

With the establishment of *Sahitya Akademi* in the year 1954, Dr. S. Radhkrishnan had made it clear that the prime objective of the *Akademi* should be the promotion of the unity of Indian literature irrespective of its political, social, geographical, or linguistic diversities. He gave a slogan that Indian Literature is one although written in many languages. It is in this context that plays of Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, or Girish Karnad in Kannada hold a unique place in Indian Literature. Arundhati Banerjee says:

In the 1960s four dramatists from different regions of India writing in their regional languages were said to have ushered modernity into the sphere of Indian drama and theatre. They were Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Badal Sircar in Bengali and Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Girish Karnad in Kannada. Rakesh's untimely death left his life's work incomplete, and Karnad has written only intermittently. Sircar, of course, has been almost as active as Tendulkar though his plays can be divided into three distinct periods. Tendulkar, however, has not only been the most productive but has also introduced the greatest variations in his dramatic creations.

V.B Deshpande opines:

Since the Independence – since 1950, to be precise – the name of Vijay Tendulkar has been at the forefront of the Marathi drama and stage. His personality both as a man and writer is multifaceted. It has often been puzzling and curious with a big questionmark on it. In the last 55 years, he has written stories, novels, one-act plays, plays for children as well adults. Similarly, he has done scriptwriting and newspaper columns as well. And in all these fields he has created an image of his own. Thus he is a creative writer with a fine

sensibility and at the same time a contemplative and controversial dramatist. He has made a mark in the field of journalism also. Because of his highly individual viewpoint and vision of life and because of his style of writing he has made a powerful impression in the field of literature and drama and has given the post-independence, Marathi drama a new idiom. By doing this he has put Marathi drama on the national and international map.

Vijay Tendulkar is a versatile writer and can easily fit himself into any role. During his struggling years, he did ghostwriting knowing that his name would not appear and become known to readers. He considered it as a role for his character. He underwent a change to suit the personality of the character. Along with his job in a newspaper, he took to ghostwriting for additional income.

### ***Check your Progress***

1. Which prestigious award was given to Vijay Tendulkar?

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2. Which play of Vijay Tendulkar deals with women's activism?

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The disturbance, violence, and oppression that he witnessed in society made him impatient. He was mentally agitated as well. Though Journalism did not offer any viable solutions for him. It did shape his dramatic career. He being a sensible, reasonable and, a sensitive citizen could not quieten his conscience with journalistic fervor. Therefore, he left journalism after he received a Nehru fellowship. It was during this period he travelled to most parts of India and witnessed various kinds of violence directly. In this connection Gowri Ramnaryan points out: "With his exposure to Marathi theatre from childhood, and journalistic background Vijay Tendulkar turned contemporary socio-political situations into explosive drama".

Tendulkar does not necessarily subscribe to any ideology but he is politically conscious. He believes these ideologies including Marxism does not understand any complexity of the human situation and do not offer any solution for these problems. He was himself a director and actor but did not find acting and direction as exciting as he found writing. He believes, he acts as he writes and emotes the lives of the characters. His writing is not just words but the

spontaneous expression and personality of the character. In his early life, he developed a curiosity and would often note speech to people, their habits, and their mannerism. This is clearly expressed through many characters of his plays. It must be admitted that most of his characters are an example of certain living persons.

Tendulkar learned a lot from films since films necessarily must have a structure. He was also fond of classical music concerts although he was not aware of its strict grammar and regulations. Since he was a rigorous reader of poetry therefore it also helped him to understand the knowledge about the compact form and structure. His frequent visit to art galleries offered him a thorough knowledge about the form, structure, rhythm of good paintings. Interestingly, Peter Brook's book *Master Craftsman in the Art of Theatre* taught him the foremost principles that all visual art including the art of theatre have one thing similar and common that is –space and it is entirely with the dramatist how skillfully and creatively fills this space.

It is interesting to know that the most important work that set Tendulkar different from his previous generation Marathi playwrights was *Manus Navache Bel (An Island Called Man 1955)*. His dramatic genius was a cutout for the newly emerging Marathi theatre. His frequent interaction and meetings with some great theatre personalities like Vijay Mehta, Sulaba Deshpande etc. encouraged and fused fuel in his creative faculties. Hence the play *Manus Navache Bel* was followed by many other plays. *Madhlya Bhinti (The Walls Between)*, *Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menacha (Nest of wax) (1958)*, *Mee Jinklo Mee Harlo (I Won, I Lost) (1963)*, *Kavlanchi Shala (School for Crows) (1963)*, and *Sari Ga Sari (Rain o Rain) (1964)*

### **18.3 Tendulkar and His Works:**

Tendulkar's most plays are of naturalistic setting. It may be noted that his play *Ghashiram Kotwal (1972)* has a Folk Tradition form, while the other two plays *Niyatiya Bailala (To Hell with Destiny)* and *Safar (The Tour)* employ fantasy. He became the centre of controversy because of his play *Silence! The Court is in the Session*. Interestingly he was considered an angry man of Marathi theatre. He rebelled against the established norms of society. *Encounter in Umbugland (1974)* is a political allegory. *The Vultures* surprised the fundamentalist section of Marathi people with its bold themes like sex, violence, etc. *Sakharam Binder* is probably one of the most naturalistic plays that gave a serious shock to the conservative section of Marathi people. It is considered more appealing and surprising than *The Vultures*. In *Gashiram Kotwal*, he explains the power dynamics and power structure that is

predominating Indian politics. Kamala is a depiction of a real-life incident that was reported by Ashwin Sarin in *The Indian Express* newspaper. *Kanayadan* equally is considered a controversial play and often branded as anti-Dalit play. This play in a subtle manner explains and shows how our romantic idealism fails. He wrote in Marathi first, influenced it, and then guided it. He was able to create an impression on other regional languages and that is why most of the plays were translated into other languages as well. He perceived the realities of society without any prejudice bent of mind or notion. He reacted to these realities like a truly sensitive and reasonable person and would project them in a realistic manner through his plays. He never wrote for the sake of winning awards or prizes, and he never compromised with his subject matter. In this connection, Vijay Tendulkar can be quoted as:

“I have written about my own experience and about what I have seen in others around me. I have been true to all this and have not cheated my generation. I did not attempt to simplify matters and issues for the audience when presenting my plays, though that would have been an easier occupation. Sometimes my plays jolted society out of its stupor and I was punished. I faced this without regrets. It is an old habit with me to do what I am told not to do. My plays could not have been anything else. They contain my perceptions of society and its value and I cannot write what I do not perceive”.

Vijay Tendulkar's plays often deal with the theme of gender inequality, social imbalance, power structure or power politics, self-alienation, sex, and violence. His characters are real-life projections, they are neither too bad to hate nor too good to believe. He challenged the tyranny of Marathi conventional theatre and liberated it by adding some political and social satire purely for entertainment purposes. Vijay Tendulkar portrays a picture of contemporary times and the dilemma of man by focusing specifically on morbidity in his plays. His plays have touched almost all aspects of life in the modern world and also display the disillusionment of modern intellectuals by primarily focusing on ‘gender, power, and violence.

### **18.3.1 List of Important Works:**

#### **One Act**

*Thief Police*

*Ratra Ani Itar Ekankika* (1957)

*Chitragupta, Aho Chitragupta* (1958)

*Ajgar Ani Gandharv* (1966)

*Bhekad Ani Itar Ekankika (1969)*

*Ekekacha*

*Andher Nagari*

**Collection of Stories**

*Kaachpatre (1957)*

*Dwandwa (1961)*

*Gane (1966)*

*Phulpakharu (1970)*

**Novels:**

*Kadambari*

*Katha Eka Vyathechi : Henry James*

*Nave Ghar : Nave Ayushya : Grace Jordan*

*Prempatre : Henry James*

*Aage Barho : G L Letham (1958)*

*Gele Te Divas (1958)*

**Essays:**

*Kovil Unhe (1971)*

*Rat Rani (1971)*

*Phuge Savanache (1974)*

*Ram Prakar (1994)*

**Plays:**

*Gruhastha (Householder) (1947)*

*Shrimant (The Rich) (1956)*

*Mānoos Nāwāche Bet (An Island Named 'Man') (1958)*

*Thief! Police!*

*Bāle Miltāt (1960)*

*Gidhāde (The Vultures) (1961)*

*Pātlāchyā Poriche Lagin (Marriage of a Village Mayor's Daughter) (1965)*

*Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe (Hindi: Khāmosh! Adālat Jāri Hai) (Silence! The Court is in Session) (1967)*

*Ajgar Ani Gandharwa (A Boa Constrictor and "Gandharwa")*

*Sakharam Binder (Sakhārām, the Book-Binder) (1972)*

*Kamalā ("Kamala") (1981)*  
*Mādi [in Hindi]*  
*Kanyādān (Giving Away of a Daughter in Marriage) (1983)*  
*Anji*  
*Dāmbadwichā Mukābalā (Encounter in Umbugland)*  
*Ashi Pākhare Yeti (Hindi: Panchi Aise Aate Hain) (Thus Arrive the Birds)*  
*Kutte*  
*Safar/Cyclewallah (The Cyclist) (1991)*  
*The Masseur (2001)*  
*Pāhije Jātiche (It Has to Be in One's Blood)*  
*Jāt Hi Poochho Sādhu Ki (Ask a Fakir's Lineage)*  
*Mājhi Bahin (My Sister)*  
*Jhālā Ananta Hanumanta ("Infinite" Turned "Hanumanta")*  
*Footpāyrichā Samrāt (Sidewalk Emperor)*  
*Mitrāchi Goshta (A Friend's Story) (2001)*  
*Anand Owari [A play based on a novel by D. B. Mokashi]*  
*Bhāu MurārRāo*  
*Bhalyākākā*  
*Mee Jinkalo Mee Haralo (I won, I Lost)*  
*His Fifth Woman [in English] (2004)*  
*Bebi*  
*Mita ki kahani "(Mita's Story)*

### **18.3.2 Awards and Honours**

All through his life Vijay Tendulkar was associated with Theatre and devoted his life to the same. He received the following awards in his life.

1. The Maharashtra State Government Award (1956, 1969, and 1973)
2. The Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1971)
3. The Filmfare Award (scriptwriter) (1980, 1983)
4. The Padmabhushan (1984)
5. The Saraswati Samman (1993)
6. The Kalidas Samman (1999)
7. The Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar (1999)

8. The Jansthan Award (1999)

9. Katha Chudamani Award (2001)

This legendary theatre actor, director, and playwright passed away on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008. He died in a private hospital where he was admitted in April 2008. He was suffering from the neuromuscular disease called Myasthenia Gravis. According to his wish, his last rites were performed at the Vaikanthelectric crematorium and prominent theatre and film personalities including Mohan Agashe, Satish Alekar, Haider Ali, Amruta Subhash, Amol Palekar, and Atul Pethe, university of Pune vice-chancellor Narendra Jadhav paid the last tribute to Tendulkar at the crematorium.

### **18.4 Let's Sum Up**

There is no doubt that Vijay Tendulkar is one of the great playwrights of all time. His contribution to Indian theatre in general and Marathi theatre, in particular, is significant. The diversity of themes that were employed by Vijay Tendulkar in his work earned him the reputation of a great social thinker and the reconstruction of society in all aspects whether through women empowerment or any such other issue remained a constant concern for Tendulkar. He will be remembered through his invaluable works for the years to ages to come by.

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## **18.5 Learning Outcomes**

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After the completion of this unit, students are able

- To know the life history of Vijay Tendulkar
- To recognize the contribution of Tendulkar to Indian theatre through his plays
- To identify the variety of themes that Tendulkar employed in his works
- To understand the variety of genres that he has contributed.
- To appreciate Tendulkar for all the awards and honours that were conferred on him.

### **18.6 Key Words**

**Familiarise:** To give the knowledge of something

**Recognise:** Identify something

**Enthralling:** Fascinating or attractive

**Hypocrisy:**The practice of claiming to have moral beliefs or standards

**Promiscuity:**The state of being a promiscuous

**Dishonesty:** Not reliable or honest

**Acrobat:** A person who performs gymnastic feats

**Associated:**To be in connection with something or some organisation

## 18.7 Reading List

1. *Vijay Tendulkar*. New Delhi, Katha, 2001. ISBN 81-87649-17-8.
2. Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal: a Reader's Companion*. M. Sarat Babu, Asia Book Club, 2003. ISBN 81-7851-008-1
3. Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal : Critical Perspectives*, Vinod Bala Sharma and M. Sarat Babu. 2005, Prestige Books, New Delhi. ISBN 81-7851-002-2.
4. *Vijay Tendulkar's Plays: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. V M Madge, 2007, Pencraft International. ISBN 81-85753-79-2.
5. An Interview with Vijay Tendulkar, *The Indian Express*, 20 October 1999

## 18.8 Sample Questions

### 18.8.1 Multiple Choice Questions:

1. When was Vijay Tendulkar born?  
(a) 1929 (b) 1928 (c) 1930 (d) 1939
2. Where was Tendulkar born?  
(a) Calcutta (b) Bombay (c) Hyderabad (d) None
3. The play *Gruhastha* was published in the year  
(a) 1947 (b) 1984 (c) 1952 (d) 1949
4. *Silence! The Court is Session* was originally written in which language?  
(a) Bengali (b) Marathi (c) Gujrati (d) None
5. Who directed the play *Maya Bazar* at the age of 11?  
(a) Kamla Das (b) Girish Karnad (c) Vijay Tendulkar (d) None
6. When did Vijay Tendulkar receive Padma Bhushan award?  
(a) 1984 (b) 1982 (c) 1985 (d) 1990
7. Vijay Tendulkar received the Kalidas Sammaan award in the year  
(a) 1999 (b) 1909 (c) 1990 (d) None

8. *Silence! The Court is Session* was published in the year  
(a) 1976 (b) 1967 (c) 1969 (d) 1979
9. Which of the film script was written by Vijay Tendulkar?  
(a) *Aakrosh* (b) *Ghumund* (c) *Sholay* (d) None
10. "Raat Rani" by Vijay Tendulkar is a  
(a) Novel (b) Essay (c) Play (d) None

### **18.8.2 Short Answer Questions**

1. Write a brief note on the life of Vijay Tendulkar.
2. Mention any five plays written by Vijay Tendulkar.
3. Discuss Tendulkar's contribution to women's activism.
4. Name any three films whose script was written by Vijay Tendulkar.
5. Discuss the various influences that helped Vijay Tendulkar to become a dramatist.

### **18.8.3 Long Answer Questions**

1. Discuss Vijay Tendulkar as a dramatist.
2. Vijay Tendulkar's plays were a mirror of society. Discuss
3. Mention any five achievements or awards of Vijay Tendulkar.

## **Unit – 21: A Brief History of Indian English Novel**

### **Structure**

**21.0** Introduction

**21.1** Objectives

**21.2** Concept of Novel and Its Origin

**21.2.1** Birth and Background of Indian English Novel

**21.2.2** Grand Trio of Indian English Novel

**21.2.3** Indo-Anglian Novel in Post-independence Era

**21.2.4** Existing Scenario of Indian English Novel

**21.2.5** Lingual Innovation in Indian English Novel

**21.3** Learning Outcomes

**21.4** Glossary

**21.5** Sample Questions

**21.6** Suggested Readings

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## 21.0 Introduction

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Among all the popular genres of Indian English Literature like poetry, drama and short story, novel has flourished with leaps and bounds within no time and has produced a galaxy of well talented and naturally genius writers of global acclaim. Though the novel is not indigenous form of writing in Indian, yet it has found a fertile soil and provided suitably a vast platform for the expression and representation of miscellaneous issues and aspects of Indian socio-cultural setup. The fiction of Indian English writers have manifested the native sensibility by reflecting the rich cultural heritage with diverse colours. Through novel, the novelists have significantly contributed in spreading the awareness among the common masses regarding various domestic, social, political and economic matters. As a natural form of expression, the novel inspires the literary figures to look into these various dimensions of reality with critical insight and thereby conceive measures to resolve them. Pertaining to this scope of novel, H.M. Williamson asserts: “It is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English speaking world”. The novel truly serves multiple purposes simultaneously. It not only educates people about the internal and external ingredients of man full of potential and meaning for life, but also equips them to channelize means for better living. The English novel in India had taken birth at the critical juncture when the nation was undergoing rigorous freedom struggle from colonialism. Therefore, it has a vital role to play in galvanizing the spirit of nationalism and patriotic fervour in the hearts of common people to stand against the illegal occupation and exploitation of the foreign yoke. After independence, it has also provided an appropriate podium for the writers to resist the false claims and misconceptions created by of English world about India and thereby to rectify them with an adequate discourse. It is also in this genre that Indian English writers excel to native English novelists in terms of execution and technique of writing. They have won laurels by grabbing international awards and prizes including Nobel Prize, Man Booker Prize and American Pulitzer Prize. Today it is seen that this Indian English literature is read, taught and researched across the globe. It is made part of the curriculum of well reputed institutions and universities in Europe and America. Thus, it can be said with assurance that the Indian English Literature has succeeded in satisfying the intellectual sense of a global reader due

to its universal appeal and multiple meanings. The corpus of Indian novel has both quantity and quality.

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### **21.1 Objectives**

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- I. To develop an overall literary consciousness among the students.
- II. To familiarize readers with the concept of novel and its inherent components.
- III. To introduce the students with temporal development of Indian English novel and its various stages.
- IV. To highlight the main themes of Indian novel and its shifting scenario.
- V. To show the readers the innovative styles of great novelists to create an exact compatibility with the substance they portray.
- VI. To make known the great landmarks in Indian English novel and their acceptance and acclamation at world level.

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### **21.2 Concept of Novel and Its Origin**

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The term novel has its roots in the Italian word '*Novella*' which literary means 'a little new thing'. In literature, the concept is used to denote a variety of literary writings that share the common characteristics of being extended works of fiction produced in prose. As a fictional work, novel is differentiated from short story and from the work of fiction of moderate length called the 'Novelette'. Moreover, as genres of literature, the novel and the drama have many commonalities and uniformities. These similar features of the two can be seen in the form of plot, characters, background or setting, conflict and diction. The big distinction between these two major forms of literature is that the novel is narrative in presentation and the drama is performative. One is called a 'telling' art and the other is known as 'showing' art. The magnitude of both the genres allows a writer to have a huge variety of personages, to develop a complexity of plots, to include a vast milieu and to display a sustained social and psychological

exploration of characters. Novels are of many categories based on their backgrounds and substances they project. These type may be named as: epistolary novel, picaresque novel, gothic novel, realistic novel, historical novel and social novel. There are also some recently emerged narratives like regional novel, non-fiction novel, anti-novel, new novel, documentary novel, involuted novel and so on. The constituent elements of the novel may be identified in the shapes of these following terms:

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

### **21.2.1 Birth and Background of Indian English Novel**

Indian English novel has significantly grown in stature since its first production and publication in the form of *Rajmohan's Wife* written by Bankimchandra Chatterjee in 1864. The genre has flourished tremendously in magnitude, diversity and maturity. From a short small plant, it has become a towering tree disseminating its boughs in different directions. The study of its progress shows its initial stage of imitation to the ripe experimental stage of realism and psychological revelation. The early period evinces that the Indian English novel has been influenced by the

discourse of Henry Derozio, the spiritual writings of Robindranath Tagore and pacific and non-violent philosophy preached and practised by Mahatma Gandhi. With the advent of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the tone of novel has been set artistically and judiciously towards its endless journey still going on.

Like poetry, the novels written at the outset during colonial era are patriotic and nationalistic in nature. But after independence as India begins its onward journey towards prosperity and wellbeing, Indian English novel also manifests positive change by incorporating bigger issues facing humanity at the universal level. With the passing of time, it has embraced diversity and universality in terms of both style and substance. Today Indian diaspora in different parts of the world is all powerful in the writing and publishing industry. They speak global language free from the shackles of a particular socio-cultural ethos. This type of novel presents the native Indian individual in relation to international environment and their ability of adjustment and negotiation in foreign setting. The Indian immigrants demystified the romantic and mythical fantasies that used to be the part of domestic affairs of rural India. The trailblazing novelist Salman Rushdie amuses the readers with his concept of '*chutnification*' of history and language. He has opened a new chapter for a number of writers to perceive the life with a fresh critical insight. Amitav Ghosh deliberates on the postcolonial phenomenon. Vikram Seth amalgamates prose and poetry with a tinge of English Victorian sophistication. Moreover, Pico Iyer effortlessly and tirelessly walks the map in his literature, while as Rohinton Mistry unravels the reality of Parsi existence before readers.

There are also many prominent female writers who resist the women suppression and shows urgency for their emancipation and empowerment in the rapidly changing life. Among them Kamala Markandaya and Shashi Deshpande depict women's predicament in India and portrays personages with their own complacency for their poor status and deteriorated conditions. Arundhati Roy adds a colourful spectacle to Indian English novel by creating multi-layered meanings in fictional works. Bharti Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri project the bitter-sweet world of Indian diaspora residing in Europe and America. These aforementioned and other female novelists have achieved a critical appreciation and acclamation in the English knowing world due to their spectacular literary craft.

Indian English literature has received its real recognition and genuine attention from the European world with the Nobel Prize of Tagore. Its stature has further been amplified when

Indian origin novelist V.S. Naipaul bagged the prize in 2001. Naipaul is also among many well established writers who have been conferred upon the envious Booker Prize, an equivalent to American Pulitzer Prize.

### **21.2.2 Grand Trio of Indian English Novel**

During the immediate pre-independence, Indian English novel was considerably influenced by social and political circumstances. It is at this juncture that the real beginning of the genre starts. The talented triad viz Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Roa have made entry on the literary scene and projected the socio-political situations with the photographic reality without distorting it. Their works are truly didactic and reformative in nature. They display utmost concern for deteriorated conditions of Indian masses. William Walsh calls this big trio as 'the founding fathers', 'the genuine novelists', and 'inaugurators of the form'. These novelists appeared almost simultaneously in 1930's. With the publication of *Untouchable* (1935), *Swami and Friends* (1935), and *Kanthapura* (1938). Thus they have established the foundation of Indian English novel on solid rocks by creating these masterpieces.

Mulk Raj Anand is a humanist-novelist par excellence. He is the writer with well defined purpose. He has kept pace with the shifting scenario having profound eye on his surrounding. His analysis of Indian socio-cultural ethos is valid and meaningful. He hardly leaves any issue and challenge unaddressed. While dealing with these affairs of life, his understanding and experience are up to mark. There is exact correspondence between social reality and psychological response in his works. He is of the opinion that the novel is "the creative weapon for attaining humanness- it is the weapon of humanism". He is the champion of the lower class and marginalized ones in the society. He is Indian Dickens. He also shows a tremendous influence of Russian Leo Tolstoy in form as well in characterization. Like all world's great realists, his novels are the projection of social contest and protest. His philosophy of writing is merged ideologies of western Marxism and Indian Gandhism. Therefore, he has a universal appeal. His main domains of fiction may be identified as: class system, imperialism, demonstration against social and industrial evils, the plight of woman and like issues. According to G.S. Balarama Gupta: "The moot point to be noted about Anand is that he has firmly believed in the role of a writer as essentially a crusader in the cause of humanity; no hotchpotch

of Vedantas; no hazy mysticism, but inalienable faith in man” (1977). All his initial novels like *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) justify such statements in spirit as the novelists has represented in these works lower class and poor people. These people can be identified in the form of characters as scavengers, the coolies, the leather workers and dalits. His masterpiece *Untouchable* is a supreme work of art so far as its substance and technique are concerned. It reflects a day from morning to evening in the life of Bakha, a sweeper boy who is described by E.M. Forster as: “a real individual, a lovable thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian” (198).

R.K. Narayan is the representative of middle class sensibility and their aspirations. He is a genuine artist and a magical story teller. From *Swami and Friends* (1935) to *The Painter of Signs* (1976), his art of narration is a continuous reminder of globally acknowledged Anton Chekov, Tolstoy, and Walt Disney. His works *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938) and *The English Teacher* (1945) are all brilliant descriptions of South Indian life. William Walsh looks upon Narayan as “ a distinctive blend of western technique and Eastern material”. The imaginary world of R.K. Narayan is *Malgudi*, a South Indian town. It is just like Thomas Hardy’s Wessex and William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpa. Regarding the genius of Narayan, K.R. Srinivas Iyengar asserts:

He is one of the few writers in India who take their craft seriously, constantly striving to improve the instrument, pursuing with a sense of dedication what may often seem to be the mirage of technical perfection. There is a norm of excellence below which Narayan cannot possibly lower himself. (359)

R.K. Narayan is extremely lucid and straightforward in the manner of language and narration. His tongue has been admired as a plain English. Like Raja Roa, he is the part of a process aiming at ‘Indianisation’ of English.

Raja Roa is an indispensable part of this grand trio. Though he is not as prolific writer as Anand and Narayan. He shows a keen interest in philosophy and mythology which distinguishes him from the other two in the fold. He has produced a landmark in Indian fiction in the form of his debut novel *Kanthapura*. The book delineates the village life and the Indian rural sensibility. It is the incarnation of Gandhian ideology and thought. Pertaining to the subject of the novel, R.K. Srivastava says:

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is a garrulous account of primitivistic, religious, political and social activities of rural people. The novel is not a two-dimensional picture of villagers but a colourful audio-visual presentation ...characterizing the entire country Kanthapura is India in miniature.”

Regarding the difficulty of writing in English Language, Raja Roa explicitly explains it in the 'Forward' to *Kanthapura*: “We cannot write like English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us.” He further adds in this connection that English is: “the language of our intellectual make up... but not of our emotional make up”.

Thus bearing these illustrations and analysis in mind, it becomes evident that this talented grant trio has a considerable hand in making Indian English novel a powerful instrument to express the native sensibility and social reality in a detailed way. They have shown other writers how this novel can be used as a literary form to depict different types of subjects by exploiting diverse styles. They have widened the scope and range of novel in India. They have created matching correspondence between foreign language and native content, and social reality and individual psyche. They provide a holistic view of life full of diversity in a unified manner.

### **21.2.3 Indo-Anglian Novel in Post-independence Era**

In the immediate post freedom literary scene, G.V. Desani's novel *All About H. Hatterr* (1948) has revolutionized Indian English fiction with its innovative technique and style. It is a remarkable piece of literary art. The novelist's real genius lies in his mastery of using English language in an experimental way. The narrative technique and English away from actual Englishness are unique accomplishments in the history of Indo-Anglian novel. After 1950's, the novelists displayed their interest to move from external social facts to internal psychological mystery to unravel the complexity of human nature. The immaterial 'inner man' has been preferred to a larger material world. There is a quest for the essence of human existence. The writers like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sehgal have reshaped Indian English Novel and thereby set tone for future developments and experiments. Anita Desai delves deep into the inner consciousness and demonstrates its impact on the outer behaviour of the characters. She explores the psychological aspects and touches a new landscape of sensibility in her novels.

Arun Josh's experimentations with new narrative techniques is his hallmark. Nayantara Sehgal through her work *Rich Like Us* (1985) has displayed a great mastery of story telling. The other writers in this genre includes Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgoankar and others have also been acclaimed and appreciated not only in India but at global level. Kamala Markandaya depicts the rustic and urban life with a photographic realism. She projects a South Indian village whose life has visibly shown no change at all for centuries. Moreover, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala is noted for her engaging comedy manifested through characters of North Indian urban middle class. Proceeding ahead in time in the evolution of Indian novel, it is Amitav Ghosh whose artistic genius has left a deep imprint on the canvas of Indian literature. His duo- *The Circle of Life* (1986) and *The Shadow Lines* (1988) established Ghosh as one of the finest writers born out of the post *Midnight's Children* literary scenario. At this point of time, Vikram Sethe has also gained a critical attention and a wider circularity with the publication of two inspiring novels- *The Golden Gate* (1986) and *A Suitable Boy* (1993). *A Suitable Boy* has amused the literary world by its extended length and in this matter may be compared with Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. *English August* (1988) is a novel by Upamanyu Chatterjee which has also contributed to this tradition of writing in India. It satirizes the foibles of Indian bureaucracy. The work is also interesting in terms of its indianised English. The contemporary Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is also a big achievement in Indian English fiction. Rohinton Mistry may be included here in this race of writing due to his well crafted fiction. His *Such a Long Journey* (1991) is the maiden work in this field of literature showing the plight of existing life.

#### **21.2.4 Existing Scenario of Indian English Novel**

It may not be hyperbolic to say that Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* is a magnum opus not only in writer's profile, but in overall Indian English novel. It has modified the world view towards Indian writing in English from dilettante to cognoscente. It is truly trailblazing creation in terms of all- narrative technique, language and the subject. It has inspired and guided all Indian novelists there onwards to make new experiments in the field of writing. In the novel, Rushdie conceives a new folk of Indians born at the stroke of midnight of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. He describes this moment of history as:

What made the event noteworthy... was the nature of these children, every one of the whom was, through some freak of biology or perhaps owing to some preternatural power of the moment, or just conceivably by sheer coincidence... endowed with features, talents or faculties which can only be described as miraculous. It was as though ... history, arriving at a point of the highest significance and promise, had chosen to sow, in that instant, the seeds of a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world has seen up to that time. (195)

What makes difference here onwards in Indian English Literature is the manifestation of natural talent and inherent genius in this type of writing. The writers have made an indelible mark on the world literary scene. Among these gifted ones is Arundhati Roy whose fiction displays a profound psychological understanding *vis-a-vis* the first hand knowledge of native culture and history. Her *The God of Small Things* is a multi-dimensional work which has attracted a critical response from the world over and bagged a coveted Booker Prize as its predecessor *Midnight's Children*. While reading Roy's novel, one feels that she has overcome all traditional shackles of writing conforming social norms and writing methodology. She does experiments of new types both in terms of content and form. With Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai explores unbeaten subjects in the shape of postcolonial reality and the cultural incompatibility between the East and the West in her novels. Her maiden novel *Hallobaloo in the Guava Orchard* is written in a satiric tone exposing society. Her masterpiece *The inheritance of Loss* (2006) demonstrates a cultural conflict between English life style and Indian one. The novel has won Booker Prize for her. The narrative technique, innovative use of language and unique execution of plot put her among the towering writers in Indo-Anglian literature. Moreover, the publication of *The white Tiger* (2008) has created one of the unforgettable novelists in Indian English Novel. It is new type of work in its own way. Though the epistolary technique is conventional one, yet the language is absolutely absorbing so far as its lucidity and journalistic colour is concerned. In the novel, Arvind Adiga mirrors the whole Indian life with colourful presentation. Indian traditional practices, social reality, politics, faulty education system, poor medical facilities all come under his satiric radar. His subject matter and the lingual use are all engaging. The novel has made the writer so popular and successful that it got for him Booker Prize. In this race of writing, Amish Tripathi has also gained the attention from the literary circle. His *Immortals of Meluha* deals with the origin of Lord Shiva. Besides, Pratab Sharma,

Boman Desai, Gopal Gandhi and others have also contributed to this 'new novel' and have enriched the realm of it with innovative experiences and experiments. This whole journey of Indian English Novel with its inventions and novel practices is beautifully described by K.R.S. Iyengar: "[novel is] a living and evolving literary genre, and is trying, in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, substance and expression that is recognizably Indian yet also bearing the marks of universality."

### **21.2.5 Lingual Innovation in Indian English Novel**

The Indo-Anglian novel has not only undergone innovations and experiments in terms of style, narrative techniques and themes, but also witnessed a considerable newness in the form of English language being exploited for native Indian characters and content. The writers have tried their utmost to create likeness between matter and form in order to project the ambiance with realistic tone and timbre. The language has been used to provide an exact text to the context. In this process of speaking Indian English through fictional characters with realism, these writers have even coined new many words. There are novelists who concentrate on issues like poverty, class difference, gender discrimination and religious dogmas. They have been recognized and acclaimed by the western readership. There are also many writers who are sometimes called 'global Indians'. They are born Indians, but live elsewhere in the world. They perceive Indian reality and existence with objectivity at a distance. They display their mastery in handling the English language with their native like competence and creativity. They use English as per the demands of literary art and subject matter. They have created a type of matching resemblance between Indian ethos shown by characters and English flair striking from their tongue. Such novelists employ the foreign language with flying colours. Their new coinages and neologisms have created a unique flavour in the domain of English fiction. The tone of this different Indian variant of English language has been set by Raja Roa at the very birth of Indian English novel in the 'Forward' of *Kanthapura* published in 1938. He writes: "We cannot write like English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us." He further elaborates in this connection that English is: "the language of our intellectual make up... but not of our emotional make up".

### 21.3 Learning Outcomes

The Indian English fiction has physically grown into a large body with multiple facets of Indian social existence and individual essence. The reading of this chapter would enlighten a reader to trace the developmental journey of the genre and to know how it changes its colours to reflect the shifting reality of life. It would also show various diversions and digressions the novelists have adopted to keep pace with realism of human psyche and social structure. The students would be educated with distinctive segments of timeline of Indian English fiction. It has been done to make the concepts easier in order to grab the meaning and significations of particular pieces of writing in the temporal and spatial context. The major themes of all prolific writers have been highlighted to demonstrate the actual purpose of these novelists. Moreover, an effort has been made to evaluate the linguistic dimension of this writing with innovations and inventions made in the foreign language to suit the native sensibility of the projected characters. On the whole, the chapter would provide an elaborate glimpse of Indian English novel with situational and historical background; would foreground the changing priorities of the writers in terms of form and content.

### 21.4 Glossary

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

**Accomplishment:** The act of completion and fulfilment.

**Amalgamate:** To merge, to combine, or to join.

**Cognoscente:** A person possessing superior or specialized knowledge in a particular field; a connoisseur.

**Coin:** To make or fabricate, invent, originate

**Colonialism:** The colonial domination policy or strategy. A colonial set up.

**Complacency:** A feeling or sense of contented self-satisfaction, especially when unaware of upcoming trouble.

**Corpus:** A collection of writings, often on a specific topic, of a specific genre, for a particular writer.

**Craft:** Intellectual power; skill; art.

**Crusader:** A fighter in the medieval Crusades. A person involving in crusade.

**Diction:** A particular Choice and use of words, especially with regard to effective communication.

**Didactic:** Instructive, educative and reformatory in nature.

**Digression:** An act of straying from the main topic in speech or writing, particularly for rhetorical effect.

**Dilettante:** Amateur, someone who dabbles in a particular field out of casual interest rather than as a profession or serious interest.

**Discourse:** Representation either in speech or writing. An exchange in words.

**Disseminate:** To sow and spread principles, ideas, opinions, or concrete things, for growth and promotion, like seeds.

**Epistolary:** Relating to letters, or the writing of letters.

**Ethos:** The character or core values of a person, people, culture, or movement.

**Emancipation:** The act of setting free from the power of another, as from slavery, subjection, dependence.

**Essence:** The true or inherent nature of a thing or idea or person.

**Foible:** Feeble, weak or idiosyncrasy.

**Freak:** A sudden change in thought, unpredictable, or enthusiast.

**Galvanize:** Electrify; To shock, inspire or stimulate into sudden activity, as if by electric shock.

**Garrulous:** Excessively chatty or talkative.

**Genre:** A form, kind; a stylistic category, especially of literature or other artworks.

**Gothic:** Relating to the style of fictional writing associated with the Gothic revival, emphasizing violent or macabre events in a mysterious, desolate background.

**Hallmark:** A distinguishing feature.

**Hyperbolic:** Relating to hyperbole, overstatement, or exaggeration.

**Hotchpotch:** Blend, mishmash, mingle mangle.

**Immaterial:** Without matter or substance.

**Immigrant:** A person who comes to a country from another one in order to permanently settle there.

**Imperialism:** Imposed dominance in the field of territory, economy, and politics.

**Incarnation:** An entity regarded as embodying or exhibiting some quality, idea, or the like.

**Indelible:** Difficult to delete, remove, wash away, blot out, or efface

**Indigenous:** Originating in, native to a land or region, especially before an intrusion.

**Juncture:** A joining point or place of two or more things.

**Magnitude:** Size, extent or importance of something.

**Magnum Opus:** The best, most popular, or most renowned work or piece of art of an author or artist.

**Marginalized:** Alienate, limit something to margin. Socially curtail ones role or importance.

**Moot point:** Any issue that is subject to, or open for, discussion or debate, to which no satisfactory answer is found.

**Mirage:** An illusion or an optical phenomenon in which light is refracted through a layer of hot air close to the ground.

**Neologism:** A word or phrase which has newly been made or coined; a new word or phrase.

**Negotiate:** To reach an agreement or adjustment.

**Pacific:** Peaceful, calm and avoid violence.

**Podium:** Platform or pulpit.

**Preternatural:** Above or beyond natural, or not adhering to natural or normal course.

**Protagonist:** A central character in a novel, drama or movie.

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

**Revelation:** Disclosure or manifestation of something.

**Rustic:** Rural, crude, rough. Pastoral.

**Satire:** A literary device of literature or art which ridicules its subject often as an intended means of provoking or preventing change. Humour, irony, and exaggeration are often used to execute this effectively.

**Shackle:** A restraint or chain that binds or hinders progress.

**Segment:** A portion or piece of something bigger.

**Spatial:** Relating to space.

**Technique:** Ability, method, skill or a practical aspect to accomplish something.

**Temporal:** Relating to time.

**Trailblazing:** Innovative, pioneering or experimenting.

**Yoke:** A bar or frame of wood by which two oxen or other draught animals are joined at the heads or necks making them to pull a plough or carriage. A burden or something oppresses or restrains something.

## **21.5 Sample Questions**

### **21.5.1 Objective Type Questions**

I. when did the first novel *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankimchandra Chatterjee publish?

a) 1854

b) 1864

c) 1868

d) 1858

II. The word 'Novella' for English 'Novel' is:

- a) German in origin
- b) English word
- c) Turkish in root
- d) Italian in derivation

III. Who did coin the word '*Chutnification*'?

- a) Salman Rushdie
- b) Arundhati Roy
- c) Amitav Ghosh
- d) Anita Desai

IV. Who is a Nobel Laureate among the following?

- a) Arvind Adiga
- b) V.S. Naipaul
- c) R.K. Narayan
- d) Bharti Mukherjee

V. Which one of the following constituents elements does not belong to Novel?

- a) Character
- b) Conflict
- c) Song
- d) Setting

### **21.5.2 Short Answer Type Questions**

I. Define the concept of Novel.

II. Write a short note on Raja Rao's idea of using English language in Indian English literature.

III. What type of novel *The White Tiger* is and what are its main themes?

IV. What is the main domain of R.K. Narayan's Novels?

V. What is the historical and literary significance of *Midnight's Children* in Indian English novel?

### **21.5.3 Long Answer Type Questions**

I. What do you mean by the term 'novel'? Explain its Constituent elements.

II. Who are 'grand trio' in Indian English novel? What is their contribution in its development?

III. Write a detailed note on the immediate post-independence Indian English novel.

IV. Elaborate the existing scenario of Indo-Anglian fiction particularly after *Midnight's Children*.

V. Evaluate the linguistic innovations and experimentations in Indian English Novel.

## 21.6 Suggested Readings

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## Unit-22: Life and Works of Rohinton Mistry

### Structure

22.0 Objectives

22.1 Introduction

22.2 Rohinton Mistry-Life

22.2.1 Rohinton Mistry-Works

22.2.2 *Tales from Firozsha Baag*

22.2.3 *Such a Long Journey*

22.2.4A *Fine Balance*

22.2.5 *Family Matters*

22.2.6 Themes in the works of Rohinton Mistry

22.2.7 Let's Sum Up

22.3 Learning Outcomes

22.4 Glossary

22.5 Sample Questions

22.6 Suggested Readings

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### 22.0 Objectives

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This unit aims to fulfill the following objectives for the students.

- To know about the life of Rohinton Mistry.
- To familiarise students about the important works of Rohinton Mistry.
- To identify Rohinton Mistry as a distinctive novelist.
- To recognise his contribution to the body of Indian writing in English.

- To appreciate the diversity of themes Rohinton Mistry has employed in his works.

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## 22.1 Introduction

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Dear Students, in this unit we will discuss about the life and works of Rohinton Mistry. There can be no denying in the fact that Rohinton Mistry has positioned himself among the distinguished writers and created a niche in diaspora literature in particular and Indian literature in general. It must be admitted that his works contain that grace and caliber that places him alongside some of the great novelists of all time. No wonder, he has often been compared with writers like Charles Dickens for his compassionate treatment of many social issues. Additionally, for his command over language and apt imagery, he is considered as a scholarly writer. Therefore, in the light of all these things, we will look at the various achievements that Rohinton Mistry has accomplished in life and academic career.

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## 22.2 Rohinton Mistry –Life

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We shall now discuss about the life of Rohinton Mistry. He was born in Bombay (which is now known as Mumbai) in the year 1952. From University of Bombay, he graduated with a degree of Mathematics. In the year 1974, he migrated to Canada, next year he settled in Toronto. In Toronto, he worked as a bank clerk and later studied English and philosophy part-time in University of Toronto. This is how he got his second degree from University of Toronto.

Mistry won the first prize in the Canadian Hart House Literary Festival for his short story entitled “One Sunday” in the year 1983. Interestingly, he won the same award in the subsequent year for his another short story called “Auspicious Occasion”. It was followed in 1985 by the Annual Contributors’ Award from the *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, and afterwards, with the aid of a Canada Council grant, he left his job to become a full writer.

He published several short stories in several Canadian magazines. He also published short story collection entitled *Tales from Firozsha Baag* in Canada in the year 1987. He published novels like *Such a Long Journey* (1991), the story of a bank clerk who is involved in a political fraud committed by top officials. His next novel *A Fine Balance* was published in the year 1996. This novel is set during the emergency period of India around 1970. *Family Matters* (2002) narrates the story of a Parsi widower living along with his step children. Both the novels

*Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* were short listed for Man Booker Prize for Fiction. Family Matters was also shortlisted for Man Booker Prize for the year 2002.

Mistry has taken the subject matter of his works from the streets of Bombay, the city which he left twenty three years ago and shifted to Canada. The “imaginary homelands” has led him to be compared with the likes of Salman Rushdie. The differences between the two writers are more apparent than their similarities. As we know that both *Midnight’s Children* and *A Fine Balance* are set in Bombay during the tenure of Indra Gandhi administration and state of emergency. It is observed that Rushdie’s novel focuses on Muslim middle class while Mistry’s work emphasizes on more on Parsi community and poor people in general. Apart from such differences both novels the ability to identify the distinction between public and private world. Both works have used a lot of similar literary devices and sharp it and imagery. Both novels have received a good deal of critical appreciation and were commercially successful.

The fictional world of Rohinton Mistry in both works *Tales from Firozsha Baag* and *Such a Long Journey* deals with lower middle class segment of Parsi community of metropolitan Bombay. The world of Khodadad that this novel creates is actually an extension of Firozsha Baag. Either of these two fictional locations forms a microcosm in itself with all its diverse cast of characters and their normal human struggles and their extraordinary range of eccentricities. The world of Khodadad is suffused with the contemporary breath of Bombay city as we find in *Midnight Children* of Salaman Rushdie or Nissim Ezekiel’s Poetry.

### Activity

1. For which Short story did Rohinton Mistry won the prize in the year 1983.

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2. When did Rohinton Mistry published his short story collection entitled *Tales from Firozsha Baag*?

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#### 22.2.1 Rohinton Mistry-Important Works:

Dear Students, lets now discuss some of his works.

#### 22.2.2 *Tales from Firozsha Baag*:(1987)

The first short story collection by Rohinton Mistry marked the beginning of a phenomenal talent. The collection got published as *Swimming Lessons* in US and contained eleven interrelated stories. It narrates the day-to-day tale about the residents of broken-down apartment building called Firozsha Baag in Bombay. Mistry's through his love, passion and thumbnail sketches is able to bring depict the lives of close-fisted Rustomji, the deranged Jaakaylee and Pesi. Mistry in an interesting manner has been able to present the weak and strong areas of relationship among the Firozsha Baag residents. It may be noted that the underlying realism does not do away with subtle sentimentality. It is a simple study of Parsi community at the neighbourhood and at diasporic level. It deals with the lives of Parsi people who happen to live a lonely life. One can say that the problem that beset Parsees together or individually has been studied from a sociological point of view.

### **22.2.3 *Such a Long Journey*: (1991)**

Mistry's first novel won him many literary prizes. It was adopted into a film by the same name. The novel set in 1970 during the Indo- Pakistan war. The main character (Gustad Noble) of the novel is not a conventional hero. He is a bank clerk who is vulnerable and his world is haunted by the India China war in the year 1962. The Fate of Gustad and his family is closely knitted with that of the subcontinent during the time of emergencies and mayhem. We as readers empathise with his son's refusal to go to college and his daughter's burial. When Gustad receives a parcel and a request to launder money for an old friend, the event's implications are at once personal and political. Henceforth, starttravails of this simple and, as the name suggests, noble-at-heart unheroic hero, who surprisingly like the true hero of traditional classics, emerges unharmed and with his essential goodness intact. It is the story of the person (Gustad) who lives in a Parsi compound with his wife and children. He is greatly loved by Tehmul Langaara, a lame man who also resides in the same compound. Dinshwaji and Gustad being close friends meet at regular intervals. Gustad is also disturbed by the absence of his former close friend, Jimmy Bilimoria. He is involved in a national plot with political implication. He gets arrested and imprisoned when Gustad visits him, he patiently listens to the narrative of the dying man and confesses that he too has been used.

### **22.2.4A *Fine Balance*: (1995)**

This is considered one of the most successful works of Rohinton Mistry. This novel narrates the story of four characters (Maneck, Ishvar, Dina and Omprakash) and the effect of the

ill-famed emergency on them. This work is considered a carefully crafted prose: “The morning train jam-packed with passengers slowed to a crawl, and then lurched forwardsuddenly, as though to resume full speed. The train’s brief deception jolted itsriders. The bulge of humans hanging out of the doorway distended perilously,like a soap bubble at its limit.” This opening paragraph is a typical precise of prose tract of *A Fine Balance* and assist the novel to propel forward through what is one of the most memorable portraits of post India independence ever written. It is the story of hardships of ordinary people. As always happens, the influential people and people having links with higher officials win the day while the poor remain poorer. The novel has clear message that in the deep rooted contentment, Indian psyche is unique whether one appreciates it or not but that is how things work here. This book has clearly expressed indictment on the functioning of Indian leaders. It has justified strong reaction aroused to a great extent.

The homelessness of Ishvar and Omprakash in the city has made them the victims of central government beautification project endorsed by the people of middle class such as Nusswan Sharief and Gupta (The Manager) who have no idea about the miseries of the poor. Initially the relationship of Dina with the two tailors was that of distrust and tyrannical, she would force them to work for long hours. She does not know that they work for long hours without food. She even stopped Maneck a nice Parsi boy to be friends with them. However, all these boundaries and barriers soon disappear as they get to know each other. On the other hand the Dina Dalal becomes a martyr and a servant to her brother’s family and is left to fend for herself. There develops a strong bond among the four of them, however this bond is to disappear very soon.

#### **22.2.5 Family Matters:(2002)**

This novel is also set in Bombay like the first two novels of Rohinton Mistry. Whereas the first two novels were set in 1970 and are considered historical fiction, this novel on the other hand depicts the contemporary Bombay and is set in 1990. At the centre of the book is an elderly man, a Parsi with Parkinson’s disease (A disorder of central nerves that affects the movements). Nariman’s Vakeel is an academician whose illness brings new troubles on the family. The professor compares himself with King Lear at times. A widower with skeletons in his closet. Nariman’s memories of the past expose the reader to the early moments of the history of city and the nation. The novel transits to the three generations of the same family. In the novel, readers

can observe the slippage between the public and private worlds. The epilogue of the novel leaves the reader for wanting more.

Mistry also published a novella *The Screaming*. It is a single story book of Mistry and perhaps the shortest of all his works. The story is set in a Mumbai based apartment and is narrated by a man at the end of his life, who is unhappy at the predicament of old age, his isolation from family and the world which does not understand and recognise his problems and concerns. He rails and raves in such a way that is hilarious as well as moving and touches us with recognition. This story reminds readers about the novel *Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry in which Prof. Nariman Vakeel conforms to this description. Therefore, it may be said that this work is steeped into humanistic colours of Mistry.

List of important works and awards of Rohinton Mistry are mentioned below:

**Novels:**

- *Such a Long Journey* (1991)
- *A Fine Balance* (1995)
- *Family Matters* (2002)

**Short stories:**

- *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987), also published as *Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firozsha Baag* (1989)
- *Searching for Stevenson* (1994)
- *The Scream* (2006)

**Awards:**

- 1983 – Hart House Literary Contest, "One Sunday"
- 1984 – Hart House Literary Contest, "Auspicious Occasion"
- 1985 – Annual Contributors' Prize, Canadian Fiction Magazine
- 1991 – Booker Prize, shortlist, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1991 – Governor General's Award, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1991 – Commonwealth Writers Prize, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1991 – W.H. Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award, *Such a Long Journey*
- 1991 – Trillium Award, *Such a Long Journey*

- 1995 – Giller Prize, *A Fine Balance*
- 1995 – Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction, *A Fine Balance*
- 1996 – Commonwealth Writers Prize, *A Fine Balance*
- 1996 – Booker Prize, shortlist, *A Fine Balance*
- 2002 – Booker Prize, shortlist, *Family Matters*
- 2002 – James Tait Black Memorial Prize, shortlist *Family Matters*

### Activity

1. What is name of the protagonist in the novel *Such a Long Journey*?

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2. Where is the novel *Family Matters* set?

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### 22.2.6 Theme of Humanism in the works of Rohinton Mistry:

Thinking upon the theme of Humanism, *Chambers Dictionary* describes ‘humanism’ as a “literary culture any system which puts human interest and the mind of man paramount, rejecting the supernatural beliefs in god etc”. This movement is also associated with the cultural and literary drive that spread through western Europe in fourteenth and fifteen century.

A common thread that predominates all his works is the relationship between individual and society. Despite the limitations of the artist, Mistry has highlighted the shortfalls and weakness of political and sociological disorder. He has lampooned all the evil influences that affect directly the individual. He believes that Individual is the worst hit of these evil influences. This thematic aspect present in his works shows that Mistry has lend a humanistic touch to all the sensitive issues that influence the society in general and individual in particular. It is because of this reason only that is compared with Charles Dickens for his humanistic treatment of the subject.

His works seeks to develop a vision that involves both community centered existence of Parsis and their wider national work. His novels deal with experience of Parsi in India. Mistry narrates the history of Parsi community and his country as it was in the post-independence era. The re-telling of history in such a way displays the awareness of apprehensions and aspirations,

of perils and problems, of challenges and prospects, and problems of existence of individual, communal and national issues. Mistry in this way has successfully exploited some historical concerns of post-independence and attempted to re-think and re-narrate about his community through multiple narratives woven in the novel.

Politics is an important sub-theme in all works of Rohinton Mistry. This preoccupation gets closer to contemporary issues like we see in *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry tackles the Bangladesh war with Pakistan. Similarly, Mistry talks about the Indra Gandhi's declaration of state emergency which affects the livelihood of tailors in *A Fine Balance*. Finally, the impact of Hindu fundamentalist agitation and post Babri Masjid riots along with its consequences on the lives of common Indians.

It is true that the aspects of national history, especially as it relates to the fate of Parsi community in the Pre and Post-Independent India, are of inherent relevance to our understanding of the characters of "One Sunday" in *Tales from Firozshah Baag*. It is through the novel *Such a Long Journey* that Mistry foregrounds national politics aspects and weaves them into the main plot of the text. *A Fine Balance* presents his serious concerns about the various stages of national politics and the fate of the individual. *Such a Long Journey* is set against the backdrop of Bangladesh and Pakistan war in the year 1970. This novel depicts how the public event have a direct impact on the lives of common people. We can easily identify multiple themes in the works of Mistry. The theme of nationalism, politics, alienation, oppression, human relationship, fear, and temptation etc. are recurrent in his works. The theme of communitarianism in the works of Mistry is one of the fine reflections about the human dimensions of the emergency. In Mistry could have taken tailors from urban cities who suffer from such torture but bringing people from villages allowed him to project new vistas of social reality, poverty, prejudice and oppression in the villages.

The political motif of *Family Matters* is voiced through the figures of Yezad and his employer- the idealistic Mr. Kapur- and their lives. Mr. Kapur dreams of restructuring the city, manufacture it safer for the people. Right from the time of his first presence, he talks of contesting the Municipal elections to deal with chaos, and acting as a buffer against the fundamentalist Hindutva plan of Shiv Sena defenders.

Nostalgia is one of the recurrent themes in the works of Rohinton Mistry. This nostalgia is generally for the past life. It is the manifestation of religious rituals which are seen as a medium to save the disintegration of the family and community. This also develops the process

of reminiscing the childhood. The same sense of reminiscence presented through different characters in the short stories and novels of Mistry are attributed to the changed situation of Parsi community following independence. Hence this political and cultural nostalgia aids to generate a sense of loss about the changed circumstances in both domestic as well as public spheres.

### Activity

1. Write briefly about the theme of nostalgia in the works of Mistry.

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2. What are some of the main themes that predominate the works of Rohinton Mistry?

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### 22.2.7 Summing Up:

Rohinton Mistry, an incomparable writer, is also a prestigious member of Indian diaspora. He has received acclaim worldwide. Rohinton Mistry, an incomparable writer, is also a prestigious member of Indian diaspora. He has received acclaim worldwide. His work deals with Indian sensibilities. His realism and transparent style are always appreciated

His work deals with Indian sensibilities. His realism and transparent style are always appreciated. It must be admitted that thematically Mistry has shifted from family in works like *Tales from Firoz Shah Bagh* to a larger audience of Parsi community in works like *Such a Long Journey* yet to the national tapestry in *A Fine Balance*. Mistry again moves back to the theme of family in *Family Matters* by utilizing the narrative strategies as he had in *A Fine Balance* to intensify the plot, the human interest and the logic the characters are rooted in their present.

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## 22. 3 Learning Outcomes

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After the completion of the unit, students are able:

- To familiarise themselves about the life of Rohinton Mistry

- To know about the academic credentials of Rohinton Mistry.
- To identify the variety of themes that are found in the works of Rohinton Mistry.
- To understand the plot of some important works by Mistry.
- To appreciate the academic and literary achievements of Rohinton Mistry.
- To distinguish Rohinton Mistry as a novelist.
- To appreciate his contribution to the body of Indian writing in English.

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## 22.4 Glossary

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**Niche:** A suitable position in life or employment

**Distinguish:** Treat someone as different

**Recognise:** Identify

**Appreciate:** Understand or praise the worth of something or someone

**Compassionate:** Loving, caring, Sympathetic

**Caliber:** The power or ability to do something

**Compel:** Force someone to do a thing

**Emphasise:** Stress, energetic

**Distrust:** The feeling that someone cannot be relied upon.

**Tyrannical:** Exercising power in a cruel or wrong way

**Reject:** Refuse, neglect

**Motif:** A recurring image or an important aspect that is frequently repeated in a text

**Narrative:** A spoken or written account of an event or a story

**Supernatural:** Pertaining to heavenly creatures

**Communal:** Shared by a community

**Traditional:** Conventional, based on old beliefs

**Reminiscing:** Recalling or evoking

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## 22.5 Sample Questions

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### 22.5.1 Objective Questions

1. When was Rohinton Mistry born?

(a) 1954

(b) 1952

- (c) 1963                      (d) 1949
2. In the year 1974 Rohinton Mistry migrated to
- (a) Japan                      (b) Canada
- (c) Norway                      (d) Denmark
3. Mistry won the first prize in the Canadian Hart House Literary Festival for his short story entitled
- (a) One Sunday                      (b) Late Evenings
- (c) Dust Fumes                      (d) None of the above
4. Gustad is one of the main characters in which novel of Mistry
- (a) *A Fine Balance*                      (b) *Family Matters*
- (c) *Such a long Journey* (d) None
5. Dina and Omprakash are characters of which novel
- (a) *A Fine Balance*                      (b) *Family Matters*
- (c) *Such a long Journey* (d) None
6. The collection *Swimming Lessons* contains how many interrelated stories.
- (a) Eleven                      (b) Twelve
- (c) Ten                      (d) Fifteen
7. The Short story “The Screams” as published in the year
- (a) 2006                      (b) 2008
- (c) 2009                      (d) 2020
8. The novel *Family Matters* is set in the year
- (a) 1980                      (b) 1990
- (c) 1970                      (d) None
9. Which work of Rohinton Mistry was shortlisted for Booker prize in the year 1991
- (a) *Such a long Journey* (b) *Family Matters*
- (c) *A Fine Balance*                      (d) All of the above
10. Which community is at the center of Rohinton Mistry works
- (a) Muslims                      (b) Hindus
- (c) Sikhs                      (d) Parsi

### 22.5.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. Throw some light on the life of Rohinton Mistry
  2. Discuss the various academic achievements of Rohinton Mistry.
  3. Summarise the theme of the novel *Such a long Journey*.
  4. Name any five literary works of Rohinton Mistry
  5. Rohinton Mistry has made significant contribution to the body of Indian writing in English.
- Discuss

### **22.5.3 Long Answer Questions:**

1. Discuss Rohinton Mistry as a novelist.
2. Critically examine the theme of *Tales from Firoz Shah Bagh*
3. Comment up on the variety of themes that Rohinton Mistry has employed in his works.

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## **22.6 Suggested Readings**

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1. Luhrmann, T.M., *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996.
2. Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. London: Faber and Faber, 2002.
3. \_\_\_\_\_. *Tales from Firozsha Baag*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Ltd, 1994.
4. \_\_\_\_\_. *Such a Long Journey*. London: Faber & Faber, 1991.
5. \_\_\_\_\_. *A Fine Balance*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995.
6. Singh, A.K. *Contemporary Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1993

<https://www.englitmail.com/2019/08/life-and-works-of-rohinton-mistry.html>