

**M.A. ENGLISH  
(SEMESTER III)**

**Course XIII**

**Indian Writings in English and Translation of Indian Writings in  
English- II (Post Independence)**

**Session- 2024-25**

**- Dr. Shraddha Srivastava**

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## **Unit 1 (Non detailed studies)**

### **Manohar Malgonkar**

Q.1 Write a short note on Manohar Malgonkar.

ANS. "I don't think a language is any kind of national property. I didn't feel any sense of violation when I chose to write in English instead of Marathi or any Indian language"

-Manohar Malgonkar

Manohar Malgonkar (1913-2010) occupies an important place in the canons of Indian literature in English, particularly for his historical fiction with political undertones. History was his forte but he was a writer and artist first and as such artistic integrity coupled with depth of historical sense make the works interesting and authentic. Born on July 12, 1913 near Belgaum, Manohar Malgonkar was the grandson of the Prime Minister of a former princely state of Dewas. The Malgonkars were close to the rulers of Dewas and young Manohar got an opportunity to experience life in the royal households closely which is reflected in *The Princes* and *The Devil's Winds*. Often acclaimed as a master story-teller for his narrative skill, Malgonkar has the uncanny knack of transmuting his felt experience into an artistic piece. The corpus of his work is rich with eleven novels that have a blend of history, romance and military life, two light romances/thrillers, a detective novel, a play, innumerable essays/ articles, two historical accounts, a travelogue and a large number of short stories collected in several anthologies. Indeed, his works are as varied and colourful as was his life—a stint in the army, a time spent as a big game hunter, a miner, a tea garden manager and an adventurer.

Like Ernest Hemingway, he weaves the beauty and thrill of adventure into his fiction in a language that is meticulously British in expression and syntax and authentication in historicity.

### **Khushwant Singh**

“Freedom is for the educated people who fought for it. We were slaves of the English, now we will be slaves of the educated Indians—or the Pakistanis.”

-Khushwant Singh

Khushwant Singh was an Indian author, lawyer, journalist, diplomat, and politician known for his provocative, honest, and witty writing. Singh was born in Hadali, British India (now present day Pakistan) in 1915. His exact day of birth is unknown, as births and deaths weren't recorded in his time, but February 2nd, a date his father made up, is commonly used. Singh came from a wealthy and well-connected Sikh family. His father was a builder and contractor, and his uncle was a former governor of Punjab.

As a writer, Singh's strengths lay in his candid political commentary, exceptional social observations, incisive secularism, and satirical style of writing. In July 2000 the Sulabh International Social Service Organization awarded him their "Honest Man of the Year" award for his courage and honesty as well as the humor in his writing. Singh published his last book, *The Good, The Bad and The Ridiculous*, in 2013, after which he retired from writing. The book was a critique of religion, particularly its practice in India, and received much acclaim. One year later, in March of 2014, Singh died in New Delhi, India. Per his request some of his ashes were buried in his place of birth in present-day Pakistan.

Khushwant Singh writes in a novel:

"If the blanket of man's fate has been woven black, even the waters of zam and kausar can not wash it white"

- A Novel

His literary contributing to the literature was immense. He entertained his readers with his satirical mode of writing.

### **C.S. Narasimhaiah**

"The function of criticizing for Narsimhaiah is exucidation and evolution"

- (Narsimhaiah, The Function, P-89)

CD Narsimhaiah successfully blends to the best of East-West poetics. Born to semi-literate shopkeeper, he grew from his mother and folk version of Ramayan sung sonorously by his father. He states in his address on being conferred D.Litt by Bangalore University in 2005:

"Aurobindo in my own country taught me to reject Aristotle's Kindergarden theory of Catharsis and look for the rasa, dhavani, auchitya, vichara to realize through them the purusharthas of dharma, artha, kama, moksha....."

Global exposure, keenness to focus on the best in east and west theories enabled CD Narasimhaiah carve a niche for himself and emerge as a pioneer- holding the torch of literary appreciation aloft, shaping a new class of literary critics.

He analyses Blake's famous poem The Tiger. It is of Interest to note that Blake was an engraver, like our own goldsmiths who give a shape and life to ornaments.

Narasimhaiah's emphasis on native critic is not based on narrow parochial view or misplaced regard of for the nation. For him culture is a source of identity, personal and natural which are inalienable. He wittily observes:

“What one has in mind is a shared tradition, a community of interest, a set of values people live by, all of which gives a sense of identity to individuals and nations.”

## **Nissim Ezekiel**

“The saint, we are told,  
once lived a life of sin -  
nothing spectacular, of course,  
just the usual things.”

- Nissim Ezekiel

Nissim Ezekiel is an Indian poet who is famous for writing his poetry in English. He had a long career spanning more than forty years, during which he drastically influenced the literary scene in India. Many scholars see his first collection of poetry, *A Time to Change*, published when he was only 28 years old, as a turning point in postcolonial Indian literature towards modernism.

Ezekiel was born in 1924 in Bombay to a Jewish family. They were part of Mumbai's Marathi-speaking Jewish community known as Bene Israel. His father taught botany at Wilson College, and his mother was the principal of a school. Ezekiel graduated with his bachelor's degree in 1947. In 1948, he moved to England and studied philosophy in London.

Ezekiel died in 2004 after a long battle against Alzheimer's Disease. At the time of his death, he was considered the most famous and influential Indian poet who wrote in English.

Despite the fact that he wrote in English, Ezekiel's poems primarily examine themes associated with daily life in India. Through his career, his poems become more and more situated in India until they can be nothing else but Indian. Ezekiel has been criticized in the past as not being authentically Indian on account of his Jewish background and urban outlook. Ezekiel himself writes about this in a 1976 essay

entitled "Naipaul's India and Mine," in which he disagrees with another poet, V.S. Naipaul, about the critical voice with which he writes about India. "While I am not a Hindu and my background makes me a natural outsider," Ezekiel writes, "circumstances and decisions relate me to India. In other countries I am a foreigner. In India I am an Indian. When I was eighteen, a friend asked me what my ambition was. I said with the naive modesty of youth, 'To do something for India.'" We can see this attitude at work in Ezekiel's poetry—even when his poems are satirical, they come from the voice of a loving insider rather than someone who is looking from the outside. In this way, Ezekiel's poems are quintessentially Indian because they exist there. Ezekiel writes, "India is simply my environment. A man can do something for and in his environment by being fully what he is, by not withdrawing from it. I have not withdrawn from India."

### **Kamla Markandaya**

"We live by our labors from one harvest to the next, there is no certain telling whether we shall be able to feed ourselves and our children, and if bad times are prolonged we know we must see the weak surrender their lives and this fact, too, is within our experience. In our lives there is no margin for misfortune."

— **Kamala Markandaya, Nectar in a Sieve**

Kamala Markandaya was born in 1924 in Mysore, in southern India. She attended college at the University of Madras, where she studied history. Between 1940 and 1947, she worked as a journalist and published short stories in Indian newspapers. She married an Englishman and immigrated to England in 1948, where she had one daughter.

Markandaya published *Nectar in a Sieve*, her first novel, in 1954, to wide critical acclaim. Hindu traditions are also important in Markandaya's writing. Rukmani, the main character in *Nectar in a Sieve*, worships the Mother Goddess, the Earth incarnate, who embodies creative energy, passion, and power.

The main theme is hunger and degradation and along with it the theme of fatalism and rootlessness is also presented through the life of the poor Indian farmers who believe firmly in their fate and accept every misery as their lot. She was well known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies. She quotes:

"Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and walk warily with thought and care, so long will it give you its aid...."

### **Nayantara Sahgal**

“ Truth is a strong medicine. It should be prescribed with great care.”

-Nayantara Sahgal

Nayantara Sahgal was born on May 10, 1927 into one of India's most prominent political families. With her mother Vijayalakshmi Pandit as India's first ambassador to the U.N., her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru as India's first Prime Minister, and her first cousin, Indira Gandhi as India's third Prime Minister, it is not surprising that politics and history inspire and underlie much of her writing. Beginning with her memoir *Prison and Chocolate Cake*, which was published in 1954, Sahgal authored other political writings - *The Freedom Movement in India* and *Indira Gandhi, Her Road to Power* - along with a collection of essays, *Point of view: a personal response to life, literature and politics*.

Novels bring out Nayantara Sahgal as a writer with feminist concerns seeking independent existence of women. She sees women as victims of conventional Indian society engaged in their quest for identity. In her last novel *Mistaken Identity* her concept of emancipation reaches its pinnacle where her female character is an out-and-out rebel.

Nayantara Sahgal served as an advisor to Sahitya Akademi's Board for English from 1972 to 1975. She was a member of Verghese Committee for Autonomy to Radio & TV in 1977-78. In 1978, she was member of the Indian delegation to U.N. General Assembly. She has also held the post of Vice-President of People's Union for Civil Liberties.



She received the Sinclair Prize (Britain) for fiction in 1985, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1986, and Commonwealth Writers Award (Eurasia) in 1987. She was also a Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington from 1981 to 1982.

### **Chaman Nahal**

Chaman Nahal was a famous Indian writer. He wrote many books that people loved. His stories were very interesting and full of life.

Chaman Nahal was born on August 2, 1927, in Sialkot, Punjab, which is now in Pakistan. He grew up in a very loving family. Chaman was always interested in books and stories. His family supported his love for reading and writing.

Chaman Nahal wrote many books and stories. Some of his famous works include “Azadi”, “The Crown and the Loincloth”, and “My True Faces”. His book “Azadi” won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1977. This is a very big award given to writers in India.

Chaman Nahal’s work continues to inspire many people. His stories are still read and loved by many. He is remembered as one of the great Indian writers. His books are a treasure for literature lovers.

Chaman Nahal's writings are known to talk about India without any touch of exoticism. Azadi, his novel on the partition of India, is widely considered to be the best of the Indian-English novels written about the traumatic partition which accompanied Indian Independence in 1947 (Quoted from “Train to Pakistan – Azadi : Vice-versa Journey” by Dr. Mangalkumar R. Patil). An autobiographical book, Silent Life, was originally written in English and later translated into 12 languages, including Russian, Hungarian and Sinhalese.

## **AK Ramanujan**

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

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

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

## **Kamala Das**

“I was born a woman, but lived as a man.”

In these succinct lines, Kamala Das reflects on the societal constraints she encountered and the desire to break free from them.

Kamala Das (born March 31, 1934, Thrissur, Malabar Coast [now in Kerala], British India—died May 31, 2009, Pune, India) was an Indian author who wrote openly and frankly about female sexual desire and the experience of being an Indian woman. Das was part of a generation of Indian writers whose work centred on personal rather than colonial experiences, and her short stories, poetry, memoirs, and essays brought her respect and notoriety in equal measures. Das wrote both in English (mostly poetry) and, under the pen name Madhavikutty, in the Malayalam language of southern India.

Das was born into a high-status family. Her mother, Nalapat Balamani Amma, was a well-known poet, and her father, V.M. Nair, was an automobile company executive and a journalist. She grew up in what is now Kerala and in Calcutta (now Kolkata), where her father worked. She began writing poetry when she was a child. When she was 15 years old, she married Madhava Das, a banking executive many years her senior, and they moved to Bombay (now Mumbai). Das had three sons and did her writing at night.

Das's poetry collections included *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), and *The Old Playhouse, and Other Poems* (1973). Subsequent English-language works included the novel *Alphabet of Lust* (1976) and the short stories “A Doll for the Child Prostitute” (1977) and “Padmavati the Harlot” (1992). Notable among her many Malayalam works were the short-story collection *Thanuppu* (1967; “Cold”) and the memoir *Balyakalasmaranakal* (1987; “Memories of Childhood”). Perhaps her best-known work was an autobiography, which first appeared as a series of columns in the weekly *Malayalanadu*, then in Malayalam as *Ente Katha* (1973), and finally in English

as *My Story* (1976). A shockingly intimate work, it came to be regarded as a classic. In later life Das said that parts of the book were fictional.

In 1999 she controversially converted to Islam, renaming herself Kamala Surayya. She received many literary awards, including the Asian World Prize for Literature in 1985.

## **Ruskin Bond**

**Ruskin Bond**, the iconic **Indian** author renowned for his captivating storytelling, celebrated his **90th birthday** on Sunday. As he marks this milestone, Bond, known for his wit and wisdom, shared reflections on his life, **writing**, and the simple joys that have defined his journey.

Born to British parents in Kasauli in 1934, Bond's early years were marked by a deep connection with literature. His childhood, spent in various parts of India, including Shimla, New Delhi, and Dehradun, laid the foundation for his future as a prolific **writer**. Bond's literary journey began with his debut novel, "The Room on the Roof," in 1956, which marked the beginning of a remarkable career that has spanned over six decades.

Bond's path to becoming a writer was not a conventional one. Initially aspiring to be an actor or tap dancer, he discovered his true calling in writing. Reflecting on his journey, Bond humorously remarked,

"I wanted to be an actor, that never happened. I wanted to be a tap dancer, never had the figure for it. Then I realized I could write."

Bond's body of work is vast and diverse, encompassing over 500 titles, including short stories, essays, and novellas. Despite his immense popularity and status as India's favorite children's author, he remains humble, quipping,

"They say 'old soldiers never die, they simply fade away'. Even old writers never die, they simply go out of print."

Bond's contributions to literature have been widely recognized, with accolades such as the Sahitya Akademi Award, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Sahitya Akademi

Fellowship. Despite his fame, Bond remains grounded, cherishing the memories he has created with his family and readers over the years.

As Ruskin Bond celebrates his 90th birthday, his life stands as a testament to the power of storytelling and the enduring appeal of literature. His words have touched the hearts of millions, and his legacy as one of India's greatest storytellers is secure. As he continues to write and inspire, Bond's journey is a reminder of the beauty and richness of a life lived in pursuit of one's passions.

### **Meenakshi Mukherjee**

Well-known litterateur, teacher and Sahitya Academy winner Prof Meenakshi Mukherjee, died here at the age of 72 on Wednesday due to a massive cardiac arrest. Meenakshi Mukherjee collapsed at Gate 22 in Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad. She was to board a IndiGo flight, when she collapsed at the gate. She was immediately rushed to the Apollo medical Centre in the Airport, by then she breathed her last. She was going to Delhi to participate in a function on the occasion of the release of her book, "An Indian for all seasons", a biography of historian RC Dutt, which was published by Penguin.

Meenakshi Mukherjee received the Sahitya Academy award in 2003 for her book 'The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English'. She was also chairperson of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies from 2001-2004 and the chairperson of its Indian Chapter from 1993-2005.

She taught in a number of colleges in Patna, Pune and Delhi before joining the University of Hyderabad. Her last and longest spell was as Professor of English in the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. She was a visiting professor in several universities outside India, including the University of Texas at Austin, University of Chicago, University of California at Berkeley, Macquarie University (Sydney), University of Canberra and Flinders University (Adelaide). Author of 'The Twice Born Fiction', 'Realism and Reality: Novel and Society in India', 'Rereading Jane Austen', and 'The Perishable Empire', Meenakshi Mukherjee had also edited many collections of essays. She was the wife of another litterateur Sujit Mukherjee, who was the Chief Publisher of the Orient Longman. She had jointly edited a few volumes, including 'Another India' (with Nissim Ezekiel, 1990). She was the founder-editor of a journal 'Vagartha'.

## **Anita Desai**

Anita Desai, eminent Indian novelist, crafts evocative stories reflecting on themes of identity, culture, and the complexities of life.

Anita Desai, original name Anita Mazumdar, (born June 24, 1937, Mussoorie, India), English-language Indian novelist and author of children's books who excelled in evoking character and mood through visual images ranging from the meteorologic to the botanical. Born to a German mother and Bengali father, Desai grew up speaking German, Hindi, and English. She received a B.A. in English from the University of Delhi in 1957. The suppression and oppression of Indian women were the subjects of her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), and a later novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975). *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) was criticized as relying too heavily on imagery at the expense of plot and characterization, but it was praised for its poetic symbolism and use of sounds. *Clear Light of Day* (1980), considered the author's most successful work, is praised for its highly evocative portrait of two sisters caught in the lassitude of Indian life. Its characters are revealed not only through imagery but through gesture, dialogue, and reflection. As do most of her works, the novel reflects Desai's essentially tragic view of life. *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) explores German and Jewish identity in the context of a chaotic contemporary India.

Novels by Desai include *In Custody* (1984; film 1994) and *Journey to Ithaca* (1995). *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) takes as its subject the connections and gaps between Indian and American culture, while *The Zigzag Way* (2004) tells the story of an American academic who travels to Mexico to trace his Cornish ancestry. Desai also wrote short fiction—collections include *Games at Twilight, and Other Stories* (1978) and *Diamond Dust, and Other Stories* (2000)—and several children's books, including *The Village by the Sea* (1982). *The Artist of Disappearance* (2011) collected three novellas that examined the collateral abandonment and dislocation wrought by

India's furious rush toward modernity. Her daughter Kiran Desai won the Booker Prize for the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006).

## **Arun Joshi**

Arun Joshi was an Indian writer. He authored novels about modern urban English speaking persons who were disturbed for some reason. Joshi's most known works are 'The Strange Case of Billy Biswas' and 'The Apprentice'.

Arun Joshi was born in Benaras and spent his childhood years in Delhi, Hoshiarpur and Chandigarh. As a child, he played the violin and music remained a great love through his life, along with reading, writing and painting. He wrote five novels and many short stories. He is remembered for his crisp, clear and perceptive writing style. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1982.

On returning to India, he began working at Delhi Cloth & General Mills, North India's first textile factory and among the earliest joint-stock companies of the country, as chief of its recruitment and training department. He married Rukmini Lal, a daughter of a shareholder. He resigned from D.C.M. in 1965 while continuing to be the executive director of Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources in Delhi.

## **Salman Rushdie**

Indian-born author Salman Rushdie wrote acclaimed novels that examine historical and philosophical issues. His treatment of sensitive religious and political subjects made him a controversial figure.

Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947, in Bombay (now Mumbai), India. He was the son of a prosperous Muslim businessman. Rushdie was educated at Rugby School and the University of Cambridge in England, receiving a master's degree in history in 1968. After university, he worked in London as an advertising copywriter, and he published his first novel *Grimus* in 1975. His next novel was *Midnight's Children* (1981), an allegory about modern India. It was an unexpected success that won him international recognition and the Booker Prize. Like Rushdie's subsequent fiction, *Midnight's Children* is an allegorical fable featuring surreal characters, brooding humor, and melodramatic prose.

Rushdie's novel *Shame* (1983) was based on contemporary politics in Pakistan and also became popular, but *The Satanic Verses* (1988), his fourth novel, encountered a different reception. Some of the adventures in this book depict a character modeled after the Prophet Muhammad and portray both him and his transcription of the Koran (Qur'an) in a way that drew criticism from Muslim community leaders in Britain, who denounced the novel as blasphemous. In 1989 the spiritual leader of revolutionary Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, publicly condemned the book and issued a *fatwa* (legal opinion) against Rushdie. The Iranian government offered to pay a bounty



to anyone who would execute him, so Rushdie retreated into hiding. In 1998 the Iranian government finally announced that it would no longer seek to enforce its *fatwa* against him.

Meanwhile, Rushdie continued to publish his writing. He wrote a collection of essays and criticism, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991); a children's book, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990); a collection of short stories, *East, West* (1994); a collection of essays, *Step Across This Line* (2002); and several novels, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005); *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008); and *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010). Rushdie recounted his experiences with the *fatwa* in the memoir *Joseph Anton* (2012). Its title refers to an alias he adopted while in hiding. His later novels include *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015). It depicts the chaos caused by a rip in the fabric separating the world of humans from that of the Arabic mythological figures known as jinn. In the novel *The Golden House* (2017), Rushdie explored the immigrant experience in the United States through a wealthy Indian family that settles in New York City in the early 21st century. His next novel, *Quichotte* (2019), was inspired by Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. *Languages of Truth: Essays 2003–2020* appeared in 2021.

The British government made Rushdie a knight in 2007. He won two special Booker Prizes, voted on by the public, in 1993 and 2008, given in honor of the prize's 25th and 40th anniversaries, respectively. Rushdie became a U.S. citizen in 2016. In August 2022 he was attacked and seriously injured in Chautauqua, New York.

## **Shashi Tharoor**

**Shashi Tharoor** (born March 9, 1956, London, England) is a prominent Indian diplomat and politician who, after long service in the international diplomatic corps, became an official in the government of India. He is also a highly regarded author of both nonfiction and fiction books.

Tharoor was born into an Indian expatriate family living in London, which returned to India after his birth. He completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Delhi in New Delhi, and in 1978, at age 22, he was awarded a Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. At that time Tharoor was the youngest person ever to earn a doctorate from the Fletcher School. Later that year he became a staff member in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2009 Tharoor joined the Indian National Congress (Congress Party) and that May contested the elections to the Lok Sabha (lower chamber of the Indian parliament) from a constituency in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala state. His candidacy was opposed by the leaders of the Kerala branch of the Congress Party, who viewed him as an outsider. Tharoor, however, won by a comfortable margin over his nearest opponent (from the Communist Party of India). Shortly after the election he was appointed the union minister of state (a sub-cabinet-level position) in the Ministry of External Affairs in the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

Tharoor developed a reputation for being an effective orator, and he was a prolific and respected author. His most-notable nonfiction books included *Reasons of State: Political Development and India's Foreign Policy Under Indira Gandhi, 1966–1977* (1982), *India: From Midnight to the Millennium* (1997), *Nehru: The Invention of India* (2003), *The Elephant, the Tiger, and the Cell phone: Reflections on India, the*

*Emerging 21st-Century Power* (2007), and *Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century* (2012). Among his works of fiction are *Show Business* (1992), which filmed as *Bollywood* (1994), and *Riot* (2001).

### **Jeet Thayil**

Performance poet, librettist, novelist, and journalist Jeet Thayil was born in Kerala, India. He was educated in Hong Kong, New York City, and Bombay, and his work across genres is noted for its innovative lyricism and use of far-ranging influences. Poet Vijay Seshadri noted that Thayil is “contemporary precisely because he has such command of the poetic and historical past, and because his invented language has such depth, archaeological richness, and reality.” Thayil’s collections of poetry include *Collected Poems* (2015), *These Errors are Correct* (2008), *English* (2004), *Apocalypso* (1997), and *Gemini II: Selected Poems* (1994). He edited *The Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Indian Poets* (2008), *Divided Time: India and the End of Diaspora* (2006), and *Give the Sea Change and It Shall Change: 56 Indian Poets* (2005). His first novel, *Narcopolis* (2012), was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and won a DSC Prize for South Asian literature. He is also the author of the novels *Low* (2020) and *The Book of Chocolate Saints* (2017). Thayil lives in New Dehli.

In 2006, he told *The Hindu* that he had been an alcoholic and an addict for almost two decades. He began using drugs after he returned to India at age 18. In 2013, he told *Gulf News* that he successfully quit at age 42.

In 2012, Thayil's poetry collection *These Errors are Correct* was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for English. He was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2012 and The Hindu Literary Prize (2013) for his debut novel *Narcopolis*. In 2013, Thayil became the first Indian author to win the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, worth \$50,000, for the novel *Narcopolis*.

## **Amit Chaudhuri**

Amit Chaudhuri is the author of eight novels, the latest of which is *Sojourn*. He is also a poet, essayist, short story writer, and musician. His *New and Selected Poems* is scheduled to be published in 2023 in the NYRB Poets series. Faber released a full set of his backlist titles in the U.K. over 2022-23 with introductions by Colm Toibin, James Wood, and Pankaj Mishra. His works of non-fiction include, most recently, *Finding the Raga*, which received the James Tait Black Prize in 2022. Other awards his work has received include the Commonwealth Writers Prize, the Encore Prize, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction, the Government of India's Sahitya Akademi Award, the Government of West Bengal's Rabindra Puraskar, and the inaugural Infosys Prize in Literary Studies in the Humanities. He is a Professor of Creative Writing and Director of the Centre for the Creative and Critical at Ashoka University. He was Professor of Contemporary Literature at the University of East Anglia from 2006-2021

Amit Chaudhuri was born in Calcutta (renamed Kolkata) in 1962 and grew up in Bombay (renamed Mumbai). His father was the first Indian CEO<sup>[citation needed]</sup> of Britannia Industries Limited. His mother, Bijoya Chaudhuri, was a highly acclaimed singer of Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrulgeeti, Atul Prasad and Hindi bhajans.<sup>[3]</sup> He was a student at the Cathedral and John Connon School, Bombay. He took his first degree in English literature from University

College London, and wrote his doctoral dissertation on D. H. Lawrence's poetry at Balliol College, Oxford.

Chaudhuri began writing a series for *The Paris Review* titled The Moment from January 2018. He also wrote an occasional column, "Telling Tales", for The Telegraph.

In 2013, Chaudhuri became the first person to be awarded the Infosys Prize for outstanding contribution to the humanities in Literary Studies

## **Kiran Desai**

Kiran Desai, (born September 3, 1971, New Delhi, India), Indian-born American author whose second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), became an international best seller and won the 2006 Booker Prize. Kiran Desai—daughter of the novelist Anita Desai—lived in India until age 15, after which her family moved to England and then to the United States. She graduated from Bennington College in 1993 and later received two M.F.A.'s—one from Hollins University, in Roanoke, Virginia, and the other from Columbia University, in New York City.

Desai left Columbia for several years to write her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), about a young man in provincial India who abandons an easy post office job and begins living in a guava tree, where he makes oracular pronouncements to locals. Unaware that he knows of their lives from having read their mail, they hail him as a prophet. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* drew wide critical praise and received a 1998 Betty Trask Prize from the British Society of Authors. While working on what would become her second novel, Desai lived a peripatetic life that took her from New York to Mexico and India. After more than seven years of work, she published *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Set in India in the mid-1980s, the novel has at its centre a Cambridge-educated Indian judge living out his retirement in Kalimpong, near the Himalayas, with his granddaughter until their lives are disrupted by Nepalese insurgents. The novel also interweaves the story of the

judge's cook's son as he struggles to survive as an illegal immigrant in the United States. The Inheritance of Loss was hailed by critics as a keen, richly descriptive analysis of globalization, terrorism, and immigration. When she received the Booker Prize for the novel in 2007, Desai became the youngest female writer to win the award.

## **UNIT 1 PART 2**

### **(ii) THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN UNKNOWN INDIAN**

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian is a 1951 autobiography by Nirad C. Chaudhuri. It is a memoir of his life, from his childhood in a small village in Bengal to his adulthood in Calcutta and London. The book is divided into three parts, each of which covers a different period of his life.

The first part of the book covers Chaudhuri's childhood and early education in Bengal. He recounts his experiences growing up in a traditional Hindu family, and his struggles to reconcile his traditional upbringing with the modern world. He also describes his experiences with the British Raj, and his encounters with British culture and education.

The second part of the book covers Chaudhuri's time in Calcutta, where he studied English literature and worked as a journalist. He recounts his experiences with the Bengali intelligentsia, and his encounters with the Indian independence movement. He also describes his travels to other parts of India, and his encounters with different cultures and religions.

The third part of the book covers Chaudhuri's time in London, where he studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies. He recounts his experiences with the British academic world, and his encounters with the Indian diaspora in London. He also describes his travels to other parts of Europe, and his encounters with different cultures and religions.

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian is a fascinating and insightful look into the life of a man who lived through a period of great change in India. It is a vivid and detailed account of Chaudhuri's life, and his struggles to reconcile his traditional upbringing with the modern world. It is an important work of Indian literature, and a must-read for anyone interested in Indian history and culture.

## **THE FINANCIAL EXPERT**

Margayya earns a modest living by providing financial advice and helping customers with loan applications and other financial procedures; he charges a small fee for this assistance. In his town, Malgudi, he has a stand under a tree outside the main bank, Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank. When the bank official decides he is being a nuisance, the guard chases him away.

Margayya decides that divine intervention, specifically his devotion to the Hindu goddess concerned with wealth, Lakshmi, will aid him in his endeavors. He increases his rituals of devotion and soon his affairs improve. Margayya's interpretation of this devotion, however, is slanted more toward money than towards the goddess or holy works. As the author reveals this flaw, he foreshadows Margayya's future (negative) experiences.

Margayya's new friend Dr. Pal, author of a sex manual that combines the classic Kama Sutra with modern Western psychology, inspires a change of business direction: to publish this manual. He enlists a local printer, Madan Lal, who quickly sees the commercial value of the work that they



title *Domestic Harmony*. Its great success sparks Margayya's social and financial rise.

Meanwhile, Margayya barely heeds his wife's counsel or his son's education, paying attention to the latter only when he fails to gain admission to university. It turns out that Balu, the son, has grown up self-centered and lazy, interested only in a sinful life. Finally, Margayya listens to his wife's fears that Balu may have died in the city of Madras. He is found alive there, however, and returns to Malgudi to get married. His father's new moneylending business makes him truly prosperous

Dr. Pal plays an active role in helping Balu get matched to a lovely wife, and it seems that all is well. However, Pal is actually a bad influence on Balu, encouraging him to waste his time and money at Pal's club. When Margayya finds out, he becomes furious with Pal and physically attacks him. The doctor in turn spreads lies about the moneylender, lies which cause his business to collapse. When Balu, unsympathetic, asks for his inheritance, his father tells him it is his heritage to be a financial expert and tells him that he should begin afresh under the tree; Margayya himself has retired.

## THE SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN

Published in 1961, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* is a semi-autobiographical work and the only complete novel by Attia Hosain. The novel, set against the backdrop of the Partition of India and the social fragmentation it ushered in, follows the life of Laila – an orphan girl belonging to a Muslim ‘*talugdari*’ (feudal landowners) family – through a span of more than two decades. In it, Hosain tries to provide an alternate perspective to the Partition through her unique position as a young woman growing up in a consanguineous and gender-segregated family that finds itself on the wrong side of the Partition not only ideologically but also spatially.

The novel depicts the upheaval that is wrecked in the life of Laila and her family members with the death of her grandfather. As a consequence of this, her supposedly ‘liberal’ Uncle Hamid takes up the mantle of the patriarchal figurehead of the family, throwing their peaceful settled existence into disarray. The bildungsroman follows Laila as she, raised on Western ideals according to the wishes of her late father, tries to negotiate between her traditional family and the rapidly changing values of the society at large as the Independence of the country looms on the horizon until she finally chooses to leave her family behind in order to marry a poor Muslim man named Ameer. Laila’s return to her soon-to-be sold ancestral house in Lucknow after a period of 14 years, as a widowed mother, in the aftermath of the Partition and its violence marks the end of the novel.

## THE STRIDERS

The Striders is a saddening poem by A.K. Ramanujan that reflects upon the struggles and displacement experienced by a group of people. The poem evokes the imagery of these "striders" who move together in a foreign land, possibly as a result of migration or displacement. The poem captures their collective journey, hardships, and their hope for a better future. In this blog, we will deal with the summary of The Striders by AK Ramanujan along with the themes, structures, forms, and literary devices used in it.

"The Striders" by A.K. Ramanujan is a poem rich in thematic depth, exploring several compelling ideas and concepts. Here are some of the key themes in the poem:

**Migration and Displacement:** One of the central themes of the poem is the experience of migration and displacement. The "striders" are depicted as a group of people who have left their homes to journey in an unfamiliar land. This theme reflects the universal human experience of leaving behind the familiar and facing the challenges of adapting to new surroundings.

**Collective Identity:** The poem explores the concept of a collective identity. The "striders" move together as a group, emphasizing their shared experiences and struggles. This theme highlights

the power of collective identity in times of adversity and the sense of unity that can emerge when people face challenges together.

**Human Condition:** "The Striders" provides a window into the broader human condition. It highlights the fundamental experiences of migration, struggle, resilience, and hope, making it a poem that resonates with the shared experiences and emotions of people from various walks of life and backgrounds

## MY STORY

My Story (1976) by Kamala Das is the translated version of her autobiography *Ente Katha* (1973) written in Malayalam. It was serially published in a weekly named *Malayalanadu*. In the preface she declares about writing the autobiography as:

My story is my autobiography which I began writing during my first serious bout with heart disease. The doctor thought that writing would distract my mind from the fear of a sudden death and, besides, there were all the hospital bills....I wrote continually, not merely to honour my commitment but because I wanted to empty myself of all the secrets...

Das's desire to reveal her secrets constitute one of the important elements of an autobiography. *My Story* thus traces her childhood in Calcutta and Malabar, her marriage as well as her literary journey. It also documents her personal experiences of being a woman, her quest for love and most importantly her assertion of self.

To situate Kamala Das's *My Story* in the milieu of women autobiographers, a brief account of the development of women's autobiography in India is discussed here. Bahinabai's autobiography (1700) is recorded as the earliest autobiography written by an Indian woman. Rassundari Devi wrote *Amar Jiban* (1876), and she became the first woman autobiographer in Bengali. She was an ordinary housewife but possessed an extraordinary zeal to read the holy

books, for which she learned the letters painstakingly from her son's book. Ramabai Ranade (1862-1924) wrote in Marathi *Amachya Ayshyatil Kahi Athwani* (Memoirs of our life together), Binodini Dasi (1863-1924) wrote *Amar Katha* (My Story) in Marathi. These women autobiographers hail from conservative patriarchal background, always remaining in the periphery, devoid of any space of their own. They were expected and taught by the senior women to be good wives. In their autobiographies, women like Lakshmibai Tilak, Ramabai Ranade express their view on marginality in parental households where singing, playing, reading and writing were out of question. Lakshmibai Tilak's husband converted to Christianity, and to live with her husband she also had to convert herself. She had tough time in trying to shed her original identity. On the other hand Ramabai Ranade was married to a western-educated husband, who insisted her to learn Marathi and English. In order to do so she had to confront the scornful attitude of the other women of the house, who tried to dissuade her from learning. She had to sustain her effort in difficult circumstances. She always remained careful not to offend her husband in any condition. Kashibai Kanitkar (1861-1948), who was associated with reformist Prarthana Samaj, writes in her autobiography that women simply considered themselves unfortunate beings. Her own mother and stepmother, who were educated, believed that education made women harsh and ambitious. She also made tremendous effort in learning. These women were silent sufferers who were taught to please men and never to worry them with their problems..

## ROUGH PASSAGE

R. Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage* which is a trendsetting poem with the three parts namely: 'Exile', 'Trial' and 'Homecoming'. *Rough Passage* is the voyage that R. Parthasarathy continues within. He peeps into self after feeling the alienation caused by the shocking experiences in England where he realizes the significance of roots which bind him to his own Tamil tradition and culture. The poem is replete with the rough experiences which the poet experiences while struggling with the realities that he faces in life. He hopes that love will suck his alienation but feels depressing to trace out its transience and so makes a dialogue with his past which makes him introduce with his linguistic cultural roots.

R. Parthasarathy's single poetic output *Rough passage*, divided into three sections entitled 'Exile', 'Trial', and 'Homecoming', voices the experience of an entire nation. *Rough passage* does not intend to arrive at any ultimate statement about life, death truth, art and time. It merely aims at illustrating an experience pattern, by catching it alive and in its fullness. Parthasarathy is ambivalent throughout *Rough passage* basically because he is extra-sensitive. He approaches life and culture with inflated expectations and is

therefore, subsequently disillusioned. And in this disillusionment lies the seed of his alienation.

## SHAME

Shame is a novel written by author Salman Rushdie, first published in 1983. Set in the fictional town of Q. in the imaginary country "Peccavistan"—based on Quetta, in Pakistan—the book follows the intersection of various lives during a turbulent historical period.

The novel begins with the story of three sisters, named Chhunni, Munnee, and Bunny Shakil. The three women pretend to be pregnant at the same time, but only one son, named Omar Khayyám, is born after nine months. However, all of the sisters raise him together, so he never knows who is his birth mother, nor does he ever know his biological father. The story then pivots to describing the rise and fall of the military dictatorships of Raza Hyder and Iskandar Harrappa, as they attain power, lose it, and are eventually both killed.

At the same time, the narrative follows Omar's eventual marriage to Sufiya Zinobia Hyder, the developmentally delayed daughter of Raza Hyder. Their relationship remains stagnant, as Sufiya cannot live life as an adult. She is also tormented by the "beast" of shame inside her, which manifests the unprocessed shame of the world around her.

Later in the novel, Sufiya becomes violently possessed and starts killing men in a frenzied state. The story ends when Sufiya eventually kills Omar. Over the course of the novel, Rushdie shows violence taking root in shame. All the characters have struggles with shame and shamelessness, as they navigate the political upheaval afflicting Pakistan.

Shame was well-received by critics. It won the French Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger and was shortlisted for the 1983 Booker Prize.

## **THE FALL OF A SPARROW**

In ornithology it would be termed as a rare sighting. You could have said that of the original birdman, Salim Ali, the father of ornithology in India. How did a man, whose only connection with birds was with those hallaled and minced into a pilaf, end up becoming an authority on birds and in some ways the earliest conservationist? The Illustrated Salim Ali: The Fall of a Sparrow is a story of the evolution of a bird hunter into a bird watcher. More significantly, it is a chronicle of the evolution of ornithology in India. The book is a tribute to a century of bird spotting, identification and leisure watching. From his first notes of a sparrow he felled in 1906 when he was barely 10, of visiting the Bombay Natural History Society and identifying it as a yellow throated sparrow, till his death in 1987, Ali literally led bird watchers from a few to a flock to now virtually a movement.

The book takes you through the ages, from the days when birds were stuffed, to the more modern days, enabled by photography. The attraction of the book is not that it is a

detailed tableau of all the birds of the subcontinent. It is a colourful travelogue that takes you to Kutch, where Ali went to study flamingos at the invitation of Maharao Vijayarajji; to Burma, where he went to work but teamed up with J.C. Hopwood and contributed to Stuart Baker's Fauna of British India. Birds. Or his travels to Afghanistan where he studied a range from Snowcock and SeeSee Partridge to the migratory Redlegged Falcon and Rosy Pastor on their way to Turkestan.

A great observer, Ali also describes the idiosyncrasies of babudom well. Put up at the government guest house during his stay at Bahawalpur, Ali says, "You remained in the dark about your status till you reached the breakfast table. First class guests should expect two eggs, two toasts, while second class guests would get one egg and one toast. It was a brutal way of making you see yourself as the state saw you".

## THE SHADOW LINES

*The Shadow Lines* (1988) is a Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel<sup>[1]</sup> by Indian writer Amitav Ghosh. It is a book that captures perspective of time and events, of lines that bring people together and hold them apart; lines that are clearly visible from one perspective and nonexistent from another; lines that exist in the memory of one, and therefore in another's imagination. A narrative built out of an intricate, constantly crisscrossing web of memories of many people, it never pretends to tell a story. Instead, it invites the reader to invent one, out of the memories of those involved, memories that hold mirrors of differing shades to the same experience. The novel is set against the backdrop of historical events like the Swadeshi movement, Second World War, Partition of India and Communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka and Calcutta.

While in London in the early 1980s, the unnamed narrator recounts a series of stories and memories to his cousin Ila and his uncle Robi. The stories and memories belong to

the narrator; his uncle Tridib; and his grandmother, Tha'mma. The memories begin in the early twentieth century when Tridib's grandfather, Mr. Justice Chandrashekhar Datta-Chaudhuri, befriends Lionel Tresawsen at séances in London.

Many of the characters in *The Shadow Lines* want—or need—to have more freedom. The characters define freedom based on both individual and collective terms, as well as on traditional and modern values. The Narrator's fragmented memory keeps him from having answers to his most persistent questions. The narrative itself operates on a stream-of-consciousness basis; it represents the Narrator's attempt at breaking free from the confines of doubt and unclear memories. One of the biggest threads in the novel involves the Narrator uncovering how Tridib died. Though the official story mentions Tridib's death as resulting from a car accident, the Narrator "feels" that there's something more to the story. The Narrator can't be free until he pieces the real story together. When the Narrator finally learns from May that an angry mob slit Tridib's throat—that Tridib sacrificed himself to save May—the Narrator finds the freedom for which he spent Part 2 searching.

Ila believes that upper-class society is the cause of the world's ills, and wishes to be free of the very system that has privileged and nurtured her. Ila finds fault with what she believes is an archaic system of values in India.

## ENGLISH AUGUST

Upamanyu Chatterjee's debut novel, *ENGLISH, AUGUST: An Indian Story* (1988) depicts the journey of a young urban Indian to self discovery. The story is told from the view point of an omniscient narrator and the title, 'English August' refers the protagonist 'Agastya Sen' who is named after a mythological Hindu rishi. His friends anglicize 'Agastya' into 'August' which connotes the feeling of un-Indian or western in Indian soil and they call him 'Ogu', 'the English type', 'hey English', and 'hey Anglo'. This multiplicity of naming hints at the fragmented identity and alienation he undergoes.

The central character, Agastya Sen, is a twenty-four year old civil service trainee and the son of a Bengali father, Madhusudhan Sen, and a Goan, Christian mother. Unlike his friends who have opted for higher studies in western universities, Agastya Sen joins Indian civil service training to satisfy his father's wish for his son to have a stable government job. He is directionless and finds solace in marijuana,



masturbation and the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius. The novel brilliantly satirizes the degeneration of Indian bureaucracy and reveals the urban rural divide in India.

The comic features of the novel are drawn largely from the portrayal of bureaucrats with their exquisite mannerisms, personal enmity and narrow social life. These officials are scandal mongers, corrupt and willing to defend their interest by any means. The novel throws light on the hitherto unexpressed life of these degenerate civil servants and it also narrates the consequences meted out by those who have tried to break open these impositions. The case of district collector Antony, who is made a scapegoat in a Hindu-muslim riot and is transferred by corrupt politicians, is a perfect example of how genuine officers are paid for their service by the corrupt public servants. The reports in Dainik newspaper, which is famous for its sensational news about the collector, minister and other bureaucrats, shows the stagnation and sterility of the life of people in the small town.

## **A SUITABLE BOY**

Vikram Seth's novel is, at its core, a love story: Lata and her mother, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, are both trying to find—through love or through exacting maternal appraisal—a suitable boy for Lata to marry. Set in the early 1950s, in an India newly independent and struggling through a time of crisis, *A Suitable Boy* takes us into the richly imagined world of four large extended families and spins a compulsively readable tale of their lives and loves. A sweeping panoramic portrait of a complex, multiethnic society in flux, *A Suitable Boy* remains the story of ordinary people caught up in a web of love and ambition, humor and sadness, prejudice and reconciliation, the most delicate social etiquette and the most appalling violence.

*A Suitable Boy* is set in a newly post-independence, post-partition India. The novel follows four families during 18 months, and centres on Mrs. Rupa Mehra's efforts to arrange the marriage of her younger daughter, Lata, to a "suitable boy". Lata is a 19-year-old university student who refuses to be influenced by her domineering mother or opinionated brother, Arun. Her story revolves around the choice she is forced to make between her suitors Kabir, Haresh, and Amit.

It begins in the fictional town of Brahmpur, located along the Ganges. Patna, Brahmpur, along with Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow and other Indian cities, forms a colourful backdrop for the emerging stories.

The novel alternately offers satirical and earnest examinations of national political issues in the period leading up to the first post-Independence national election of 1952, including Hindu–Muslim strife, the status of lower caste peoples such as the jatav, land reforms and the eclipse of the feudal princes and landlords, academic affairs, abolition of the Zamindari system, family relations and a range of further issues of importance to the characters.

## FINAL SOLUTIONS

'Final Solutions' is a play by Mahesh Dattani. It got him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998, making him the first Indian playwright to win the prestigious award. It is a commentary on socio-religious politics in India, with several layers of meaning embedded in the dialogues.

The title of the play *Final Solutions* in historical context is a reference to the termination of Jews during World War II. The play is set in two time periods, both dealing with the

overarching theme of communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. Dattani makes compelling arguments regarding the idea of forced religious differences dividing a country like India based on stereotypes. Padamsee in the foreword says 'this is a play about transferred resentments' – taking out your anger on someone in events of humiliation, just because your forefathers did, is never a valid motivation.

Most of the action in the play takes place inside the house of Ramnik Gandhi and his family. One part of the story follows Ramnik's mother when she was a young girl and had befriended a Muslim girl in her colony. When her family offers to help theirs, all is well; but overnight, there are major differences that lead to disaster. The truth behind the events is unravelled throughout the play, and the sad reality behind the two religious communities' fights is revealed. Since then, Ramnik's mother has had a hatred towards Muslims. In the present, Ramnik claims to be a 'liberal', and when two Muslim boys, Bobby and Javed, show up at their house, he offers them jobs, solely to prove to them that he doesn't see religion as an issue. His wife Aruna, however, shares the same hatred that her mother-in-law has towards them, and all hell breaks loose.

Dattani uses a literary device called 'chorus', which essentially functions as an objective voice from the outside, a third party of sorts. The chorus in *Final Solutions* plays a very important role in moving the plot forward. The chorus here takes on the role of a mob, which is sometimes Hindu and sometimes Muslim, depending on the action of the scene. The chorus speaks in many voices and alludes to themes of communal violence, fascist ideology (represented by the Hindu mob), minority status among the majority (represented by the Muslim mob), multiculturalism, and fear and suspicion of the 'other'. He also brings to light how it is a blame game; each community blames the other.

One of the most powerful quotes from the chorus sums up the unfortunate situation that most people today echo –

'A drop of oil cannot merge with an ocean of milk. One reality cannot accept another reality.'

## RED EARTH AND POURING RAIN

“The future is simple. The future is simple, I can hold it with the palm of my hand; and the present is just a matter of endurance, detachment, and a sense of humor.”

– **Vikram Chandra, Red Earth and Pouring Rain**

In Vikram Chandra’s *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, Sanjay Parasher, a nineteenth-century Brahmin reincarnated as a monkey who, like Scheherazade, must tell stories to prolong his life, keeps ‘going to London’—in his dreams and in real life—in search for a political and discursive centre but, ultimately, for his own identity. London, the empire’s centre, becomes an imaginary space that must be conquered by the emerging Indian national consciousness, whose reading of it differs from the imperial power discourse.

The chapter 'In London, a Battle between Immortals' marks the climax of the protagonist's journey through his life in colonial India and provides an X-ray of underground London that reveals the hidden, repressed face of power. By solving the detective mystery of this chapter, Sanjay provides a rereading of the urban text—and of the novelistic discourse itself—through a different lens, which dethrones the exemplary value of the metropolis and opens it up to an alternative, 'other' discourse. I will show this by analysing the textuality of this chapter from a perspective informed mainly by Dipesh Chakrabarty's project of 'provincialising Europe' and Barthes' and Derrida's alternative views of the centre in discourse and the free play of textuality.

*Red Earth and Pouring Rain* functions on the basis of this shift of emphasis from plot development (with its aim of a *dénouement*) to the process of storytelling and the digressions in it. The meanings of events (like digressions in the traditional Indian epics) prevail over their dynamics, yet everything is ultimately subordinated to the process of telling. This move from what we could call 'the English (or European) way', i.e. the plot-oriented way of telling a story, to an 'Indian way' (more interested in digressive comments and side stories that further pursue certain lines of thought) is a formal gesture and a political one at the same time. A narrative that otherwise would have been about the usual postcolonial plot (the Empire writing back to the centre) becomes one that escapes containment within dichotomous categories of thinking and ultimately states that the most important thing of all is not what happens in the story, but that the story should be kept going.

## INDIA UNBOUND

*India Unbound* is the riveting story of a nation's rise from poverty to prosperity and the clash of ideas that occurred along the way. Gurcharan Das examines the highs and lows of independent India through the prism of history, his own experiences and those of numerous others he has met—from young people in sleepy UP villages to chiefs of software companies in Bangalore. Defining and exploring the new mindset of the nation, *India Unbound* is the perfect introduction to contemporary India.

*India Unbound* is mainly about the transformation of India from birth of the writer in (1942) to 1999. The author majorly speaks about the Indian politics and the economy of India. He categorizes the complete timeline from 1942 to 1999 in three major sections: 'Spring of Hope (1942–65)', 'the Lost Generation (1966–91)' & 'Rebirth of Dream (1991–99)' and tell various stories(memoirs) and the historical facts of that time. The book is a

great mixture of memoir, economic analysis, social investigation, political scrutiny and managerial outlook being thrown into the understanding of India.<sup>[2]</sup> It begins shortly before independence and continues until the new millennium. As other authors cherish the revolution that began with independence in 1947, Gurcharan Das does not find full cause for jubilation until 1991, when India unleashed a series of economic reforms, the start of an "economic revolution" that he believes "may well be more important than the political revolution."

The book starts with a brief history of 18th and 19th century India. Gurucharan Das starts with the augmentation of the railways in India, which was presumed to usher India into the industrial revolution. The book also points to the factors which led to the decline in the Indian economy under the British Raj.

## THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS

The story centres around the lives of Biju and Sai. Biju is an Indian living in the United States illegally, son of a cook who works for Sai's grandfather. Sai is an orphan living in mountainous Kalimpong with her maternal grandfather Jemubhai Patel, the cook, and a dog named Mutt. Her mother was a Gujarati and her father a Zoroastrian orphan himself. Author Desai alternates the narration between these two points of view. The action of the novel takes place in 1986.

Biju, the other character, is an illegal alien residing in the United States, trying to make a new life for himself, and contrasts this with the experiences of Sai, an anglicised Indian girl living with her grandfather in India. The novel shows both internal conflicts within India and tensions between the past and present. Desai writes of rejection and yet awe of the English way of life, opportunities to gain money in America, and the squalor of living in India. Through critical portrayal of Sai's grandfather, the retired judge, Desai

comments upon leading Indians who were considered too anglicised and forgetful of traditional ways of Indian life.

The retired judge Jemubhai Patel is a man disgusted by Indian ways and customs -- so much so, that he eats chapatis (a moist South Asian flatbread) with knife and fork. Patel disdains other Indians, including the father with whom he breaks ties and the wife whom he abandons at his father's home after torturing her. Yet Patel never is fully accepted by the British, despite his education and adopted mannerisms.

The major theme running throughout *The Inheritance of Loss* is one closely related to colonialism and the effects of post-colonialism: the loss of identity and the way it travels through generations as a sense of loss. Some characters snub those who embody the Indian way of life, others are angered by anglicised Indians who have lost their traditions; none is content.

## INDIA AFTER GANDHI: THE HISTORY OF WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY

*India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* is a non-fiction book by Indian historian Ramachandra Guha. First published by HarperCollins in August 2007.

The book covers the history of the India after it gained independence from the British in 1947. A revised and expanded edition was published in 2017.

### Background

In November 1997, Peter Straus, then head of Picador, met Ramachandra Guha and suggested that he write a history of independent India. Straus had read an article by Guha in the Oxford journal *Past and Present*. He suggested that since Indian historians

typically stopped their narratives with Indian independence in 1947, a scholarly analysis of modern Indian history post-independence would be of interest. Guha signed a contract in March 1998, with a delivery date for the book specified for March 2002.<sup>[4]</sup>

In writing the book, Guha consulted the private papers of several important Indian personalities, as well as newspaper records, housed at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. The private papers of Indian independence activist and politician C Rajagopalachari and P N Haksar, Indira Gandhi's principal secretary 1967 and 1973, were especially useful to Guha's research. Guha sent across his final draft to Straus in 2006, and the book was published in 2007.

## THE IMMORTALS OF MELUHA

**The Immortals of Meluha** is the first book of Amish Tripathi, first book of Amishverse, and also the first book of Shiva Trilogy. The story is set in the land of Meluha and starts with the arrival of the Shiva. Meluha is a near perfect empire, created many centuries earlier by Lord Ram, one of the greatest kings that ever lived. However, the once proud empire and its Suryavanshi rulers face severe crisis as its primary river, Saraswati, was slowly drying to extinction. They also face devastating attacks from the Chandravanshis who have joined forces with the Nagas, a cursed race of people with physical deformities. The present Meluhan king, Daksha, sends his emissaries to Tibet, to invite the local tribes to Meluha.

Shiva, chief of the Guna tribe, has been dealing with attacks from a rival tribe for many years. There is no peace to be had and the conflict has led to the death of many. Concluding that moving from Tibet will bring peace to his people and wanting a better



future for them, he accepts the proposal sent by Daksha and moves to Meluha with his people. Once reached they are received by Ayurvati, the Chief of Medicine of the Meluhans. The Gunas are impressed with the Meluhan way of life. On their first night of stay the tribe wake up with high fever and sweating. The Meluhan doctors administer medicine.

Ayurvati finds out that Shiva is the only one devoid of these symptoms and that his throat has turned blue. The Meluhans announce Shiva as the Neelkanth, their fabled saviour. Shiva is then taken to Devagiri, the capital city of Meluha, where he meets Daksha. While staying there, Shiva and his comrades, Nandi and Veerbhadra, encounter Princess Sati, the daughter of Daksha. She is a Vikarma, an untouchable person due to sins committed in her previous births. Shiva tries to court her, but she rejects his advances. Ultimately Shiva wins her heart and even though the Vikarma rule prohibits them from doing so, an enraged Shiva vows to dissolve it and marries Sati.<sup>[1]</sup>

During his stay in Devagiri, Shiva learns of the war with the Chandravanshis and also meets Brahaspati, the Chief Inventor of the Meluhans. Brahaspati invites Shiva and the royal family on an expedition to Mount Mandar, where the legendary drink Somras is manufactured using the waters of the Saraswati. Shiva learns that the potion which made his throat turn blue was actually undiluted Somras, which can be lethal when taken in its pure form. But he was safe, indicating him to be the Neelkanth. Somras has anti-ageing properties making the Meluhans live for many years. Brahaspati and Shiva develop a close friendship and the royal family returns to Devagiri. One morning, the Meluhans wake up to a blast that took place at Mandar, destroying parts of the mountain and killing the scientists living there. There is no sign of Brahaspati, but Shiva finds the insignia of the Nagas, confirming their involvement with the Chandravanshis.

Enraged by this, Shiva declares war on the Chandravanshis at Swadweep, consulting with Devagiri Chief Minister Kanakhala and the Head of Meluhan Army, Parvateshwar. A fierce battle is fought between the Meluhans and the Swadweepans in which the Meluhans prevail. The Chandravanshi king is captured but becomes enraged upon seeing the Neelkanth. The Chandravanshi princess Anandmayi explains that they too had a similar legend that the Neelkanth will come forward to save their land by launching an assault against the "evil" Suryavanshis. Hearing this, Shiva is dumbfounded and utterly distressed. With Sati he visits the famous Ram temple of Ayodhya, the capital of Swadweep. There he has a philosophical discussion with the priest about his karma, fate and his choices in life, which would guide him in future. As Shiva comes out of the temple, he finds Sati being kidnapped by a Naga.

## CHRONICLE OF A CORPSE BEARER

“Because if the dead are really and truly dead, null and void, snuffed out without a trace – then everything we grow up believing in is a lie. All religion, theology, my father’s life and beliefs and prayers, the pumped-up ‘power of faith’ – everything is simply wishful thinking.”

*Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer* is a story in which a lot is written, but very little is said. On the whole, considering the potential of the subject matter at hand, I feel a tad underwhelmed by the book. The title rouses one’s interest, but the title may just be its most interesting part.

***Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer*** is a 2012 novel written by author and playwright Cyrus Mistry. Set in pre-Independence era of India, the book is about the Parsi community of corpse bearers who carry the dead bodies for burial in Bombay.<sup>[1][2]</sup> The idea for the novel came to Mistry in 1991, when he was researching the subject for a film producer,

who wanted to make a documentary on it by Channel 4. The film could not be made so Mistry decided to write it as a novel.

*Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer* won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature in 2014 and the Sahitya Akademi Award for English in 2015.

Phiroze Elchidana is a Parsi corpse bearer aka "khandhias" of the Parsi community whose job is to collect the dead, perform the last rites and rituals before the corpses are left to decay or consumed by the vultures. The son of a priest who is inept at his studies, Phiroze compounds his family's disappointment by falling in love with Sepideh, the daughter of a khandhia. He later marries her and becomes a corpse bearer himself. Sepideh dies, leaving Phiroze and his daughter in sorrow.

## UNIT-II

### SHRILAL SHUKLA: RAAG DARBARI

Q.1 Write an analysis of political scenario in India in Rag Darbari.

OR

Rag Darbari is a satirical novel. Comment.

ANS. The novel highlights the failing values present in post-independence Indian society. It exposes the helplessness of intellectuals in the face of a strong and corrupt nexus between criminals, businessmen, police politicians.

The story does not have a fixed plot – it is merely a series of anecdotes. The novel is narrated from the point of view of Ranganath, a research student in history, who comes to live with his uncle, Vaidyaji, in a village named Shivpalganj in Uttar Pradesh for a few months. He learns how his uncle uses all the village institutions—the village school, the village panchayat, the local government offices for his political purpose. The conduct of his uncle and the petty village politicians is in stark contrast to the ideals that Ranganath has learnt to aspire to during his university education. There are several such incidents, one after the other, that shatter Ranganath's lofty ideals and faith in justice. He is a mere spectator of the system – unable to make a mark or stand up for himself.

Shrilal Shukla was notable for his satire. He worked as a Provincial Civil Services (PCS) officer for the state government of Uttar Pradesh. He has written over 25 books including *Raag-Darbari*, *Makaan*, *Sooni Ghaati Ka Sooraj*, *Pehla Padaav* and *Bisrampur Ka Sant*.

Shukla has highlighted the falling moral values in the Indian society in the post-independence era through his novels. His writings expose the negative aspects of life in rural and urban India in a satirical manner. Shukla received the *Jnanpith Award*, the highest Indian literary award, in 2011. His first major award was the *Sahitya Akademi Award* for his novel *Raag Darbari* in 1969. He received the *Vyas Samman* award in 1999 for the novel *Bisrampur ka Sant*. In 2008, he was awarded the *Padma Bhushan* by the President of India for his contribution to Indian literature and culture.

*Raag Darbari* is a Sahitya Academy award-winning work of noted Hindi writer Sh Shrilal Shukla. It is probably one of its kinds book that describes the rural life of post-independence India in its entirety. And with a satire in the tone. I have had this book *Raag Darbari* for more than 5 years. But it was the death of the author that triggered me to pick up the book and read it as a tribute to him.

The story covers six months in the village of Shivpalganj, probably somewhere in UP. During which time a postgraduate from the city comes to spend time in this village where his maternal uncle is a de-facto head.

At regular intervals, the story keeps introducing characters of the village through their stories. And linkages with the main characters. It showcases how those in power dictate the lives of people. More importantly, how the power center is created. The college is a center for political activities, where trustees, principal, teachers, and students are key players. At times, it seems the whole purpose of college is to hone the political skills. Rather than teach or be taught.

Vaidya Ji, an Ayurvedic practitioner who is the managing director of the college is the power center of the village. He has two sons. Elder son a wrestler and younger a student leader. People meet at his place every evening and enjoy Bhang along with moving the wheels of the village politics. Then there is a common man who throughout

the story tries to get a small job done without paying a bribe. There are people from the trading community who are not interested in doing anything but their business. Caste, although not very important, but is the first identity of the person.

This work is a documentation of the life as it existed in a village in India in mid 20th century. Just after the country became independent. It may have sounded very simple then. But today it is a mirror of those times. There are things like wrestling that must have been common in villages then but are now almost extinct. Surprisingly, there are almost no women characters in the whole novel, except a small incident involving a girl. Women do exist in the fantasy of men. But have absolutely no role in what happens in the day-to-day activities of the village. Even when the home scenes are described, women are not mentioned. It almost feels like that the village is devoid of women. Of course, the society was and probably still is absolutely male dominated. Looks like women always played their roles through men in their family.

There are interesting incidents like that of tying a knot in the village by the visitor and saying that it is the name of Hanuman Ji. By next day the story becomes a legend and the field is full of knots. You laugh when you read the cleverly written incident. But then you think is it not how many of the rituals around us may have been formed. Though a lot has changed in 40+ years since the book was first written, you can relate to almost everything even today. The core of our society has not changed, we might have changed completely on the surface. The power politics goes on in any place, which has more than a few members. More energy is spent on getting the power in hands and using it once you have got it than doing the actual work.

There is an excellent description of how the power changes the man through the character of Sanichar, common man becomes a pawn for the power brokers. There is a critical look at how Government schemes are targeted by the villagers. And how their professions change based on what Government funding scheme is being launched. This is so true even today. When you travel to villages you see how the villagers have milked all sources of funding including loans, irrespective of if they can repay it or not. In fact, in most cases, there is no intent to repay.

There is an intellectual analysis that the visiting nephew of Vaidya Ji tries to do. But in the end, he realizes that there is nothing that can be done. He observes himself getting rough and roguelike villagers and getting involved in their matters. He questions but gets no answers. Probably a satire at self-styled intellectuals who think they have all the answers sitting in their ivory towers but are far removed from reality. Confronted with reality, they are completely at loss, and at best can get absorbed in it.

Wright writes about the author:

“If fiction is the moral history of our time Shrilal Shukla chronicled it with a poignancy never seen before”

-Frontline

## **UNIT-III**

### **RAMESH C SHAH: VINAYAK**

Q.1 Write the character sketch of Vinayak.

OR

What is the theme of Vinayak?

OR

Theme of identity, morality and social justice is portrayed by Ramesh C Shah in *Vinayak*.

ANS. Ramesh Chandra Shah is an Indian poet, novelist, critic and the author of Sahitya Academy Award winning novel, *Vinayak*. He was honoured by the Government of India in 2004 with Padma Shri, the fourth highest Indian civilian award

Shah is credited with several books composed of poems, short stories, travelogue, essays and novels. His first novel, *Gobar Ganesh*, based on the lives of middle-class families in Almora, came out in 2004. *Vinayak*, a 2011 work which is considered by many as an extension of his first novel, fetched him the Sahitya Academy Award in 2014.

*Vinayak*, a Sahitya Akademi-award winning Hindi novel, as a sequel to the author's first novel *Gobar Ganesh*, according to the novelist, is the "pratismriti" (remembrance of our national-cultural memories) and the katha or narrative of India as a civilizational state. Its multi- perspectival, multi-centric kathanak (plot), involving characters representing a cross-section of Indian society, is marked by engaging and interesting debates on such issues as gender-politics, cultural imperialism, casteism, communalism, the Kashmir-question and the condition of Kashmiri Pundits, sustainable development, ecological consciousness, swaraj or decolonization of mind, role of "Breaking- India" forces camouflaged as NGO-activism, and the all-embracing nature of the spiritual that subsumes the secular, the significance of purusharthas or cardinal principles of life, etc. A sahridaya or cultivated reader would also relish how deftly the narrative echoes the voices of such great masters as Valmiki, Vyas, Krishna, Keats, Rilke, Yeats, Eliot, Naipaul, Proust, Prasad and others.

The novel delves into the complexities of human relationships, the passage of time, and the interplay between tradition and modernity. The story revolves around the life of the protagonist, Vinayak and his interactions with the people and events that shape his journey.

*Vinayak*'s character is portrayed as a reflective and introspective individual who grapples with the changing dynamics of his personal and professional life. The novel explores themes such as identity, cultural heritage, and the inevitable changes brought about by societal progress. Through *Vinayak*'s experiences Shah highlights the struggles and conflicts that arise when one tries balance the old one with the new.

The narrative is enriched with vivid descriptions and a deep understanding of human emotions, making it a compelling read. Shah's writing is a compelling read. Shah's writing is known for its lyrical quality and philosophical depth and "*Vinayak*" is no exception. The

novel invites readers to contemplate the essence of life and the impact of time on human existence.

Vinayak, the protagonist of the novel, is a young Brahmin boy growing up in a small town in Uttar Pradesh. He is a complex and dynamic character, struggling to find his place in a society dominated by caste and social hierarchies.

Vinayak is a curious and sensitive boy, often questioning the traditions and values of his community. He is drawn to the stories of his grandfather, who was a social reformer, and wants to make a difference in his own life. Vinayak is also deeply conflicted, struggling with his own desires and the expectations placed upon him by his family and society.

Vinayak's main conflict is his desire to break free from the constraints of his caste and social status. He wants to pursue his own interests and make his own choices, but is constantly reminded of his duties as a Brahmin. He is also torn between his loyalty to his family and his growing sense of social justice.

Vinayak's relationships with others are crucial to his development as a character. His friendship with Kishan, a Dalit boy, opens his eyes to the harsh realities of caste discrimination. His relationship with his father is complex, as he struggles to balance his respect for tradition with his desire for independence. His mother, Durga, is a source of comfort and support, but also represents the limitations placed on women in their society.

Vinayak's inner turmoil is a major aspect of his character. He is constantly questioning his own identity and purpose, upon him. He struggles with feelings of guilt, shame and anger, as he navigates the complexities of his own desires and the demands of his community.

Throughout the novel, Vinayak undergoes significant growth and development. He develops a stronger sense of self and purpose, eventually finding the courage to make his own choice and forge his own path.

Overall, Vinayak is a rich and nuanced character, full of contradiction and complexities. His struggles & triumphs make him a deeply relatable and human figure, and his story serves as a powerful exploration of identity, morality and social justice.



## **UNIT IV**

### **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

#### **1)Night of the Scorpion**

Q.1 Write critical appreciation of the poem Night of the Scorpion.

ANS. "I remember the night my mother  
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours

of steady rain had driven him  
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

Parting with his poison – flash  
of diabolic tail in the dark room –  
he risked the rain again.”

This poem begins at the beginning, with the speaker telling the story of how his mother was stung by a scorpion. Ezekiel does not use unnecessary phrasing or extra words, he gets right to the point. He describes how the scorpion had been driven inside by “steady rain” and had decided to hide beneath a “sack of rice.”

Nissim Ezekiel's *Night of the Scorpion* is a strong yet simple statement on the power of self-effacing love. Full to the brim with Indianness, it captures a well-detached black and white snapshot of Indian village life with all its superstitious simplicity. The poet dramatizes a battle of ideas fought at night in lamplight between good and evil; between darkness and light; between rationalism and blind faith. And out of this confusion, there arises an unexpected winner – the selfless love of a mother. The poem opens with the poet's reminiscence of a childhood experience. One night his mother was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours of steady rain had driven the scorpion to hiding beneath a sack of rice. After inflicting unbearable pain upon the mother with a flash of its diabolic tail, the scorpion risked the rain again. The peasant-folk of the village came like swarms of flies and expressed their sympathy. They believed that with every movement the scorpion made, the poison would move in mother's blood. So, with lighted candles and lanterns they began to search for him, but in vain. To console the mother they opened the bundle of their superstitions. They told mother that the suffering and pain will burn away the sins of her previous birth. “May the suffering decrease the misfortunes of your next birth too”, they said. Mother twisted and groaned in mortifying pain. Her husband, who was sceptic and rationalist, tried every curse and blessing; powder, herb and hybrid. As a last resort he even poured a little paraffin on the bitten part and put a match to it. The painful night was long and the holy man came and played his part. He performed his rites and tried to tame the poison with an incantation. After twenty hours the poison lost its sting. The ironic twist in the poem comes when in the end the mother who suffered in silence opens her mouth. She says, “Thank God the scorpion picked on me and spared my children.”

**Delineate the Indian background, idea and theme of the poem Night of the Scorpion:-**

**Night of the Scorpion** creates a profound impact on the reader with an interplay of images relating to good and evil, light and darkness. Then the effect is heightened once again with the chanting of the people and its magical, incantatory effect. The beauty of the poem lies in that the mother's comment lands the reader quite abruptly on simple,

humane grounds with an ironic punch. It may even remind the reader of the simplistic prayer of Leo Tolstoy's three hermits: "Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us."

**Indian Background:** Ezekiel is known to be a detached observer of the Indian scenario and this stance often has the power of a double-edged sword that cuts both ways. On the one side *Night of the Scorpion* presents an Indian village through the eyes of an outsider and finds the deep-rooted strains of superstition and blind faith which may seem foolish to the western eye. But on the other, the poem never fails to highlight the positive side of Indian village life. The poet does not turn a blind eye to the fellow-feeling, sympathy and cooperation shown by the villagers. And in a poem that deals with the all-conquering power of love, the reader too should be well aware of it.

**Clash of Ideas:** There is a contrast between the world of irrationality represented by the villagers and the world of rationalism represented by the father who tries all rational means to save his wife from suffering. Religion too plays its role with the holy man saying his prayers. But all three become futile. Or do they? One cannot totally ignore the underlying current of love and fellow feeling in their endeavours.

**Theme:** Images of the dark forces of evil abound in **Night of the Scorpion**; the diabolic tail of the scorpion, giant scorpion shadows on the sun-baked walls and the night itself point to evil. In fact, the poem is about the pertinent question as to what can conquer evil. Where superstition, rationalism and religion proved futile, the self-effacing love of a mother had its say. Once again it is "Amor vincit omnia." Love conquers all, and that is all you need to know.

Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Night of the Scorpion" presents a rural Indian village and its people. It came from a religious background and Ezekiel wrote this poem trying to give the impression of anger, but also an underlying message of motherly love, along with a hint of culture and superstition:

After twenty hours  
it lost its sting.  
My mother only said  
Thank God the scorpion picked on me  
And spared my children.

The last lines of the poem carry the irony, that is, the poet's mother expresses her gratitude to God for saving her children. According to scholar Pona Mohanta, "The concern of the villagers and the poet's father seem rather superficial when pitted against the heartfelt feelings of his mother."<sup>1</sup> It is a universal truth that a mother cannot tolerate the pain and suffering of her children. In the context of the poem, this is not exceptional because the poet's mother expresses her concern for her children just after the relief from the intense pain which conveys an underlying gesture of unconditional motherly love.

## **POEM 2) A TIME TO CHANGE**

Q.1 Write critical appreciation of the poem A Time To Change.

OR

Write a note on the theme of the poem A Time To Change.

ANS. Ezekiel's first collection of poetry, *A Time To Change*, is largely concerned with the writing process, poetry, religion, and spirituality. Ezekiel's earlier works, as exemplified by this collection, are characterized by lofty language and an acute focus on rhyme, meter, and poetic form. The lines of each of the poems are similar in length, and if the poem has stanzas, every stanza has a similar number of lines. Thus, the poems in *A Time to Change* are overwhelmingly symmetric, which further emphasizes Ezekiel's early reliance upon a strict poetic form. Unlike Ezekiel's later collections, which focus on the specifics of daily Indian life, *A Time to Change* tackles larger concerns, such as the power and

accuracy of communication, the limits of language, the natural world, sexuality, human nature, and religion. A common characteristic of Ezekiel's early work is that the titles of the poem are directly related to and even describe the content of the poem itself. In comparison to Ezekiel's later works, the poems in *A Time to Change* feel much more formal and less conversational. Additionally, these early poems display an interest in global issues instead of addressing the specifics of life in India. As a whole, this work employs methods of thinking and of using language that call back to a classical Western tradition.

One of the most pervasive themes throughout *A Time to Change* is the power (and limits) of language to portray the human condition. For example, the titular poem, "A Time to Change," is concerned with authenticity and the duty of the poet to employ "precise communication". The speaker imagines the poet as a "stubborn workman" who labors over language in the hopes that the "secret faults" of the world are "concealed no more". "On Meeting a Pedant," a later poem, touches on the limits of language as compared to lived experience. The speaker compares language to "a Chinese Wall" which "rots the impulse" of the lived world. As a result of this observation, the speaker demands the pleasures of the world while revoking language: "Give me touch of men and give me smell of / Fornication, pregnancy and spices. / But spare me words as cold as print, insidious / Words, dressed in evening clothes for drawing rooms". In "A Word for the Wind," towards the middle of the collection, the speaker laments being unable to find a specific word that describes the wind: "I cannot find a word for the wind". This poem uses irony, however, to show that the speaker *does*, in fact, know how to describe the wind through his imagery and rhythm. His words wind through the poem with a movement that evokes wind.

The theme of the power (and limits) of language arises again in "Advice." In the poem, the speaker relays advice he gave to an acquaintance, including telling him to "be tolerant" and "creative". However, by the end of the poem, the speaker reveals that the person he is giving advice to is actually dying: "And then I watched him die and turned away, / Could not save him, merely had my say". As a whole, the poem communicates Ezekiel's anxiety about the futility of language in the face of real-world consequences. The poet uses the interaction between the speaker and the dying man as a meditation on the efficacy of language when life and death are at stake. In a certain way, Ezekiel questions the power of poetry in this poem, and in turn, questions himself: do his poems hold any real weight in the real world?

### **POEM 3) POET, LOVER, BIRDWATCHER**

Q.1 Write a critical analysis of the poem Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher.

ANS.

“To force the pace and never to be still  
Is not the way of those who study birds  
Or women. The best poets wait for words.”

- Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher

This poem appeared in *The Exact Name* (1965). It outlines the method that a poet should adopt to achieve success in his chosen vocation of writing poetry. He gives the

analogy of a lover and a birdwatcher here to illustrate his point. In each case, illumination or fulfillment comes through a patient wait and through silent perseverance.

In "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher," the speaker describes the process of writing poetry and compares it to being a lover or a birdwatcher. The speaker notes that "to force the pace and never to be still" will not get one very far if one wants to "study birds / or women". The speaker then reveals the point of these comparisons: "The best poets wait for words"

The speaker notes that this waiting should not be strenuous and instead should be as peaceful as "patient love relaxing on a hill". From this relaxation, the poet/lover/birdwatcher can notice details, like a bird's wing or the moment a woman gives in to love.

The speaker moves on to say that he finds much more meaning from "slow movement". In order to find the rarer birds, the speaker advises, one must go off the beaten path toward areas that are "remote and thorny". Once one arrives at such a location, the bird or woman one was chasing will "slowly turn around". Poetic creativity is discovered in this place, a power so transformative that because of it, "the deaf can hear, the blind recover sight".

"Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" is known as one of Ezekiel's more 'serious' poems, as is evidenced by the content and the form. Ezekiel does not use an ironic tone at all in this poem, which is relatively rare for him. The seriousness of the content is reflected in a strict meter and rhyme scheme. The capitalizations at the beginning of each line have returned. Additionally, the poem is broken up into two stanzas with two lines each, which visually signals symmetry and perfection for the reader. All of these formal elements slow the reader down and force her to digest that which she is reading and in turn take it more seriously.

Because this poem is essentially about writing poems, it can be classified as an *ars poetica*. Ezekiel has written many an *ars poetica* throughout his career, but "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" is by far his most famous. Perhaps this is because it is only partly about the writing process; the rest of the poem is about nature and love. In fact, the transition from one image to another is so seamless in this poem that the poet (and his poem), lover (and his woman), and birdwatcher (and his birds) melt into one persona in order to carry the poem to the end.

This poem contains the theme of self-examination, which pops up again and again throughout Ezekiel's work. He notes that his process is hardly orthodox: "and sense is found / By poets lost in crooked, restless flight". It is this "restless" flight that the poet is forced to complete in the search for inspiration. Likewise, the bird in the poem is symbolic for the quest for self-knowledge, which turns out to be elusive, restless, and often rare in Ezekiel's writing. In the same vein, the female image can be read as representing a fertile creative impulse. No real advancements are made in the poem, however, until the poet, lover, and birdwatcher become one.

The poem juxtaposes the patience required for birdwatching and wooing women with the hasty nature of modern life. Unlike poets who rush to express their emotions, those who truly appreciate nature and love must exercise patience and observe from afar.

The poem is similar to Ezekiel's other works in its exploration of human relationships, but it differs in its focus on the natural world. The poem reflects the mid-20th century movement towards environmentalism and the search for authenticity in a rapidly changing world.

The poem's simple language and unassuming tone create an atmosphere of contemplation and reflection. The slow, deliberate pace mirrors the process of bird watching and love, suggesting that true understanding requires patience and observation.

## **POEM 4) THE PATRIOT**

Q.1 Write the theme of the poem The Patriot.

OR

The poem satirizes India's post-independence period, marked by social unrest, political violence, and a rejection of traditional values. Comment.

ANS.

"I am standing for peace and non-violence.

Why world is fighting fighting

Why all people of world"

- The Patriot



This poem satirizes India's post-independence period, marked by social unrest, political violence, and a rejection of traditional values. The speaker, a self-proclaimed patriot, bemoans the decline of ancient Indian wisdom and the embrace of Western materialism. The poem's simple language and colloquial style contrast with its serious themes, creating a sense of irony.

The poem is similar to Ezekiel's other works in its use of humor and social commentary. However, it is unique in its focus on the specific political and social issues of India in the 1970s. The poem reflects the disillusionment and frustration felt by many Indians during this period of rapid change and upheaval.

Today's poem is in many ways typical of Ezekiel: a wry view of patriotism mixed with some fairly sarcastic political commentary. It appears to have been written around the time of the infamous Emergency in 1977 (which was invoked by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi - to suppress her political rivals, according to some).

That particular Indira regime was marked by lots of corruption, a '20 point program' for regeneration, the forced sterilization of people (to implement a "one family, one child" rule mooted by her power hungry and vicious son Sanjay Gandhi)...

... all as seen through the eyes of an old pedant gossiping over a cup of lassi (sweetened yoghurt) with his neighbor. Also, note the dig at the 'unity in diversity' which is official Indian policy. India is a huge mix of several races - most of which speak different languages, wear different clothes ...  
for example, many Indian languages use doubled verbs to indicate an ongoing action, hence phrases like "world is fighting fighting" in today's poem.

The poem is written in a simple and colloquial language.

The poet being living during a time where India was achieving independence from the british is reflected in the poem hence the growing alienation and dissatisfaction among people living in the country is reflected in the poem.

The poem is written in a colloquial language is Indian English that is mended to convey a very serious and patriotic meaning to the readers. now a days every one are interested in English and want to master in it. But today's youth is going on fashion and foreign things . He also uses the touch of Indian words like goonda fellow, Indira behn , lassi, ram rajya ,hindi wallahs, so on. the poet tells us the greatest known fact that an average Indian subscribes to the gandhian ideals but doesn't follows them in ones life. Its portrays the present situation where the youth runs for fashion and aping the western people without having the patriotism and love for ones own country and its diverse culture and ethnicity, the poet putting humor in this poem reflects the poet's sarcasm as he observes the people about him carefully. He even adds a the famous lines from Julius Caesar to show an impression of how

“good” his English is the poetry is conversational and informal where the poet even offers an Indian drink called lassi and comparing it with wine which is said to be meant for drunkards.

The notion of all men being brothers is not correct because of the constant fights and clashes between India Pakistan and China. Moreover India with its diverse languages is still united and is one. The poem expresses concerns over global violence to state politics. Even some of the stills forms part of our daily lives . its indirectly referring to the importance of peace and how violence is actually a saddening phenomena in this world. The usage of humor makes the poem entertaining and many references of the Indian society and even the mention of the Indian newspaper times of India.

Ezekiel presents that the new generation is going after 'fashion and foreign things.' He presents the typical Indian make - up. The Indian living conditions are sought to be portrayed. The India of yesteryears is no longer to be seen here, as modernization and industrialization have speeded up the process of change. The regrettable thing in the modern world is the act of violence and anti

—  
social tendencies proving to be a menace. Still the positive aspects like regeneration, remuneration and contraception could be thought of as a way out of the present muddle. One can certainly hope for the better and propagate the best that is thought as unique.

In the second stanza, the readers get a peep into things - Indians as Gandhi's heir, he would opt for peace and non - violence. He is puzzled why others are not following Gandhi's advice - while in this estimate, the ancient Indian wisdom is correct, contrastively the modern generation takes it to whatever is western and fashionable - like other Indians, he too has to improve his English language. The student interest and petty agitations make him feel sickening line Antony's appeal to the Roman mob, he will call upon the fellow citizens to think of the past masters.

Thus in the third stanza, he pronounces, In order to get away from that which is disgusting, he wants to have a cup of wine which is very good for digestion. It can be taken as equivalent to the western wine if only a little salt is added to make it a lovely drink. The poet confesses that he is the total abstainer from drinks while it is taken by addicts to gunch themselves, he for his part would turn to simple drinks like lassi. Thus, the poet tries to receive the old Gandhian days.

## POEM 5) THE VISITOR

Q.1 The poem is based on a common Indian superstition. Comment.

OR

Write the theme of the poem The Visitor.

ANS.

*“ Three times the crow has cawed  
At the window baleful eyes fixed  
On mine, wings slightly raised...”  
- The Visitor*

**The Visitor** appears in **The Exact Name (1965)**. The poem is based on a common Indian superstition that, if we hear a crow cawing on the roof or a wall in our house in the morning, it is a sign that a visitor would arrive during the day and that we should be ready to receive him. The poet's own experience of this superstition turns out to be true.

However, the poet is disappointed when the visitor arrives because he has nothing worthwhile to say to him and their conversation is trivial and insubstantial.

The crow has cawed three times at the window of the poet's room. It has been gazing ominously at his eyes. Its wings are somewhat uplifted in a spiteful posture as if holding out the threat of a visitor. It looks tense with its neck stretched out like the neck of a woman scolding her husband. It is not all relaxed and the room is filled with its cawing sound.

The poet has received the crow's message thrice as he sits lost in his thoughts; he has been thinking of the well - being of everything and everyone in the world. He is now worried how he will receive and deal with the visitor whose thoughts and opinions might not be in consonance with his own.

The poet waits all day for the arrival of the visitor because of its being associated with the cawing of a crow. The visitor might be an angel in the garb of a human being or an evil in an unfamiliar shape, trying to test the poet's integrity. If an evil being, the visitor would ruin the poet's sleep at night by holding out some temptation and eventually leading him astray.

But what happened was not what the poet had expected. The visitor came empty - handed; he had come only to while away his time. No doubt, he had good intentions. But he had nothing important to say; all his talk was trivial and inconsequential. In fact, there was more substance in the smoke that their cigarettes emitted than there was in their conversation.

The poet realized how mistaken he was in his assumptions about the visitor. His arrival was as trivial and routine as everyday occurrences in our lives. He had failed to foresee that miracles take place only inside the human mind and that, outside the mind; one sees only such ordinary things as the figure woven into a carpet by the carpet - maker and looking conspicuous. Or, one sees only the changes which take place in the man - woman sexual relations, or the change of seasons.

The narrator notices a crow at his window, cawing exactly three times. It exhibits sinister look in its eyes and posture. It stares the narrator in an awkward manner like it is trying to say something to him. He compared it with "a nagging woman" who dominates with her personality and voice wherever she goes.

The crow's cawing of exact three times hints the narrator that a visitor is going to come over his house. In Indian culture, there is a belief that a crow's arrival marks the arrival of a guest. Believing it, this knowledge of a coming visitor keeps looming in his head while sleeping. He begins to prepare his house to make way for a visitor. The idea of having a guest prevents him to be attentive to his "muddy clothes". He knows that he will have to compromise on his own terms with the choices or preferences of the guest.

The narrator waits all day for his upcoming visitor. He thinks about the belief and wonders if the visitor would be "an angel in disguise" or perhaps, his heart's "temptation" in different form intending to ruin his sleep and comfortable life.

The reality doesn't resonate with his expectations. The visitor comes but he brings or offers nothing relevant to the narrator. He visits the narrator to pass his time. They smoke cigarettes and converse but their talk is frivolous and has no weight. It seems that the narrator is not interested in neither the person nor his talks.

Now the narrator introspects and comes to know that his expectations were entirely untrue and baseless. He points that our mind has a miraculous power to imagine things which we desire. But the reality is crude and monotonous, a life where he visualizes the drawings in the carpet and the arrival and departure of both sexual fulfillment and seasons. He fails to see the ordinary things in his life.

## **Unit IV**

### **KAMALA DAS**

#### **Poem 1**

#### **An Introduction**

Ques. Self- reflection and and confessional tone is described by the poet in An Introduction.

Ans. "An Introduction" is perhaps the most famous of the poems written by Kamala Das in a self-reflective and confessional tone from her maiden publication Summer in Calcutta(1965). The poem is a strong remark on Patriarchal Society

prevalent today and brings to light the miseries, bondage, pain suffered by the fairer sex in such times.

The poet says that she is not interested in politics but claims that she can name all the people who have been in power right from the time of Nehru. By saying that she can repeat them as fluently as days of week, or names of the month, she indirectly states the fact that politics in the country is a game of few chosen elite who ironically rule a democracy. The fact that she remembers them so well depicts that the same people have been in power time and again.

Next, she describes herself saying that she is an Indian, born in Malabar and very brown in colour. She speaks in three languages, writes in two and dreams in one, articulating the thought that Dreams have their own universal language. Kamala Das echoes that the medium of writing is not as significant as is the comfort level that one requires. People asked her not to write in English since isn't her mother tongue. Moreover, the fact that English was a colonial language prevalent as medium of communication during British times drew even more criticism every time she had an encounter with a critic, friends, or visiting cousins. She emphasizes that the language she speaks becomes her own, all its imperfections and queerness become her own. It is half-English, half-Hindi, which seems rather amusing but the point is that it is honest. Its imperfections only make it more human, rendering it close to what we call Natural. It is the language of her expression and emotion as it voices her joys, sorrows and hopes. It is as integral to her as cawing is to the crows and roaring to the lions. Though imperfect, It is not a deaf, blind speech like that of trees in storm or the clouds of rain. Neither does it echo the "incoherent mutterings of the funeral pyre." Instead, it has an inherent natural coherence of its own.

She moves on telling her own story. She was a child, and later people told her that she had grown up for her body had started showing signs of puberty. But she didn't seem to understand this interpretation because at the heart she was still but a child. When she asked for love from her soulmate not knowing what else to ask, he took the sixteen-year-old to his bedroom. The expression is a strong criticism of child marriage which pushes children into such a predicament while

they are still very childish at heart. Though he didn't beat her, she felt beaten and her body seemed crushed under her own weight. This is a very emphatic expression of how unprepared the body of a sixteen-year-old is for the assault it gets subjected to. She shrank pitifully, ashamed of her femininity.

She tries to overcome such humiliation by being tomboyish. And thereafter when she opts for male clothing to hide her femininity, the guardians enforce typical female attire, with warnings to fit into the socially determined attributes of a woman, to become a wife and a mother and get confined to the domestic routine. She is threatened to remain within the four walls of her female space lest she should make herself a psychic or a maniac. They even ask her to hold her tears when rejected in love. She calls them categorizers since they tend to categorise every person on the basis of points that are purely whimsical.

Towards the end of the poem, the poet describes her encounters with a man. She doesn't take names, for it is the symbolism in her relationship that she seeks to convey. He is every other man who wants a woman, like an embodiment of the hungry haste of river, while she is every other woman, an embodiment of patience like the ocean's tireless waiting. When she asks every such man who he is, he replies saying he is I. The poet herein through symbolism presents to the readers the inherent male ego of a patriarchal society. He is rigid in his mindset like a "the sword in its sheath", and his views are not open to discussion. It is this "I" i.e. male ego that justifies lying drunk at 12 in the night in a hotel in some strange town, that justifies the condescending laughs, that makes love to woman and then feels ashamed about being so easily carried away, and yet dies with a rattle in the throat, like everyone else. Death exposes the futility of male ego, showing that the "he" is no greater than "she". Thus the poet concludes by saying that this "I" should be no different from "her", and thus I is both the sinner and the saint, both the betrayer and the betrayed, and both the man and the woman. There are no joys to "I" that she doesn't get to experience, nor any pains to him that she hasn't gone through. Thus "She" is "I" too.

# KAMALA DAS

## Poem 2

### My Grandmother's House

**Ques. Theme of loneliness, desire for love, longing and nostalgia is depicted by Kamala Das in My Grandmother's House.**

Ans. My Grandmother's House by Kamala Das was an auto-biographical poem in which the poet memorized her past days at her grandmother's house and how the love and affection she got from her grandmother had been lost since her death. The house had become deserted after the demise of her grandmother. It became a place of silence over the death of the old woman because her grandmother was the very soul of that house. After her grandmother's death the snakes were moving on the books. The poet was too young, she couldn't read anyway and she didn't really understand what was going on. All these things made the house quite horrible and the poet's blood turned cold like the moon. But still, the poet expressed her desire to go back to the house because she was emotionally attached to that house since her childhood. She wanted to look through and observe closely through the windows, which might be blind eyes as no one was there in the house. The air of the house was frozen, because no fresh air had circulated through the house since the death of her grandmother, as it was locked. The poet wished to pick up an armful of darkness which was a reminder of the past and wanted to take it back to her distressed, troubled and hopeless life so that even a pinch of darkness from her beloved grandmother's house might provide her with security and warmth. This shows that her present life is worse than the darkness of the empty house of her grandmother. The poet was really desperate for her grandmother's memories that even darkness would be enough to ease her current crisis. She told her husband that he could never believe that his wife once found happiness in the small house of her grandmother. In that house, she was very much loved and felt proud. Her marriage no longer assures her security and love. She knew well that she wouldn't be able to get that much love but she still hoped for at least a part of it. Hence the poem ended with hope and despair.

#### Longing and Nostalgia

The speaker of "My Grandmother's House" mourns the loss of her grandmother, the person who provided her with the only unconditional love she's ever known. She dreams of going back to her grandmother's house, which has fallen into disarray in the



wake of the grandmother's death. This house represents a time when the speaker was cherished and nurtured, and she finds even its "Darkness" more comforting than the terrible loneliness of her adult life. The speaker's desire to visit her grandmother's house is really a wish to revisit the love and security of her childhood. But this poem implies that such comforts are difficult (if not impossible) to regain once they're lost.

The speaker describes her grandmother's house as a place where she "once / [...] received love," and she also says that when her grandmother died, she was still "too young / To read." By emphasizing how young the speaker was when she lived with her grandmother, the poem connects the house to the innocence and vulnerability of the speaker's childhood.

The fact that her grandmother's house is now "far away" and has fallen into disrepair shows how distant the speaker feels from that loving world of her youth. When her grandmother "died," the speaker says, "The house withdrew into silence" and "snakes moved / Among books," images that suggest the speaker felt utterly abandoned after her grandmother's death: what was once a loving home becomes a dangerous wasteland.

The speaker's longing to return to her grandmother's house, meanwhile, reflects her desire to experience unconditional love again. "How often I think of going / There," the speaker says of the abandoned house. Of course, the poem implies that such a return isn't possible; the speaker is all grown up, and this house—and the love and care it represents—are firmly in the past. Not only has the speaker traveled "far" from her childhood home (and the love she experienced there), but that home itself no longer exists as it once did; the place where she "received love" has become cold and threatening, full of "snakes" and "darkness."

And yet, the speaker seems almost comforted by the thought of taking some of that darkness home with her "to lie / Behind [her] bedroom door like a brooding / Dog." By comparing the darkness to a dog, the poem implies that the thought of

the grandmother's house still calls to mind the love and devotion the speaker experienced when she was young. Those memories might be tinged with darkness, but they seem to be all she has.

### **Loneliness and the Desire for Love**

"My Grandmother's House" can be read as a portrait of extreme loneliness. The poem's speaker, having lost the only person who ever completely loved her, now looks for whatever scraps of affection she can get from "strangers." Her desperation and willingness to turn just about anywhere for comfort reflects the depth of her loneliness and illustrate just how powerful the desire for love can be.

The poem makes it clear that the speaker is painfully lonely. Her grandmother, in whose house she "once [...] received love," seems to have been her only reliable source of affection. Given that this grandmother has been dead since the speaker was "too young / To read," the speaker must have led a tough, loveless life.

So lonely is she now, in fact, that it's almost inconceivable to her that she was *ever* loved. Even a person she addresses as her "darling" (presumably a lover or partner) "cannot believe" that she once "was proud and loved"—a line that hints this so-called "darling" may not be providing the love the speaker needs, either! (Readers might be tempted to interpret this moment as autobiographical: Das entered a loveless arranged marriage with a much older man when she was only a teenager.)

The desire for love is so strong, the poem implies, that the speaker will do just about anything to find it—even if that means losing her "way." In the absence of her grandmother's love, the speaker is so hungry for affection that she becomes willing to "beg" for scraps of love at "strangers' doors"—perhaps having casual affairs, perhaps just looking for love in the wrong places. Loneliness and a hunger for love, the poem suggests, can become all-consuming, devastating, and destructive afflictions.

## KAMALA DAS

### Poem 3

#### The Old Playhouse

**Q.1** Exploration of the disillusionment and emotional turmoil in the poem The Old Playhouse. Comment.

Ans. "The Old Playhouse" by Kamala Das is a powerful and poignant exploration of the disillusionment and emotional turmoil experienced by the speaker in her married life. The phrase "The Old Playhouse," in and of itself, turns into a key metaphor for the speaker's emotional and mental state being neglected and degraded inside her marriage.

The woman accuses her husband of domesticating her after marriage and of wanting to "tame a swallow" in the opening line of the poem. The speaker's sense of imprisonment and loss of freedom is alluded to by the comparison to a swallow. "Lights put out" emphasises the negative effects of the marriage on the speaker's mental health by conveying a sense of gloom and desolation.

The speaker berates her spouse for treating her as if her only purpose in the marriage was to provide physical fulfilment and no emotional bond. She asserts that the goal of the marriage was to uncover her actual self rather than to acquire wisdom or enlightenment. Her husband's egotism, however, has dashed her dreams of personal development and self-discovery.

The horror of the speaker's marriage, where she feels overwhelmed by her husband's enormous ego, is explored in the third section. The wording that refers to being viewed as a "object of sexual gratification" and the loss of identity creates a dismal impression of how dehumanising the relationship is.

The speaker characterises the last part of her life as a "stand-still" time that was characterised by a void and a lack of purpose. The image of a "Old

Playhouse" shrouded in total darkness serves as a metaphor for her emotional and mental decline and neglect. The portrayal of the husband's lovemaking as deadly and mechanical adds to the general depressing atmosphere.

Throughout the poem, Kamala Das employs vivid and suggestive imagery to convey the disastrous effects of a mismatched marriage. The sparrow, summer, autumn, and the old playhouse serve as powerful metaphors, each contributing to the layered exploration of the speaker's emotional and psychological turmoil. The poem is a poignant critique of the oppressive nature of a patriarchal marriage and the profound impact it can have on an individual's sense of self-worth and identity.

## **KAMALA DAS**

### **Poem 4**

#### **A Hot Noon in Malabar**

Q.1 Write the theme of the poem A Hot Noon in Malabar.

Ans. "A Hot Noon in Malabar" by Kamala Das is a poignant poem that captures the essence of a hot noon in the region of Malabar. The poem is a vivid portrayal of the sights, sounds, and emotions associated with this particular time of day

The poet begins by describing the noon as a time for beggars with whining voices, men from the hills with parrots in cages and fortune-cards, and brown Kurava girls with old eyes who read palms in light singsong voices. The scene is set with bangle-sellers spreading their colorful wares on the cool black floor, covered with the dust of the roads they have traveled.

The poet paints a picture of the physical toll on the bangle-sellers, with miles causing cracks on their heels. The noise of their ascent onto porches is described as grating and strange.

As the poem progresses, the focus shifts to strangers during this hot noon. They part window-drapes, peer in with hot eyes brimming with the sun, unable to see anything in the shadowy rooms. These strangers, characterized by mistrust in their eyes, rarely speak, but when they do, their voices run wild, resembling jungle sounds.

The poet reflects on this noon being a time for wild men, wild thoughts, and wild love. The repetition of the idea of wildness emphasizes the intensity of emotions associated with this particular moment. The poet expresses the torture of being far away from her home in Malabar during this vibrant and lively time.

In the concluding lines, the poet speaks of wild feet stirring up dust in the hot noon at her home in Malabar, highlighting the contrast between the lively, familiar surroundings of Malabar and the poet's current state of being far away.

Overall, "A Hot Noon in Malabar" is a richly detailed poem that not only vividly describes the physical aspects of a hot noon in Malabar but also delves into the emotions of the poet, portraying a sense of longing, nostalgia, and alienation.

## **KAMALA DAS**

### **Poem 5**

#### **The Dance of the Eunuchs**

**Q.1** Write the theme of struggles and alienation in the poem The Dance of the Eunuchs.

**ANS.** "The Dance of the Eunuchs" by Kamala Das is a poignant poem that uses the symbolic dance of eunuchs to explore the struggles and alienation faced by marginalized individuals in society. Divided into three parts, the poem delves into the outward display, inner hardships, and the complexities of existence for the eunuchs.

The poem begins with a vivid portrayal of the eunuchs dancing in the scorching heat. They wear wide skirts, clang cymbals, and jingle anklets in a visually striking performance. Despite their efforts to appear attractive, the poet hints at the underlying harshness of their existence. The repetition of "hot" emphasizes the intensity of their circumstances.

The second part delves into the harsh reality of the eunuchs' lives. Their voices are described as harsh, and their songs are melancholic, narrating tales of dying lovers and unborn children. The poet emphasizes their inability to experience certain aspects of life, using phrases like "sorry breasts" to underscore their physical and emotional limitations. The comparison of their limbs to "half-burnt logs" vividly conveys their suffering and deterioration.

The third part introduces rain as both a blessing and a curse for the eunuchs. While the rain brings relief from the intense heat, it disrupts their dance and potentially affects their means of livelihood. The poet notes the contrasting smells associated with the rain, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of their existence.

The poem, at a deeper level, serves as an allegory for societal norms, gender roles, and the struggles faced by those who deviate from these expectations. Through the dance of the eunuchs, Kamala Das explores themes of societal exclusion, the performative nature of identity, and the dualities inherent in their existence.

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## **UNIT V**

### **GURCHARAN DAS: 9 JAKHOO HILL**

Q.1 Write the theme of the play 9 Jakhoo Hill.

OR

The theme of betrayal of sexual love, traditional Indian social life is described by Gurcharan Das in the play 9 Jakhoo Hill.

ANS. The play 9 Jakhoo Hill by Gurcharan Das is all about the changing order in post colonial Indian middle class, the old middle class giving away to the new middle class. It's the story about Ansuya and her family who belong to the old middle class and Deepak and Chitra who belong to the new middle class. The most striking feature of contemporary India is the rise of a confident new middle class, which is full of energy and drive and is making things happen. The play has multiple themes apart from the changing order; it also talks about the downward trends of moral ethics of the new

middle class, the wishful nature of the new middle class, and the hold of Indian mothers on their sons, about a fading class clinging foolishly to spent dreams.

But the main theme is the betrayal of sexual love. Traditional Indian social life is fundamentally incomprehensible to the west.

*9 Jakhoo Hill is set in the Shimla of 1962. It explores a number of themes which continue to have as much relevance today as they did in the sixties: changing values; conflicts between old and new; family relationships and attendant tensions that come to the surface when skeletons in cupboards begin to tumble out....*

It is a story of two neighbors who migrated from Lahore during partition. Amrita, an aristocrat widow lives in Jakhoo Hill, Shimla with daughter Ansuya and younger brother Karan Chand. She is a socialite, mostly stuck in the past, is unable to manage her finances and in huge debt, on the verge of losing their ancestral house. Amrita invites her friend and neighbor in the past, Chitra (the one from Lahore) and her son, Deepak to celebrate Diwali with them. Ansuya and Deepak exchange letters often; theirs is a childhood love. Karan Chand/ Mamu nurtures incestuous feelings towards his niece who loath Deepak. The company Deepak works for wants to expand their business in Kolkatta and certain Rai Saheb is the key to help. Rai Saheb, a bureaucrat works for the government of India and Amrita's close friend. The story sets in the midst of Indo-China war. Love blossoms between Deepak and Ansuya. However, Chitra, Deepak's manipulative and overbearing mother is against it solely based on Ansuya's current financial status. They all play the game of "Truth or Dare" that unravels truth in a nasty way.

The action of the play covers three days round Diwali festival in October 1962, when the humiliating Indo-Chinese war of India was going on. Amrita invited from Bombay her friend and old neighbor Chitra and her young son Deepak to Shimla for celebrating Diwali. Each character in the play is symbolic of different aspects. Rai sahib represents western outlook, culture and speech. He retains old Beaucroatic loyalty to British colonial rulers. He is a vulnerable Indian sahib, who is ready to flirt with middle aged Chitra. Rai sahib is English in thought and taste but Indian in color, a perfect member of the Indian class that Macaulay intended to create. He is a typical colonial surrogate, consistent throughout the play. He reflects the worse political system. Deepak and Ansuya are the protagonists of the play. The two form romantic pair in the play. There is a conflict between the upper and the middle class, artistically reflected through the characters of Rai sahib and Chitra on one hand and Amrita and Ansuya on the other. Chitra, as said earlier is a consistent character throughout the play. Her main purpose for coming to Jakhoo hill is political and business is clear when she says to Amrita:

"We rushed here didi, here because Deepak's company is building for a licence, and a big „ufsar" living in Shimla."



She is representative of mothers having hold of their sons. Her only objective is to raise her son to the heights. She has no moral qualms to fulfill her ambition. This contrast between upper and middle class is also prominent in the characters of Amrita and Chitra. An ambitious lady Chitra believes that nothing is bad to gain success. Her friend Amrita is a graceful woman of taste and belongs to a rich aristocratic family. But now she is in a poor state for nobody could handle her ancestral wealth and fortunes. The whole story revolves around Ansuya and Deepak. There is a transformation in both the characters. They were in love with each other when they were just 10 years in age. The influence of the mother in the play and consciousness of Deepak for his future shatters his romantic vision of happy life with Ansuya. She gives us a hint that Deepak came here for license and not for love. He curtly denies in diplomatic ways by saying:

“I came to Shimla to see you Anu, but then I discovered that Rai Sahib was also up here, and I told Maa, why not combine business with pleasure.”

Ansuya represents a new upcoming generation. Deepak could not break through the love and domination of his mother and sacrifices his love and happiness. Love is vulnerable and its loss is a terrible thing. Ansuya's mamu has a strange attachment towards her. He is not happy with Deepak and Ansuya's relation and tells Ansu that:

“I don't like him...He is selfish...I am afraid you'll get hurt.”

Karan is an intelligent and interesting old man and contrary to the wishes of his family, he becomes a teacher in the university. He is an idealist and joins teaching profession to influence young men to pursue ideals. He doesn't marry and in grown up age, to get rid of solitude and loneliness, he started having cats. The very first scene marks the loneliness of narrator, sitting alone, playing chess with himself. Mamu's loneliness and frustration resulting from idealist approach in youth finds escape in strange attachments to his niece. His elder sister curses him over his affection for cats:

“It is unnatural to be so fond of cats.”

Karan cannot isolate his twin roles, as a narrator and as Mamu, character. It is very similar to what W.H Auden says “people are so much indulged in oneself that they forget the happening in the world.” Karan, Amrita and Ansuya are frustrated with little hope for a bright future. Their helplessness unites them in a strange and natural bond of unity. The play, in the game of “truth and dare”, reaches a climax, in the mess that ends the game exposing major characters real self. It is here when Ansuya declares her love with Deepak. In Act four, narrator sums up by saying:

“It is a dangerous game these girls play in boarding schools...I next time...I wouldn't play this game”.

