



SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

(Elective Group 4 : Paper-VIII)

**Modern and Post-modern
British Literature**

For

M. A. Part-II

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Shivaji University,
Kolhapur. (Maharashtra)
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Prescribed for **M. A. Part-II**

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Preface

Dear Learners,

This book contains the Self-Instructional Material on the Paper-VIII Modern and Post-modern British Literature. The syllabus covers the various texts prescribed by the university with different forms of literature. There are 9 units dealing with the different genres like prose, poetry, novel and drama. The writers try their level best to make them simple for you to understand and grasp easily. They make it handy, so that you can go back to the unit again & again to make you more familiar with the topics. For self check, the answers of questions are given at the end of each unit. This will help you greatly to correct your answers.

But dear students, though the book deals with the topics thoroughly, still these are only notes for your guidance. So you must refer to the original material. You should develop this material by additional reading.

There are exercises given at the end of each unit. There are broad answer type questions which may face in the final examination. his book also provides you the list of the additional reference books which will definitely enrich your study and knowledge.

This SIM is not a comprehensive studying material. For detailed study students should refer to textbooks and reference books.

We wish you best luck in your final examination.

Editors

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Each Unit begins with the section Objectives -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. What has been presented in the Unit and
2. What is expected from you
3. What you are expected to know pertaining to the specific Unit once you have completed working on the Unit.

The self check exercises with possible answers will help you to understand the Unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answer only after you write your answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as Study Tools to help keep you in the right track as you study the Unit.

Unit-1

General Topics

Contents

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Modernism and Post-modernism
 - 1.2.1 Check Your Progress
 - 1.2.2 Glossary and Notes
- 1.3 The Absurd Drama
 - 1.3.1 Check Your Progress
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 - 1.5.1 Check Your Progress
 - 1.5.2 Glossary and Notes
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Answer to Check Your Progress
- 1.8 Exercises
- 1.9 References to Further Study

1.0 Objective:

After completing the study of this unit, you will

- know about the modernism and post-modernism as literary movements
- know about the characteristics of Modernism and Post-modernism
- learn about the Absurd Drama and Psychological novel

- know about the experimentation in Modern and Post-modern British Literature
- be able to answer the questions on the modernism, post-modernism, psychological novel, absurd drama and experimentation in British Literature.

1.1 Introduction:

This unit discusses the Modernism and Post-modernism as literary movements and characteristics of them. It also presents the information regarding the Absurd Drama and the Psychological novel, and their writers and characteristics of them. Moreover, it also discusses the experimentation in modern British Literature, i.e. fiction, poetry and drama. This study will help to understand modern English literature.

1.2 Modernism and Post-modernism:

Modernism:

The term *modernism* is widely used to identify features in the subjects, forms, concepts and styles of literature, and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I (1914-1918). The specific features signified by *modernism* vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but culture in general. Modernism is a term frequently used in discussion of 20th century literature. The 20th century English Literature is a complex and elusive phenomenon. Diverse dimension of literary movements can be discerned in poetry, fiction, drama and literary criticism in the twentieth century. Modernism is a conscious movement. It has the philosophical, aesthetic and literary dimensions. It is impossible to give an exact definition of Modernism. But surely it can be said that modernism is one kind of substitution of realism and escapist romanticism. Modernism can be studied on different views as intellectual investigation, questioning any fixed relation between man and his social and material environment. But Modernism in literature can also be examined as a particular selection from a wide range of linguistic and literary options. The syntax of modernist text shows signs of epistemological uncertainty and metalingual criticism. Modernist semantics

is characterized by consciousness, detachment and observation, which might restrict the workings of a free mind.

As a literary movement, modernism gained prominence during and especially, just after the First World War; it flourished in Europe and America throughout 1920s and 30s. Modernist authors sought to break away from tradition and conventions through experimentation with new forms, devices and styles. They incorporated the new psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Jung into their works and paid attention to language. Their works reflected the pervasive sense of loss and despair in the wake of the Great War. Hence they emphasized on historical discontinuity and the alienation of humanity. Modernist works are called avant-grade. Although modernist authors tended to perceive the world as fragmented, many—like T. S. Eliot and James Joyce—believed they could counter that disintegration through their works. Such writers viewed art as potentially integrating, restorative force, a remedy for the uncertainty of the modern world. To this end, even while depicting disorder in their works, modernists are injected order by creating patterns of allusion, symbol and myth.

The period of high modernism is the period between 1910 and 1930 and the writers of the period are T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Woolf, Stein etc. They emphasized on subjectivity. They did not give importance to omniscient external narration and stressed techniques. The year 1922 alone was signaled by the simultaneous appearance of such monuments of modernist innovation as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacobus Room*, as well as many other experimental works of literature. The catastrophe of the War had shaken faith in the continuity of Western civilization and raised doubts about the adequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the post-war world. T.S. Eliot wrote in a review of Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1923 that the inherited mode of ordering a literary work, which assumed a relatively coherent and stable social order, could not accord with 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'. Like Joyce and Ezra Pound in his *Cantos*, Eliot experimented with new forms and a new style that would render contemporary disorder, often contrasting it to a lost order and integration that had been based on the religion and myths of the cultural past. In *The Wasteland* (1922), for example, Eliot replaced the standard flow of poetic language by fragmented utterances, and substituted for the traditional coherence of poetic structure a deliberate dislocation of

parts, in which very diverse components are related by connections that are left to the reader to discover or invent. Major works of modernist fiction, following Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and his even more radical Finnegans *Wake* (1939), subvert the basic conventions of earlier prose fiction by breaking up the narrative continuity, departing from the standard ways of representing characters, and violating the traditional syntax and coherence of narrative language by the use of stream-of-consciousness and other innovative modes of narration. Gertrude Stein, often linked with Joyce, Pound, Eliot and Woolf as a trail-blazing modernist—experimented with writing that achieved its effects by violating the norms of Standard English syntax and sentence structure. These new forms of construction inverse, prose and narrative were emulated and carried further by many poets and novelists.

To Lyotard, Modernism and Postmodernism are cultural phrases, continuous with one another and both emphasize the Now, and ignore history. The 'modern' is not a historical period or a particular practice. It is timeless and permanent and cannot be contained within historical narrative. Like anything anarchic Modernism can never really die. It has taken the form of paralogical science and is totally blended with the system. Lyotard calls modern works which believe in reason and logic as 'metanarratives' which try to reassure and explain. Modern works are also called avant-grade. Modern works reflect the sense of loss and despair in the wake of the Great War and hence they emphasize alienation of humanity. Though they depicted disorder in their works, they infused order by creating patterns of allusion, symbol and myth. Eagleton in essay *Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism* contrasts Modernism with postmodernism by speaking in favour of modernism. Modernism strives for truth, meaning and history while postmodernism believes only in representations of surface reality. Modernism searches for the real and struggles for meaning. It considers fragmentation and alienation as something terribly bad. While classic realist texts present character as unified and coherent, modern writers present split heroes and focus on the loss of meaning and angst experienced by modern man. They view with anguish the disintegration of the principles of traditional humanism. Modern writers like Eliot, Yeats and Kafka expose the meaninglessness of moderate man. They critically analyse the modern condition.

History and modernity are always in constant conflict and collusion. In other words, modernity means, in Nietzschean terms, an 'active' forgetting of history. In *Thought out of Season* Nietzsche says that living life in a non-historical ways is the

most important and original of all experiences and only such a life can lead to right health and greatness. Modernism is an attempt to free life from history. Walter Benjamin, a Marxist critic, takes the opposite stand. While talking of ‘revolutionary nostalgia’ he stresses the need to remember history and invoke the tradition of the oppressed. Lyotard, like Nietzsche, is opposed to historical consciousness. While Lyotard contrasts modernism and postmodernism by pitting the Grand totalizing narratives of the Enlightenment (early modernist works) against the micro-political, Benjamin could never approve of such a schema.

Paul De Man also looks at Modernism in the Nietzschean sense but his view is tinged with irony. Can one actively forget history? –this is the question which is answered in the negative by Paul De Man. Active forgetting of history is never possible. Though modernist works attempt to forget history, it is clear that such attempts end in failure since these works remind the readers of history instead of making them forget it. The best example is Yeats, one of the foremost modernists. Yeats indulged in symbolism and myth and in terms of modernism; such mythologizing can be seen as an attempt to escape from history, and from mass culture. In *The Second Coming* he foresees the arrival of new phase of history with the rough beast slouching towards its birth at Bethlehem. This image focuses the reader’s attention to World Wars and their consequences instead of directing their minds away from it. In other words, action and temporality can never be separated. One’s actions are motivated only because one lives at a certain point in history. Historical events, epochs affect all to such an extent that it is impossible to imagine a self-contained art. It is through the medium of history that one encounters reality. The very act of writing disrupts tradition. The terms modernists and traditionalists are neither cultural movements nor aesthetic ideologies. Rather, the terms represent a phenomenon which is that of being in and out of time simultaneously. Literature gives concrete expression to this game of playing in and out of time. Literary History stands for History in general. This means, according to De Man, that one can never abandon one’s radical political allusions and such efforts will only prove to be self-defeating. History will see to it that political beliefs are perpetuated from time to time. Thus the Nietzschean call to forget history is impossible.

The relationship between history and modernity is similar to the relationship between theory and practice. It is in Literature that truth and error mingle. For example, Modernism has for its theory the belief that one should forget history and

present in Literature in unmediated encounter with reality but the two are definitely different. De Man accuses Marxism for insisting that literature should inform the readers of social reality. In other words, knowledge of history (to the Marxists) is emancipatory. Thus Paul De Man is very prudent and practical regarding modernism by saying that modernist works cannot free themselves from history totally. Eliot can be taken as an example to prove De Man's point of view.

Eliot's *The Wasteland* is a very modern poem; it talks of gramophones, trams, typists and insurance clerks, the brown fog of London; horns and motor cars; sandwich wrappers and empty bottles. Eliot has been criticized for turning from history but it is clear that *The Wasteland* is also called a war poem. Its disarrangement and fragmentation echo the bewildering experience of the war as the poem alludes to events of the previous ten years. Everything, from east and west, past and present, the world of the war and its aftermath are presented in the poem. The poem is full of teasing quotations, snatches of song, multiple languages, half-thoughts, nursery rhymes, monologues and myths. It can be said that Eliot comments on history by revealing that the Great War is best known through images of poppy fields, trenches and Bayonet charges. The modern individual's knowledge of the past is built from disconnected pieces, and Eliot makes the same point about modern cities which are built on top of old cities, assembled together from new and old architecture. *The Wasteland's* relations to history and art is that of a treasure house; it shares an immense heap of valuable materials torn from their original setting and displays them for the interested individual to contemplate and to contrast with modern discourses, heard in the pub or the music hall on the gramophone or the trams. Eliot deals predominantly with a destroyed post war Europe but the references to war are oblique and social change takes place within a mythological framework. *The poem represses history and politics which is itself a significant historical effect in as much as it exposes a contemporary disillusionment with the possibilities for collective action and social change.*

To De Man, all literature is a kind of baffled modernism in that it imbibes or falls a prey to the ideas, institution and practices prevalent in that particular age. In fact, it is this which brings about literature in the first place. For example, Modernist art records an emotional aspect of a Western crisis, characterized by despair, hopelessness, paralysis, angst and a sense of meaninglessness shown on a spiritual, cultural and personal level. In other words, literature includes 'cultural

institutionalization” and becomes a slave to it. As a result of this, literature cannot free itself from social reality and therefore cannot engage or represent the real. Thus history inhabits modernity as a parasite.

De Man’s views on modernity makes one pause and reflect on the meaning of the term “Modernity”. Perry Anderson, in his essay *Modernity and Revolution* rejects the opinion that the term lacks positive content. Eagleton says that *Modernism* refers to a particular period in history which was full of crisis and change. It was a time when one became conscious of one’s place in history, a period of self-doubt and at the same time a celebration of the self (writers such as Joyce turned against forms of historical understanding, seeing greater meaning in the individual than in society). It was a period of anxiety and triumph. The present time was given more importance and history was denied and ignored. In fact Modernism became very conscious of its historical epoch. History was lived as a ‘present’ moment and future became something very important. For Lyotard, Modernism is not a particular moment in time but a revaluation of time itself.

Modernism has also been characterized as a reaction to mass culture and to feminization. In the early 1900s literature was thought to be a serious academic discipline, one that had to be assessed and regularized. Eagleton hails modernism as an innovative and glorious movement, towards increased sophistication, profound introversion, technical display, self skepticism and general anti-representationalism. Moreover, it is a strategy whereby art works resist commodification and social forces which are bent on degrading it to an exchangeable object. Thus, modernist works contradict their material status and strive to exist as an autotelic object. Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Symbolism, Imagism, Dadaism, Futurism and Surrealism are different ways of viewing reality. In fiction new writers spearheaded a rejection of several of the fundamentals of classic realism such as a dependable narrator, the depiction of a fixed stable self; history as a progressive linear process; bourgeois politics, which advocated reform not radical change; the tying up of all narrative strands, or ‘closure’. Modernist works are concerned with self-referentiality, rather than representational. It produced art that was about itself and texts that were self-contained rather than representational. As a result develops a magical aura about it, and hence falls prey to another form of commodification – art as fetish.

Characteristics of Modernism:

As an artistic and cultural movements, modernism has many characteristics:

- High degree of complexity in structure
- Reworks traditions
- Works are intensely self-reflexive, exploring the process of their own composition
- Are often fragmented and non-linear, breaking up time-frames and plots (in fiction)
- Is city-based
- It is also located in the context of Empire and world wars, of advanced military technology
- A great deal of experimentation with language and form
- An interest in subjectivity and the working of the human consciousness
- Some critics identify a sense of apocalypse and disaster in modernism
- Often rejects realism, and the idea that art has to capture reality
- Modernist fiction ‘defamiliarizes’ or makes strange what is common ‘Make it new’ is the modernist slogan
- Highly elitist because it was complex and used allusions and classical references that called great erudition – which was available only to certain classes of people.

Formal/ Stylistic Characteristics of Modernism:

- Free indirect speech
- Stream of consciousness
- Juxtaposition of characters
- Wide use of classical allusions
- Figure of speech
- Personification

- Hyperbole
- Parataxis
- Comparison
- Quotation
- Pun
- Satire
- Irony
- Antiphrasis
- Unconventional use of metaphor
- Symbolic representation
- Psychoanalysis
- Discontinuous narrative
- Metanarrative
- Multiple narrative points of view

Thematic Characteristics of Modernism:

- Breakdown of social norms
- Realistic embodiment of social meanings
- Separation of meanings and senses from the context
- Despairing individual behaviours in the face of an unmanageable future
- Spiritual loneliness
- Alienation
- Frustration
- Disillusionment
- Rejection of outdated social systems
- Rejection of history

- Objection to religious thoughts
- Substitution of a mythical past
- Two World Wars' effects on humanity

Postmodernism:

Postmodernism is a critical approach and philosophy that has influenced visual arts, architecture and literature from the 1950s. It refuses to accept any 'grand' or unified theory that supposedly explains everything. It thus rejects Freudianism, which saw everything in terms of sexuality, and Marxism, which reduced everything to economics. Postmodernism prioritizes the local and the native over the universal. It believes that human knowledge is always fragmentary and limited. There can never be 'objective' knowledge because the structures that enable knowing are derived from subjective conditions like human emotions. It offers fragments and contingency, fluidity and multiples in place of fixity, completeness and unitariness. In literature it is marked by a tendency to question the legitimacy of the narrative itself, the refusal to offer any universal truths and multiple points of view. The term *postmodernism* is sometimes applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-1945), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment and the ominous fact overpopulation. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter-traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the *elitism* of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons and popular music. Many of the works of postmodern literature – by Jorge Luis Borges, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes and many others-blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. To Lyotard, Modernism and Postmodernism are cultural phases, continuous with one another and both emphasize the Now, and ignore history. The 'modern' is not a historical period or a particular cultural practice. It is timeless and permanent and cannot be contained within historical narration. While postmodernism believes that truth itself is dead since the subject no longer exists, Modernism does not

abandon its search for truth. Modernists view with anguish the disintegration of the principles of traditional humanism while postmodernism invites us to embrace the split subject who figures in postmodernist art.

Many people are confused by the term postmodern. It has become a term that is bandied about in intelligent conversation, while many people use it loosely to mean almost anything new and innovative. Postmodernism is related to the term "modernism". "Post" means to come after. In other words, postmodern thought is that which comes after or develops from modernistic thought. For postmodernism, by contrast, fragmentation is a liberating phenomenon suggesting our escape from fixed systems of belief. Modernism laments fragmentation while postmodernism celebrates it. The second difference between them is a matter of tone or attitude. While modernism stresses on strict technical innovations, postmodernism rejects the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' art and believes in excess, gaudiness and mixture of qualities. Baudrillard, another postmodern theorist says that in contemporary life the influence of TV, advertising and media have led to a loss of the distinction between real and imagined.

In order to understand postmodernism, first we have to understand what modernism was reacting against. The postmodern is rightly associated with a society where consumer life styles and mass communication dominate the lives of its society. Postmodernism proclaims that the bad is good in the sense that both terms 'good' and 'bad' have lost their worth in the postmodernism proclaims order. The contemporary situation has to be faced for what it is. The only truth in this world is that disorder is the only possible end. While Modernism considers psychic fragmentation and alienation as something terribly bad and wounding, postmodernism celebrates it as it is the only reality. Postmodernism believes that the split personality is not something to be afraid of but something which part of late capitalist experience. It also believes that truth itself is dead since the subject no longer exists. Modernism, on the other hand, does not abandon its search for truth. Postmodernism also deconstructs the idea of the unified subject. The subject is only a psychical meaning and is only a means of fulfilling the function of media, experience, sexual trend or fashion.

One of the main characteristics of postmodern thinking is that the world is seen as a much more complex and uncertain place. Reality is no longer fixed or determined. All truth within a postmodern context is relative to one's viewpoint or

stance. The world is a representation. In other words, it is a fiction created from a specific point of view only, and not a final truth. This is an uncomfortable viewpoint for many people and there is a much misunderstanding about this idea of postmodernism. Postmodernism is essentially still in its infancy. It is an attempt to think beyond the confines of the past. Derrida, one of the chief exponents of post-structuralism, coined a term called "deconstruction" which means a philosophical method of looking for weak points in modern thinking and established ways of perception. An undertaking in some Postmodernism writings is to subvert the foundations of our accepted moods of thought and experience so as to reveal the "meaninglessness" of existence and the underlying 'abyss', or 'void', or 'nothingness' on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended. Postmodernism in literature and the arts has parallels with the movement known as poststructuralism in linguistic and theory: post-structuralists undertake to subvert the foundations of language in order to show that seeming-fullness dissipates, for a rigorous inquirer, into a play of conflicting indeterminacies, or else to show that all forms of cultural discourse are manifestations of the ideology, or of the relations and constructions of power, in contemporary.

As a term Postmodernism is difficult to define as it covers a wide range of disciplines and general areas of thought. These include art, architecture, literature and technology. There are however a number of central characteristics that help us to understand the foundations of the postmodern. Firstly, like modernism, postmodernism rejects all boundaries. This rejection also includes the boundaries between different forms and genres of art. The art development of bricolage and pastiche are examples of this. Secondly, there is a concentration on fragmentation and discontinuity as well as ambiguity. The postmodern focuses on a de-structured, de-centered humanity. What this really means is that the idea of disorder and fragmentation, which were previously seen as negative qualities, are seen as an acceptable representation of reality by postmodernists. Modernism considered the fragmented view of human life as bad or tragic, while postmodernists rather celebrate this seemingly meaningless view of the world. It is an acceptance of the chaos that encourages a play with meaning. Postmodernism also accepts the possibility of ambiguity. Things and events can have two different meanings at the same time. A more rigid rational and logo-centric or linear approach tries to avoid or reduce

ambiguity as much as possible. Postmodern thought sees simultaneous views not as contradictory but as an integral part of the complex patterning of reality.

Beyond all the theory and academic discussion, what is postmodern thought and what is its importance for the modern person? Postmodern thought is, in its very essence, an adventure and an expression of life experience. From its modernist beginnings, Postmodernism is an attempt to question the world that we see around us and especially not to take other people's views as the final truth. Postmodernism puts everything into question and radically interrogates philosophies, strategies and world views. There is no such thing as a definition of the postmodern. It is a mood rather than a strict discipline. Postmodernism, with all its complexity and possible excesses, is an attempt to find new and more truthful versions of the world.

Characteristics of Postmodernism:

Irony, playfulness and humour:

Postmodern authors were certainly not the first to use irony and humor in their writing, but for many postmodern authors, these became the hallmarks of their style. Postmodern authors will often treat very serious subjects—World War II, the Cold War, conspiracy theories—from a position of distance and disconnect, and will choose to depict their histories ironically and humorously.

Pastiche:

Many postmodern authors combined, or “pasted” elements of previous genres and styles of literature to create a new narrative voice, or to comment on the writing of their contemporaries. Thomas Pynchon, one of the most important postmodern authors, uses elements from detective fiction, science fiction, and war fiction, songs, pop culture references, and well-known, obscure, and fictional history.

Intertextuality:

An important element of postmodernism is its acknowledgment of previous literary works. The intertextuality of certain works of postmodern fiction, the dependence on literature that has been created earlier, attempts to comment on the situation in which both literature and society found themselves in the second half of the 20th century: living, working, and creating on the backs of those that had come before. J.M. Coetzee, a postmodernist used this feature in his fiction.

Metafiction:

Many postmodern authors feature metafiction in their writing, which, essentially, is writing about writing, an attempt to make the reader aware of its fictionality, and, sometimes, the presence of the author. Authors sometimes use this technique to allow for flagrant shifts in narrative, impossible jumps in time, or to maintain emotional distance as a narrator.

Historiographic metafiction:

This term was created by Linda Hutcheon to refer to novels that fictionalize actual historical events and characters: Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon*, for example, features a scene in which George Washington smokes pot.

Temporal distortion:

Temporal distortion is a literary technique that uses a nonlinear timeline; the author may jump forwards or backwards in time, or there may be cultural and historical references that do not fit: Abraham Lincoln uses a telephone in Ishmael Reed's *Flight to Canada*. This technique is frequently used in literature, but it has become even more common in films.

Techno-culture and hyperreality:

In his essay of the same name, Frederic Jameson called postmodernism the "cultural logic of late capitalism." According to his logic, society has moved beyond capitalism into the information age, in which we are constantly bombarded with advertisements, videos, and product placement. Many postmodern authors reflect this in their work by inventing products that mirror actual advertisements, or by placing their characters in situations in which they cannot escape technology.

Paranoia:

Many postmodern authors write under the assumption that modern society cannot be explained or understood. From that point of view, any apparent connections or controlling influences on the chaos of society would be very frightening, and this lends a sense of paranoia to many postmodern works.

Maximalism:

Vilified by its critics for being in turns disorganized, sprawling, overly long, and emotionally disconnected, maximalism exists in the tradition of long works like *The*

Odyssey. Authors who use this technique will sometimes defend their work as being as long as it needs to be, depending on the subject material that is covered.

Minimalism:

Minimalism is a style of writing in which the author deliberately presents characters that are unexceptional and events that are taken from everyday life. It is not an exclusively postmodern technique, as many writers, most notably Ernest Hemingway, wrote in a similar style, but some critics claim that Samuel Beckett, one of the most important postmodern authors, perfected minimalism.

Faction:

Faction is very similar to historiographic metafiction, in that its subject material is based on actual events, but writers of faction tend to blur the line between fact and fiction to the degree that it is almost impossible to know the difference between the two, as opposed to metafiction, which often draws attention to the fact that it is not true.

Magical realism:

Arguably the most important postmodern technique, magical realism is the introduction of fantastic or impossible elements into a narrative that is otherwise normal. Magical realist novels may include dreams taking place during normal life, the return of previously deceased characters, extremely complicated plots, wild shifts in time, and myths and fairy tales becoming part of the narrative. Many critics argue that magical realism has its roots in the work of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, two South American writers, and some have classified it as a Latin American style.

Participation:

Many postmodern authors, as a response to modernism, which frequently set its authors apart from their readers, attempt to involve the reader as much as possible over the course of a novel. This can take the form of asking the reader questions, including unwritten narratives that must be constructed by the reader, or allowing the reader to make decisions regarding the course of the narrative.

1.2.1 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternatives:

1. Modernism is a term frequently used in discussion of ----- century literature.
A) 20th century B) 16th century C) 18th century D) 17th century
2. When did modernism flourish?
A) 1920 and 1930 B) 1560 & 1570
C) 1880 & 1900 D) 1910 & 1915
3. Where did modernism mostly flourish just after World War I?
A) Europe & America B) Germany & Italy
C) Africa & India D) Canada & Australia

B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence. State true or false:

1. Whose theories are incorporated by modernist authors?
2. To Lyotard, what does mean modernism and post-modernism?
3. How does Eagleton contrast Modernism with Post-modernism?
4. What does mean modernity in Nietzschean term?
5. Who says that active forgetting of history is never possible?
6. What is the view of Paul De Man of Modernism?
7. Who is one of the chief exponent of Post-Structuralism?
8. Who coined a term called 'deconstruction'?
9. What does mean 'Temporal distortion'?
10. Whose works are mostly related to magical realism, according to many critics?

C) State true or false:

1. Modernism searches for the unreal struggle for the meaning.
2. For Nietzsche, Modernism is an attempt of free life from history.

3. Eliot's 'Wasteland' is not a modern poem.
4. To De Man, history inhabits modernity as a parasite.
5. For Lyotard, Modernism is not a particular moment in time but a revaluation of time itself.
6. Eagleton hails modernism as an innovative and glorious movement.
7. Modernism is city-based.
8. Post-Modernism rejects Freudianism.
9. Modernism laments fragmentation while Post-modernism celebrates it.

1.2.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **abyss** (n) : a bottomless gulf
- **subvert** (v) : overthrow entirely
- **devastation** (n) : destruction
- **parataxis** (n) : the placing of clauses or phrases one after another, without words to indicate co-ordination and subordination.
- **imbibes** (v) : drink in, take in
- **introvert** (n): a person predominantly concerned with their own thoughts and feelings rather than with external things.
- **slouching** (n) : more with droop of head and shoulders
- **collusion** (n) : come into collision with

1.3 Experimentation in Modern and Post-modern British Literature:

The experimentation in literature means the use of new techniques and forms in literature. It is caused by the writer's search for devices that would enable him to solve the break down of a public sense and significance each in his own way. There are several factors which led to the birth of experimentation in literature: Firstly, the break down of the public backgrounds of belief, secondly, the terrifying weapons of the First World War, thirdly, a number of new intellectual theories. All these generated a new attitude towards life, a sense of disordered and fragmented reality which motivated or forced the authors to find new values and systems of faith. As

result of this, we found the 20th century had to explore for new experimental methods rendering life in literature. It was humming with new ideas in art and literature. These new ideas can best be categorized under the heading 'modernism'. The writers used the modernist techniques in quite an individual way. From a technical point of view, modernism involves the rejection of traditional forms. It is experimental by nature. It includes the many techniques like the use of stream of consciousness technique, the myth as a structural principle and poetic images that challenged the traditional literary notions and beliefs.

NOVEL:

Long before 1918, it had become obvious that in poetry, in the novel and in drama, the old traditional forms were outworn. In all three forms or fields, experimenters were evolving new forms to sustain the new demands being made upon them. The most rapid progress is in the drama, but the novel too, in the hands of great masters, undergoes revolutionary challenges, the importance of which is sometimes underestimated because they are overshadowed by more surprising or startling experiments of the inter-war period.

M.H. Abrams has pointed out "The 20th century has seen an enormous amount of experimentalist activity, in the field of Modern Novel. Intellectual, imaginative, creative activity which entails the exploration of new concepts, techniques etc. which go beyond convention, movements come into this category." To enrich modern novel several experiments have been made. The novel in the 18th century and 19th century was enriched in a social world. But some of the 20th century novelists have drawn novel from the public arena. The modern age has produced great novelists like Henry James, H.G Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and so on. Though the novel had made phenomenal progress during the Victorian Age, yet it could not achieve that excellence which it has attained in the hands of the aforesaid novelists. They have given wider space to novel and have made experiments in regard to matter and manner of novel.

M.H. Abrams writes that as far as literature is concerned modernism –reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man's position and function in the universe and many experiments in form and style. It is particularly concerned with language and how to use it. Thus,

structuralism was from the outset closely connected with modernist tendencies. However, structuralism did not gain a strong foothold, until the 1960s; by which time post modernism was well established as a new movement. Aspects of modernism are touched on the constructivism, didaism, decadence, existentialism, expressionism, futurism, ideogramic method, imagists, new humanism, stream of consciousness, symbolism, Vorticism, etc.

The early decades of the 20th century were the years of experiments. In modern novel, we are confronted with different school of fiction, different types of novels, different techniques, different experiments and different angles of dealing with the problems of modern life. It represents the modernist theory in practice. The novel in the hands of Henry James, Joseph Conrad became new. They evolved techniques which revolutionized the form of the novel. There has been a shift from a narrative mode to a symbolic mode or an ironic mode. Henry James was the pioneer to redefine novel. He defined novel as “a personal, a direct impression of life”. To him, the novel is primarily an art form to be judged solely artistic canons concerned, not with moral purpose. As a student of Henry James, Flaubert and Maupassant, Joseph Conrad adopts and develops the method of Henry James. He wants to render the human soul and he uses the impressionistic technique and the technique of “the multiple point of view” to achieve his purpose. The factors responsible for experimentation in modern novel were mainly the War, rapid advancement of science and technology, the new concepts about time and consciousness by William James and Bergson, psychological concepts and theories of Freud, Jung and Adler, the impact of foreign writers such as Balzac, Maupassant, Proust, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov and Gorky etc. Therefore, the Modern Novel has traveled on diverse paths. It has been undergone many changes; in the subject matter, form, techniques and styles. The novelist such as D.H.Lawrence, James Joyce, Huxley have touched the subjects such as primeval instinct-sex, science and human consciousness. They turned their attention to the reality within human mind. The old technique was out-dated and so they have invented the technique of Stream of Consciousness. The old concepts of plot, character, theme, point of view, and language received a blow by modern novelist, such as Dorthy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. As innovators, they did not care for a well-knit plot of the Edwardians. There is no logical arrangement of events. Their novel are formless and without pattern because life itself is chaotic, confusing and incomplete. For

Virginia Woolf, 'there is no plot, no character, no tragedy, no comedy, no love interest or catastrophe' as in the traditional novel.

The stream of consciousness technique in fiction is revolt against reason and revolt in style. D.H.Lawrence was the leader of the revolt against reason. Henry James, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were the innovators of new style. They revolutionized the technique of the novel. They wrote novels on the 'stream of consciousness' technique. Under it, the concept of 'reality' is changed. The reality lies not in the outer action, but in the inner working of the human mind; in the inner perception. Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is an experiment towards a new method in fiction. It is psychological technique. She did not portray passion or action and upheld no social or moral belief. Her novels impress not for their realism, but for their sensibility. She used several technical devices to transcribe the various mental activities of the 'psyche' or 'soul'. Her novels deal with psychological technique. Such kinds of novels have no story at all. So, Edwin Muir had rightly pointed out that story seems to have died out of the 20th century English novel.

The first modern novelists who consciously employed the stream of consciousness technique was Dorothy Richardson whose novel *'Pointed Roofs'* is first of the serious of novels, known as pilgrimage. A far more exciting use of this technique was made by Virginia Woolf by publishing her 'The Voyage out', in the manner of Arnold Bennet, H.G.Well and Galsworthy. Virginia Woolf wrote four remarkable stream of consciousness novels---*Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, The Waves* and *Between the Acts*. James Joyce employed the stream of consciousness technique in his multi-dimension novels *Ulysses*. The action of Ulysses covers one specific day in Dublin and a criticism of the modern life with its 'sick hurry and divided aims', but also a parody of Homer's Odyssey. Thus, the stream of consciousness technique enjoyed its heyday from 1915 to 1941.

Galsworthy, Arnold Bennet and H.G. Wells continued the tradition of realist social novel. Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* deals with the upper middle class society soaked in the wine of materialism and money. Bennet presented the reality of Five Town while H.G. Well wrote the novels of idea. However, he has experimented with science fiction. He is a pioneer in the field of science fiction. His novels *The Invisible Man, The first Men in the Moon* display his concern and interest for science. Aldous Huxley contributed to this new trend of science fiction. Edwardians were

interested in portraying the external world revolutionized by the new discoveries of science. Henry James and Joseph Conrad rejected the old way of telling a story. They presented the technique which revolutionized the form of novel. Experimentation in fact, in novel, began with Henry James; and he is known as the pioneer of psycho-analysis technique. He turned within 'Human consciousness.' Mind-stuff is at the centre of his novels. He uses the dramatic method of narration. He is the precursor of the Modern Novel. He analyses human feelings, tendencies, and instincts in his novels. His well-known novels are—*The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Wings of a Lady*, *The Wings of Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, *The Golden Bowl*.

POETRY:

The twentieth century English poetry is called modern poetry. The most significant fact of 20th century English lyric poetry is the revolution that took place in poetic form and content which resulted in the rejection of the earlier poetic taste and practice. Modern (as the first half of the twentieth century was referred to) English lyric poetry in all diverse manifestation remains an incredibly effective way of embodying a rich variety of human experience and in "criticizing life". It has been enriched by the changes that have taken place in the realms of thought, emotion, revelations and the like. It has incorporated the dramatic changes that have taken place in the intellectual and physical mores and aesthetic, political, social and economic aspects.

The term 'modern' amounts to more than a chronological description. It implies a distinctive kind of imagination, whereby its themes and forms, conditions and modes of creation, interrelate with each other and form an imaginative whole. It is sometimes aggressively and consciously different from the past literary tradition. Modern poetry is regarded as anti-traditional. It is more anti-traditional in terms of "Victorianism", which was a poetry of *exclusions*, while modern poetry is one of *inclusions*. The 1920s and 1930s are often described as the period of 'high modernism'. There are some features of Modernist poetry. They are as follows:

- Use of allusion and myth, often from non-Western tradition
- Fragmented and non-linear
- Symbolism used in some cases

- Influenced by various movements like imagism, Vorticism. Surrealism and objectivism
- Metropolitan in theme and setting
- Experiment with form and style

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Modern English poetry is its centrality to human concerns. Man was caught in an atmosphere of disillusionment or apathy, tension or guilt, anger or bitterness. The world that it portrays is the one which has gone through two World Wars, the Nazi concentration camps, economic crisis and depression, intellectual changes, genocide and the constant threat of a nuclear war. Modernist poetry in England was influenced by French symbolism (Rimbaud, Laforgue, Mallarmé and Baudelaire), the American imagists and the writings of Ezra Pound. Since the beginning of the 20th century a departure from the late Victorian poetry, especially, in the exploration of form and attitude to human experience took place with the advent of Ezra Pound, an extreme instance of modernism, and T.S. Eliot, an innovator. Both Pound and Eliot, each in his own way, brought about a revolution in the 20th century poetry. Other poets such as Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, A. E. Housman, Walter de la Mare, G. M. Hopkins, W. H. Auden, Spender, Louis MacNeice, Day Lewis, Dylan Thomas, D. H. Lawrence, just to name some major poets, one finds the basic concern with modern man and his world, yet expressed in a matter so strikingly different from each other.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972), was born in the USA but moved to Britain and Europe later in his life, has the reputation of being one of the most difficult poets of the 20th century. He largely created the poetry of our time, and revolutionized its poetic diction and verse forms. His significance to 20th century criticism and poetry is unimaginable. He nurtured several poets – one of them was T. S. Eliot, whose *The Waste Land* was edited by Pound -- and was at the forefront of major literary movements and developments like Vorticism and Imagism. Pound was one of the first modernists who assimilated the ancients and the non-European cultures in English poetry. Eliot recognized this and described him as being both ‘objectively modern’. He adapted literary and cultural traditions from China and Europe, which makes his poetry inaccessible. His attention to form – he was an advocate of spare imagery and free verse – established trends in modernism. A good example of his inspirational role in modernism would be his famous *In a Station of the Metro*.

Pound's Cantos, running into 120 sections, is multicultural epic. There are Chinese characters, quotations in European languages and references from the history of Africa, the United States and Europe. Pound did not bother to explicate his references, and this adds to the poem's difficulty. The unconnected sections of the poem and the fragmented imagery have been interpreted by some critics as reflecting the fragmented nature of human experience of itself.

W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), is surely Ireland's greatest modern poet. Yeats was particularly influenced by the French symbolists and adapted from Celtic mythology and various mystic traditions. Yeats was also a deeply political poet and his engagement with Ireland's struggle with England produced some exceptionally fine poems like *Easter 1916*. His poetry falls roughly into three divisions: the romantic, the realistic, and the mystical. In the poetry of the first period he dwells on love, beauty, Nature and Irish mythology and tales of the supernatural, which he weaves into lovely dreams. The verse also flows on sweetly in the traditional romantic manner. In the second period the grim reality on the Irish struggle for freedom claims most of his attention. In the final period both the dreams of early youth and the realities of the Irish situation are replaced by a mystic contemplation of life, developed from various philosophical systems, native, eastern, and western. The poems which convey this – *Leda and the Swan*, *Sailing to Byzantium*, *Byzantium* are extremely difficult to understand in spite of the prose comments which the poet provided to some of them. Yeats also tried to escape the dilemmas and anxieties of his time by turning to mysticism. His experiments with automatic writing with his wife Georgia Hyde-Lees revealed multiple sides to his personality and he concluded that his *daimon* was female. Like other modernists writing under the influence of Freudian theory – Yeats was exploring his own fragmented personality where the mind is not just male or female but a bit of both. In *Among School Children*, the mystic vision fuses present and past, and suggests a harmony and unity that is truly organic. The poem *Leda and the Swan* is about linkage of power and sexuality. His vision of civilization and destruction appears in a poem like *The Second Coming*. It indicates vision of christianity's peak and destruction after 2000 years. He proposed a universal memory -- what he called *spiritus mundi* – which was eternal in the Byzantium poems. His poems often also expressed anxiety about body, mortality and death. Like other modernists, Yeats was skeptical of order and beauty and his poems reflect the modernist anxiety about impermanence. Symbolism, suggestion, and

allusion abound, but they are too enigmatical to be interpreted with. In versification, while he is always musical, he is more regular in the earlier volumes than the later, where he adopts freer metres and attempts to keep close to the rhythm of speech. This together with his interest in the complexities of life makes him a modern.

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), often taken to be one of the most complex poets of the 20th century, changed his location, political beliefs and faith. He is the major modern poet. He is aware of disintegration of moral values in the contemporary society and of the spiritual bankruptcy of the age. All the characters of his early poetry suffer from inertia, distrust and spiritual vacuity. His *The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock* presents many of modernism's features. The 'topos' or setting is the city. There is a sense of ennui as the city; its people and its very character seem to be in coma. It reveals that time and life are meaningless. Prufrock is away from instinct and passion and he becomes a victim of indecision and fear. He is 'like a patient etherized upon a table'. The man (Prufrock) in the poem seeks to convey something to the woman, who does not seem to understand. He admits he is unable to choose the right words. A parodic element is also introduced as the women of the lower class talk about great artists and high culture (Michelangelo). There is a sense of collapse and decay towards the end of the poem. Some startling images and numerous intertextual allusions and juxtapositions made the poem fascinating and modernist. Time is non-linear and space is surreal in the poem. *The Wasteland* was his most ambitious poem. It is an unparalleled work in modernist poetry. It attempts to project an impersonal society, barren of belief. The technique is very varied and derived from French symbolists and Imagists, and they appear to be fragmentary. The poem is in the form of fragments, and is meant to indicate how human knowledge will always be limited and incomplete:

Son of man,

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only

A heap of broken images,

The poem also explores the collapse of collapse of contemporary civilizations. Sexuality is meaningless, as illustrated in the incident of typist. Religion has failed. Technology and science are used in wars to kill people. The collapse of civilization in Eliot is perhaps the single most pervasive modernist theme.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): While the novels of Thomas Hardy were all written and published in the Victorian age, his poetry belongs to the present century. He may be said to be the first of the moderns. He lived through different ages as the Victorian ages of self complacency, the post Victorian era of doubts and melancholy and modern age of interrogation, loss of faith and despair. He was by nature introspective, self-critical and sincere to his feelings. The chief concern of Hardy's work is man's powerlessness against the circumstances, natural and social. His poetry dealt with Nature, Humanity and Destiny. In style he is partly a Victorian and partly a modern. In the care he bestows on the artistic arrangement of his matter and on the technique of his verse, he is Victorian. He was led to them both by the tradition in which he grew and by his training as an architect. But in the choice of his language and the general avoidance of metrical effects he is a forerunner of the moderns. In the former what arrests attention is the frequent employment of archaisms, neologism, dialect words in strange combinations. In metre while he is, at his best, always felicitous, he has no use for sheer music. His irony arises from the bitter humour seen in the conflict and contrast between the aspirations and ideals on the one hand and the actualities of life on the other hand.

D.H.Lawrence's (1885-1930) reputation rests on his fiction, even though he wrote some highly accomplished poetry. He was influenced briefly by Imagists. His poems are intimate, deep, and depict his personal emotions. He was probably the most controversial figure of his time. The language of his poems is direct and natural, which introduced a new tone into English poetry. His poetry is not the outcomes of rules and formal craftsmanship, but of a purer, more native and immediate artistic sensibility. He created openness to sexual feelings and a myth making vision that saw great meaning in ordinary life. He constantly stressed in his poetry, the physically and instinctual awareness of the psychic forces at work in the universe. In contrast to the modernists, Lawrence highlighted spontaneity and sentiment in his poetry. Like modernist, He is extremely self-conscious. Poems such as *Snake*, *Piano*, *Bavarian Gentians*, *Baby Tortoise*, *Mosquito*, and *End of Another Home Holiday*, portray the acute insight, mystical and psychological experiences that open a wonder, wit, honesty, and intelligence. The confident, direct style of Lawrence's poems introduced a new tone into English poetry.

During the thirties the new poets were the ‘pink poets’ who wrote of Marxism, and class-struggle. The voice of protest is seen in W H Auden, Stephen Spender Louis MacNeice and Cecil Day-Lewis. At the beginning they did not suffer alienation, but later they ask men to seek refuge in privacy and loneliness. W. H. Auden (1907-1973), was a witty and intelligent poet countering the rhetoric and theatricality of others with his own brand of understatement. Of the poets of the 1930s, writing in the wake of Eliot and Pound’s high modernist mode, the work of W H Auden is perhaps the most significant. Auden was a member of a group of writers at Oxford: Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice and Cecil Day-Lewis. As an intellectual poet, he had the capacity to invent witty language, forceful imagery, a mystic pattern of fantasy and diagnosis by which he could lead his readers to a greater self awareness about themselves and their society. Auden wrote about war, culture, morality, workers and humanity. A Brilliant satirist and chronicler of human and civilization follies, Auden’s poetry is notable for its range of subject matter and precise control over rhythm and diction. Like modernist Auden is disillusioned by the decaying civilization. His dexterous craftsmanship, his wit, humour and learning make him one of the most interesting of modern poets.

Stephen Spender (1909-1985), like Auden, was influenced by socialism. As a consequence of his politics, he wrote what is called the poetry of social protest in *Poems* (1933) and *Vienna* (1934). The latter was a poem praising the Viennese Socialists. Eventually, like many others of his name, he was disillusioned with the way socialism had shaped up. Spender’s sexuality – it turns out he was bisexual –is the subject of both furious public controversies and his poetry. As an anti-Fascist he not only wrote moving poems on the Spanish Civil War but compiled an anthology of *Poems for Spain* in 1939. In them, both Marxist and the anti-Fascist meet. But in his later work Spender has tended to discard the merely topical and to concentrate on the deeper problems of time and eternity or what he calls ‘spiritual explorations’. He employs the language and imagery of scientific inventions as did the poets of his time but unlike other poets in the 1930s he preferred free verse to the regular.

Louis Mac Niece (1907-1963), was a clear, orderly, open kind of poet giving us his personal account of the world around him. His wit and tone are much quieter than Auden’s. His verse is on the whole subdued, controlled, and reflective of the sadness of human life. His central theme is a pitiless exposure of the ills of the modern industrial civilization. Cecil Day Lewis (1904-1972), was associated with the left-

wing doctrine. This was very much evident in his early poetry but his later poetry is more personal, less doctrinaire, according to his personal impressions of the events of his time. His early poetry, produced as it was when economic depression with its concomitant evil of unemployment and mass starvation was at its highest and the danger of dictatorships arising in Europe was imminent. In style, he uses free verse and draws his imagery from scientific inventions. His sensibility is that of the romantics, largely under the influence of Yeats, which appears most in his lyrics.

The high-talk of modernism is dead long back and the present cultural phase is described as postmodern. Rejecting both the modernists' abstract philosophizing and experimentation with form and the deliberate commonness of the Larkin kind, contemporary poetry, from the 1970s, has moved along various lines. It is seen that so many readers think that Philip Larkin, Donald Davie, Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes are the British poets of Today. But some other readers include D J Enright, R S Thomas, Peter Levi, Carol Ann Duffy, and Geoffrey Hill and so on. The old names like W H Auden and T S Eliot would be forgotten. Today, there are so many promising poets actively writing in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Most poets have some groups: The Movement, The Mavericks, the Group and the Beat. There is an anxiety that poetry has exhausted all possible forms. Cyberculture has enabled new experimentation with hypertexts, thus providing a new form. The contemporary poetry was divided on the line followed by two major poets – Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes. It is said that the misfortune of the British poetry began when Philip Larkin rejected the “common myth-kitty” of Dylan Thomas. Philip Larkin (1922-1985) was the most distinguished voice of a new generation reacting equally against what seemed to them the confused romanticism of Dylan Thomas and his imitators and the naïve political enthusiasm and idealism of the poets of the 1930s such as Auden, Spender, and Day Lewis. He preferred the forthright virtues of Thomas Hardy, whom he acknowledged as his most important influence, as an alternative to what was offered by modernism. Larkin tried to write poetry of irony, clarity and exact observation. Larkin's poetry lies a constant awareness of the passing of time and of man being a captive of time, disappointment, loneliness balanced with their opposites – permanence, joy, and the sharing of some ritual. His poems are invariably subtle, disturbing, complex, however, ‘domestic’ in his subjects.

A return to primitivism is an important feature of contemporary poetry. A raw, violent primitivism is visible in Ted Hughes (1939-98), poet Laureate of England from 1984 until his death. He has an imaginative depth, emotional complexity and powerful expression which have placed him till the present day as one of chief exponents of postmodern poetry. He was a prolific writer, fascinating, and bewildering at times. Turning away from the urbanism of the moderns, Hughes' early work is rooted in nature. However, Hughes did not have the Wordsworthian view of nature. The nature found in *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Crow* (1970) and other early poems, is a violent, barbaric and blood-ridden one. Dismemberment, blood and violent mutilation mark Hughes' work. In *Snowdrop*, nature and its creatures are visualized almost entirely in terms of their power, brutality and capacity for the violence. Hughes examines the divided nature of man and his relationships: between men and women, between them and natural life and finally with god. The publication of *Crow* brought along with it controversy regarding its new hero, Crow, resilient, resourceful, deceitful and God as Crow's adversary, passive and caught sleeping when Crow is going about his tricks.

Donald Davie (1922-1995), poet and distinguished critic, is often treated as a part of the 'Movement' poets. He writes a more philosophical and abstract poetry. He chose rural landscapes more than anything else, and perhaps wrote more semi-urban and rural poetry than most 20th British or Irish poets. He is also more Romantic than most poets of his generation. Nostalgia, memory and longing mark Davie's work. Thomas William Gunn (B. 1929) is more familiarly known as Thom Gunn. He was a poet who showed early promise and found a place in anthologies whole still very young. His first collection *Fighting Terms* (1954) appeared the year he left Cambridge. He was influenced by the French Existential thought and is sometimes seen to aggressively espouse it in his poetry. He wrote with an urgency that was appropriate to the times. He made use of prose in matter as well as in manner. He expressed matter close to the heart—youth, culture, lorry drivers, rockers in leather jackets, Elvis Presley, death, and in more recent works, homosexuality and drugs. In the poems with which he has made a name, he attempts to define the tensions between opposites – rule and energy, will and instinct, intellectual rigour and the modes of pleasure.

Geoffrey Hill (Born 1932) has been called a visionary in the tradition of William Blake, but he is a much more difficult, learned and referential poet than Blake. He is an experimenter with form and theme, is richly allusive and elliptical in his work. The result has been that he is often ignored – like Ezra Pound – for being difficult. He may be described as ‘postmodernist’ for the way in which he renders common things strange. His fragmented syntax and poem structure in volumes like *Canaan* (1996) also serve to make the reader aware of the poem’s form – a feature of most self-reflexive and self-conscious postmodern writing. Hill uses multiple registers – traditional poetic styles, the language of advertisements, myth, religious images and political themes. Hill is also concerned with the victims of war and genocide. He is impressive as a stylist using traditional forms with fluid grace. At times fierce, his poetry has the visionary energy, at once learned and direct. Carol Ann Duffy (Born 1955) is in disputably one of the most exciting new voices in English poetry. Her collection *The World’s Wife* (1999) is a reworking of myths and legends where the wife’s role and identity is redefined by Duffy in tones of both satire and sadness. She followed this up with *Feminine Gospels* (2002) which shares concerns with her earlier work. Like most postmodern poets, Duffy is concerned with the limits of language, and like postmodern writing, she appropriates myth and legend to engage in playful subversion or to reflect on very contemporary concerns. Thus mythological woman figures become strangely contemporary in their agonies, anxieties and oppressions. A strong sense of play in Duffy conceals her very strongly political and social comments on relationships, gender inequities and social norms. Homosexuality and sexual encounters are themes, though Duffy has been less explicit about it than others.

Modern poetry of allusiveness and irony, purposefulness and social criticism, clarity and craftsmanship and of observation and preciseness was exhausted itself. Contemporary poetry needs ‘immaculate supranational poesy insemination’. Regionalism and provincialism appeal to some poets. Roy Fisher (1930-) experiments with forms, protests and attempts to be a romantic realist in his poems. Romantic realism is a better term for the new English poetry because the poet is aware of the social, political and environmental realities. He fuses the elements of imaginative and visionary experience into realities. He wrote some of the best landscape poetry. His most important volume is *City* (1961), a prose-poetry collection. The images are simple and direct, there is very little abstraction or attempt

to convert every image into a loaded metaphor or symbol. Here is an example from *City*.

Outside the Grand Hotel, a long-boned carrot-haired girl with glasses, loping along, and with strips of bright colour, rich, silky green and blue, in her soft clothes. For a person made of such scraps she was beautiful.

One suspects that Fisher attempts to keep urban dirt and corruption out of his poetry. There is very little Eliotesque description of the city's seedy sides. On the rare occasion when Fisher does describe dirt or decay it is with a sense of revulsion.

In short, it is seen that both modern and postmodern poetry reflect the complexity and variety of contemporary life and ideas and the mood and atmosphere of the Age. They are chiefly experimental and innovative.

DRAMA:

Modern drama owes a great to the efforts of Irish playwrights of the first decades of the 20th century. The independent Theatre opened in London in 1891 and provided a valuable forum for the dramatic circles of the city. Twentieth century English drama is a 'split drama'. There are different schools of drama. They are known as 'Theatre of Words', 'Theatre of Cruelty', 'Epic Theatre', 'Absurd Theatre', 'Theatre of Anger' and 'Kitchen-sink drama'. Drama in this century is marked by changes. It comes with conflict. It is confronted with the dictates of both life and art. During the post-war, particularly in the mid-1950s, there has been a remarkable flowering of British drama. The new wave of dramatists of the 1950s made different experiments as innovations in form, content and style of drama.

Modern drama is impatient with naturalism. One of the ways to counter naturalism was to revive poetic drama. The other method was to challenge drama and theatre by questioning them in a more fundamental way. Many major and minor playwrights helped to the growth of modern drama. However, the playwrights after the Second World War contributed to communicate the despair doubt and anxiety of the modern man. The values and belief of the past were not only questioned but were found useless to complete contemporary problems to capture the integrated self and lack of certainty. Therefore, there are many new trends in recent English drama. The new English drama is ripe for new talents. There are two reasons which renovated

English drama. First, there is great influence of the works of European dramatists like Samuel Beckett and others. Secondly, dramatic action and speech are expanded to a wider human range. There was emergence of the working class drama. It expressed contemporary mood. The search is made for expressive forms of drama. The postmodern or contemporary drama has been remarkable for new experiments and innovations. Through the new experiments and innovations, some features of new drama are seen. They are as follows:

- Stages scenes of sex and violence
- Social protests through depiction of extreme conditions
- An obsession with the non-rational
- Political themes
- Absurd drama and the theatre of cruelty became significant influences
- Highly stylized and highlights its own artifice
- In-Yer-Face theatre relies on excessive brutality to capture contemporary reality.

The new dramatists are young and started writing for the theatre early and then for radio and television. Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker, John Osborne, John Arden, Terence Rattigan, Edward Bond and so on, are some of their representatives. They searched many new tricks to shock their conventional and traditional audiences by horrifying, shocking and disgusting situations, Homosexuality, nymphomania, prostitution and abortion, violent and casual deaths and disfigurement are all parts of the new drama.

Samuel Beckett stands as the benchmark for many genres within drama: expressionist, absurd, experimental. His *Waiting for Godot* (English translation in 1955) depicts two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, waiting for Godot. Who or what Godot might be, we never get to know. Pozzo and his servant Lucky turn up occasionally. The plot is repetitious with no action except for the dialogue and brief episodes of minor diversions. Thus Pozza eats and delivers a lecture on philosophy to Vladimir and Estragon. Beckett was trying to capture the endless, tedious nature of human experience itself, where actions do not always have a goal or meaning. This play presents illogical situations and purposeless action. Language itself seems

to break down when speech does not seem to make sense. It shocked the audience at first by its absence of plot or structure, its bare set and its central concept that 'nothing happens'. This play is a tragic farce. It is funny. It seems to be a satire on religion.

British drama turned an entire new chapter with the advent of 1950s with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956). Osborne (1929-94) added two new phrases to the English drama as the 'Angry Young Man' and the 'Kitchen sink Drama'. The term 'Kitchen-sink Drama' is applied to the new wave of the realistic drama depicting the family lives of working class characters on the stage. The heroes in it revolt and protest against the social system. Osborne was one of the 'Angry Young Men' of 1950s Britain. There is resentment against the values of the British middle class. The most striking example of the 'Angry Young Man' is Jimmy Porter, the protagonist of Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Jimmy represents a generation with no heroic causes left: "I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any more. We had all that done for us, in the thirties and forties, when we were still kids." He rants and raves, and directs his anger at his wife Alison. The play shows a certain idealization of working class virtues like poverty and a contempt for those who come from the other side of the class barrier. Jimmy's principal problem is that he has no role to play in this modernity, that despite his education, he is ignored by the establishment. Sexual morality, education and work ethics are Jimmy's targets in the play and enabled Osborne to speak with a large section of disillusioned English youth.

By 1960 Harold Pinter and Arnold Wesker had come to be seen as potentially more fruitful. The 20th century British dramatists, Harold Pinter, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, stands out as the most complex, daring and often elusive of all. Pinter (1930-2008) has thus far 29 plays, numerous screenplays and theatre productions to his credit. His activism, especially in favour of the freedom of expression has attracted considerable attention too. Originally influenced by the Theatre of the Absurd, Pinter's plays are often taken as symbols of anti-traditional protest and emancipation. *The Birthday Party* (1957) shows Stanley Webber, who lives in a rather cheap lodging house in an unnamed English seaside resort, being visited by two men. He is being accused of opposing tradition, even as the two men quickly become symbols of an oppressive establishment. In typical absurdist mode, we are never given any complete information as to why these things happen to

Stanley. We know that he is being interrogated and persecuted. But the actual crimes he is supposed to have committed, and the nature of the oppressors, remain unknown. Pinter's plays are often difficult to 'resolve'. Conversations are fragmented – the characters are not always engaged in a dialogue; rather we have two parallel monologues. Information is never complete, and cultural-historical contexts are not always available. A critic has said that "The world of Harold Pinter is shadowy, obsessed, guilt-ridden, claustrophobic and, above all, private. You are expected to find your way. Through it without signposts, clues or milestones."

In 1960 Arnold Wesker completed 'the Wesker's trilogy – *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1958), *Roots* (1959), *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* (1959). This series deals with the life of an East End (London) Jewish family, the Kahns. His plays are categorized as 'kitchen-sink drama', where the main protagonist spends considerable time in the kitchen. In *Roots*, for example, Beatie Bryant cooks, cleans, philosophizes and even bathes in the kitchen. The plays also located family tensions and relationships within the political ideologies and class tensions of the time. Wesker's characters speak about war, liberty and a responsible role for the artist in a society. It can be said that Wesker is not without serious purpose. His work is closely attentive to society. One can see that in themes, characters, settings, real life behaviour and dialogue, the new dramatist is responding to the society in which he lives. He is entirely committed to the view that the people of his own working class are deprived of the good things of life by various kinds of exploitation.

In short, though the new British dramatists do not make statements of define their aims, they are creatively involved with society and reveal in their plays, what they find in the world around them and within them. They look promising and important dramatists.

1.3.1 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternatives.

1. Who was the pioneer to redefine novel?
A) Henry James B) Flaubert C) Maupassant D) Joseph Conrad
2. Who pointed out that story seems to have died out of the 20th century English novel?
A) Virginia Woolf B) Edwin Muir C) James Joyce D) Dorothy Richardson.

3. Ezra Pound was born in -----.
A) India B) South Africa C) U S A. D) England.
4. What is the period of T.S. Eliot?
A) 1888-1965 B) 1840-1928 C) 1865-1939 D) 1885-1930
5. The period of John Osborne is-----.
A) 1930-1960 B) 1929-1994 C) 1830-1875 D) 1935-1995

B) Answer in one word/phrase/ sentence.

1. What are the responsible factors to the birth of experimentation in literature?
2. Who were the innovators of new style in Modern novel?
3. Who wrote 'To the Lighthouse'?
4. Who brought a revolution in the 20th century modern poetry?
5. What is the poem 'Leda and the Swan' about?
6. What does the poem 'The Second Coming' indicate?
7. What are the themes of Auden's poetry?
8. What is the central theme of Louis Mac Niece's poetry?
9. Who is the most striking example of the 'Angry Young Man'?

C) State true of false.

1. Modernism is experimented by nature.
2. Some 20th century novelist have drawn novel from the public arena.
3. Virginia Woolf's novels are dealt with psychological techniques.
4. H.G. Well is a pioneer in the field of science fiction.
5. Henry James is not known as the pioneer of psycho-analysis technique.
6. Modernist poetry in England was influenced by French symbolism.
7. Hardy was by nature introspective, self-critical and sincere to his feelings.
8. Stephen Spender's poetry is not about social protest.

9. Harold Pinter's plays are not often difficult to 'resolve'.
10. Arnold Wisker's plays are categorized as 'Kitchen-sink-drama'.

1.3.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **genocide (n):** the deliberate killing of a large group of people.
- **inertia (n) :** a tendency to do nothing
- **bestows (v) :** to give
- **dexterous (aj) :** clever with hands and fingers
- **nymphomania (n) :** uncontrollable or excessive sexual desire in woman
- **Angry Young Men :** It is a term used to describe a group of writers (mainly dramatists and novelists) in the 1950s.
- **Surrealism :** An art movement, Surrealism was an attempt to capture the mind's deepest and most unconscious aspect in painting. In literature, automatic writing and Stream-of-consciousness came closest to being influenced by this kind of approach.
- **Vorticism :** It is one kind of movement. The movement, mainly confined to Britain, used modernism's fascination with technology and energy. It was influential in poetry, painting and sculpture.

1.4 The Absurd Drama:

The 20th century English drama is called a 'split drama'. The general trends of writing drama established during the 1930s continued in the post-war years. The Post-war English drama has been remarkable for the new experiments and innovations. The new young dramatists started their writing in new techniques. They made new experiments and innovations in form, content and style of drama. During the period, there were different schools of drama known as 'Epic Theatre', Kitchen Sink Drama' 'Absurd Drama' or 'Theatre of Absurd Drama'. It is said that much before Martin Esslin coined the term 'Theatre of the Absurd'. Playwrights had been shown in their plays, individual elements, which later crystallized as distinctive features of this new wave in theatre. Martin Esslin coined the phrase 'Theatre of the Absurd' in 1961 to refer to a number of dramatists of the 1950s. It popularized the absurd drama. But it is school of drama developed from 1950 to 1962.

Albert Camus wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus' in 1942; and the phrase 'The Theatre of the Absurd' is taken from this essay. Camus defined the absurd as the tension which emerges from man's determination to discover purpose and order in a world. But it steadfastly refuses evidence either. The playwrights in the Theatre of the Absurd came to know humanity's plight as purposeless in existence out of harmony with its surroundings. Awareness of this lack of purpose in all produces a state of metaphysical anguish and it is the central theme of these absurdists. Basically, 'absurd' means 'out of harmony'. The dictionary defines it as 'out of harmony with reason or propriety, incongruous unreasonable, illogical'. But Camus does not use the word 'absurd' with such meanings. He has different sense of meaning. For him, human being becomes aware the absurdity of his existence when he realizes that the world is really an unintelligible and a meaningless place. According to him, the divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity.

A plot implies a logical sequence of cause and effect which parallels the conception of an orderly universe, but in the absurd plays there is no logical construction or the rational linking of idea with idea. So these plays lack plot and events. As Martin Esslin writes in 'The Theatre of the Absurd' an absurd plays has a situation rather than a story. The form and structure of the absurd drama is totally different from the conventional drama. It rejects the concept of the plot of Aristotle. The absurd drama does not have a definite plot or story. It is often without recognizable characters and presents the audience with the almost mechanical puppets. It has neither a beginning nor an end in the traditional sense. The dialogues deal with incoherent babblings. The absurd playwright uses gestures, modes of action, unexpected opening and indefinable present. It doesn't have a closure. In such drama, a focus is not given on the speech. It is speech which is closed to silence. There are some gaps, silences and pauses in the speeches. The absurd drama has short sentences and brief speeches indicating lack of continuity. There is no logical link, and lack of harmony between words and action. There is devaluation of language. It uses a language based on patterns of concrete images rather than argument and discursive speech. The situations in Absurd drama are hardly drawn from real life. The absurd drama developed with new themes like relationship between Man and God, Man and Nature, Life and Death, Man and Man etc. It also deals with a few problems in human life like life, death, isolation, communication,

anxiety and fear. The absurd dramatists share a common belief that human life essentially irrational, purposeless and out of harmony with its surroundings and the result in uncertainty, anguish and depression. For Irving Wardle, the features of ‘the Theatre of the Absurd’ are “the substitution of an inner landscape for the outer world, the lack of any clear division between fantasy and fact; a free attitude towards time, which can expand or contract according to subjective requirements, a fluid environment which projects mental conditions in the form of visual metaphor, and iron precision of language and construction as the writer’s only defense against the chaos of living experience.”

In absurd plays, it is observed that life is essentially meaningless and so it is miserable. There is no hope because of the inevitable futility of man’s efforts. Reality is unbearable unless relieved by dreams and illusions. Man is fascinated by death which permanently replaces dreams and illusions. Nothing meaningful can happen. The final situation is absurd or comic. Absurd is that which has no purpose or goal or objective. Absurd drama is not purposeful and specific as it solves no problem. It neither investigates nor solves problems of conduct or morals. It is not concerned with conveying information or presenting the problems or destinies of characters that exists outside the author’s inner world. It is like an abstract painting which is supposed not to convey a definite meaning. This type of drama seeks to explore the spiritual loneliness, complete isolation and anxiety of the people who are social failures and social outcasts. Action and dialogues are reduced to a minimum in these plays. Absurd plays do indeed confront their public with a bewildering experience, a veritable barrage of wildly irrational, often nonsensical goings on that seem to go counter to all accepted standards of stage convention. These plays are divorced from any framework of conceptual rationality. Absurd play has its roots in Existentialism, Expressionism and Surrealism. It is a part of a rich and varied tradition. It reflects new attitude of modern man. It provides a new language, new ideas and new approaches to play.

The spectators of the theatre of the absurd are confronted with a grotesquely heightened picture of their own world: a world without faith, meaning, and genuine freedom of will. In this sense, *Theatre of the Absurd* is the true theatre of our time. The decline of religious faith, the discovery of vast areas of irrational and unconscious forces within the human psyche, the loss of a sense of control over rational human development in an age of totalitarianism and weapons of mass

destruction, have all contributed to the erosion of all basis for the conventional drama.

‘The Theatre of the Absurd’ became an international affair by the major leading dramatists like Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov, Jean Genet, and Harold Pinter. The minor figures are Robert Pignatelli, N. F. Simpson, Edward Albee, Fernando Arrabal and Gunter Grass. This school of drama is associated with a number of other avant-garde writers in France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Germany, the United States and elsewhere.

Samuel Beckett was an Irish dramatist and novelist who lived long in Paris and has written both in French and English. He is called as the father of the absurd school of drama. He uses formless language to present the meaningless void of experience as encountered by his characters. His plays express the concerns and anxieties of the present age. He always poses questions in his plays, but doesn’t give any solutions. He puts the ball in the court of the audience. He is ranked with Shakespeare and Ibsen; it is because of his service of the English stage. His masterpiece is *Waiting for Godot* in France. His other plays are *Endgame*, *Krapp’s Last Tape*, *Happy Days*, *All That Fall*, *Embers*, *Words and Music*, *Come and Go*. Although Beckett translated his plays into English and even wrote occasionally in English, he is essentially in the continental rather than the English tradition.

Eugene Ionesco, a Rumanian born dramatist, wrote in French. Eugene as an absurdist dramatist dealt with such subjects as the breakdown of language and vulnerability of man in his famous play like *The Chair*. Arthur Adamov, a Russian born dramatist, also wrote in French. His plays are *La Parodie* and *Le professeur Taranne* which depict a sense of alienation. Jean Genet is a famous dramatist and a poet of France. He has written a number of plays as *Deathwatch*, *The Maids*, *The Balcony*, *The Blacks* and *The Screens*. Jean Genet through his emphasis on the motif of role-playing, the format of the play within the play and the theme of overlapping natures of art and life, appearance and reality, mask and face and fluid nature of human identity, shares a lot in common with the Theatre of Absurd in plays like *The Maids* and *The Balcony*.

Edward Albee, an American dramatist, produced One-act-plays and reflected contemporary social and psychological tensions. Martin claims that Albee for Absurd Theatre who shares traits, but resists the label. He wrote – *Who’s Afraid of Virginia*

Wolf? The Death of Bessie Smith and Tiny Alice and Box-Mao-Box. N. F. Simpson is also considered as an absurd dramatist. Esslin sees him as an example of absurd drama providing highly effective social comment. His plays are- *A Resounding Tinkle, One Way Pendulum* and *You Can't Take It With You*.

Harold Pinter, the leading British playwright in the contemporary theatre is greatly influenced by Kafka and Beckett. He revealed a remarkable element of the Absurd in his presentation of the characters, motivations and backgrounds are singularly mysterious in play after play. His plays are *The Birthday Party, the Room, The Caretaker, The Servant, The Homecoming, Old Times, No Man's Land, and Betrayal*. His characters' 'irrational behaviour' point to larger irrationality in the world around them which can not be explained in logical terms. Richard Schechner states, Pinter's heroes like Kafka's are vague about what is going to happen. Alrene Sykes points out, "Pinter's plays suggest that life is uncertain, but not necessarily that it is also inevitably devoid of purpose, senseless in the way that Beckett, Ionesco, Arrabal, Vian, Adam off and Pinget have implied." Martin Esslin thinks that Pinter's master of dialogue, accuracy of observation, originality, fertility, poetical vision; all these do justify the highest hopes for his future development. His language is an exact reproduction of natural speech which produces dialogue akin to the disintegrating language of the absurd.

1.4.1 Check your progress:

A) Choose the correct alternatives:

1. The ----- English drama is called 'split drama'.
A) 16th century B) 20th century C) 17th century D) 18th century
2. The phrase 'Theatre of the Absurd' coined in -----.
A) 1961 B) 1861 C) 1761 D) 1680
3. Albert Camus wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus' in -----.
A) 1942 B) 1948 C) 1964 D) 1924
4. Who is called as the father of the absurd school of drama?
A) Harold Pinter B) N.F. Simpson
C) Gean Genet D) Samuel Beckett

5. Arthur Adamor is a ----- born dramatist.
A) Indian B) Russian C) Rumanian D) Irish

B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Who coined the phrase 'Theatre of the Absurd'?
2. Who wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?
3. What does mean 'Absurd'?
4. What are the themes of 'Absurd Drama'?
5. Who are the major leading dramatists of 'The Theatre of the Absurd'?

C) State True or False.

1. In the absurd plays don't have logical construction.
2. Absurd plays lack plot and events.
3. For Martin Esslin, an absurd play has a situation rather than a story.
4. An absurd drama does not reject the concept of the plot of Aristotle.
5. An absurd play neither investigates nor solves problems of conducts or morals.
6. Samuel Beckett was an Irish dramatist and novelist.

1.4.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **babblings** (n): foolish talk
- **discursive** (aj): rambling
- **fluid** (aj) : capable of flowing
- **grotesque** (aj) : strange and amusing
- **erosion** (n) : eroding or being eroded

1.5 The Psychological novel:

The Psychological novel is primarily concerned with 'what a man thinks and what he does', observed Henry James. Psychological is that element in the narrative art that is concerned with the psychic i.e. the subjective aspect of experience. Ordinary exposition, description and characterization are not generally sufficient for

the purpose of dealing with this subjective aspect of experience. The limitation of the realistic novel is that it is not able to highlight private self of the individual. The character is a combination of thought, feeling, and actions. Every individual is constituted of two-selves ---- the public self and private self. To know a character wholly it is essential to know his mind psychologically. The realistic novel did not depict the mental life of the character and thus was able to project only one aspect of the character. So in the middle of 19th century it was felt that the reader was to be given a more intimate view of a character that is how he reacts to a particular problem and why. This led the novelist to be engaged with the inner psychology of the character and to provide what conflict arose in his mind with regard to his course of action and what were his motives for acting. In general, it can be said that the emphasis came to be given to the feelings and mental process of a character in a given situation. This detailed presentation of the feelings and mental process of a character is what in the fiction is called psychology. In a more precise way Henry James pointed out that the novel must describe the atmosphere of mind. A psychological novelist analyses the motives, impulses and mental processes which moved his characters and to act in a particular way. He depicts the inner struggles of his characters and thus lays bare their soul before his readers.

George Eliot and Henry James were the first English language writers to create psychological novel in the 19th century. George Eliot was convinced that no human life could be sympathetically understood without penetrating the unique inner experience of that life. For her recording the subjective reality was the function of a novelist. Eliot brought to fiction an extraordinary density of analysis. She went behind the apparent motive to something lying deep in consciousness which is the main deterrent of action and conduct. Though basically, she is a moral novelist, she studies human nature in its psychological aspect. Her main theme can be said to be the problem of choice and self-deception. The central conflict in her novels is between duty and passion. Characters are caught between their allegiances to these two. George Eliot has elaborated this conflict for the development of which she has analysed the inner laws which govern and control human nature. As for example, in *The Mill on the Floss*, the central character Maggie Tulliver faces this kind of dilemma and commits mistakes in making choices for her lack of understanding of her ownself. She is seen as renunciation all personal pleasures and desires for the purpose of fulfilling a promise made to her father. In this she acts against her inner

nature because she essentially craves for the fulfillments of passion. In this way, George Eliot shows that how the psychological process of sublimation works. Actually she wants to enjoy life, its beauty, its colour and passion. In *Middlemarch* Mr. Bulstrode is a wealthy vulgar. He has a deep and sincere religious faith. In the past he committed a dishonest action. So he deprived Will Ladislaw from his inheritance of money and property. That essentially was the source of Bulstrode's prosperity. Bulstrode is a hypocrite but not an ordinary hypocrite. He believes that whatever he has been doing is for the glory of God. This process of rationalizing has been carefully analysed by George Eliot. A moment of crisis comes in the life of Bulstrode with the return of Raffles. Raffles knows about Bulstrode's past misdeed. So Bulstrode thinks of removing him. When Raffles is ill, Bulstrode gives him an over-dose of medicine which kills Raffles. Thus Bulstrode fails to conceal his hypocrisy with the help of rationalizing his misdeeds. His murder of Raffles is dedicated by his unconscious. Like the psychologist George Eliot has several times explained that man cannot be free from the consequences of his past life. And also that hidden motives in man come out at the moment of crisis and paralyse his hold on life. It is thus that George Eliot provides a psychological analysis and interpretation of a moral theme.

Henry James went beyond George Eliot in seeing that the consciousness of a central character not only gives the novelist this material but also this form. In James's novel we have the recording of the consciousness and the readers have not the benefit of knowing more than the character knows. In James, therefore, we get properly what is known as the dramatization of consciousness. The characters reveal themselves with minimum intervention of the author. James shows the relationship between the central consciousness and some reflecting minds. The characters illuminate each other and thus that we see a character from different points of view. In this way Henry James turns the novel into an interesting play of minds.

George Meredith is not concerned with the technical aspect of psychology. In his novels, the psychological process is a much more sophisticated affair, involving highly civilized people. The subject is the satisfaction of moral vanity. The devious ways in which man tries to flatter his moral and intellectual vanity, is the subject of Meredith. Meredith generalizes the psychology of his characters and analyses their feelings. He stands outside the character and looks in. He watches the fun of a fine mind going wrong. Such fine minds are that of Austen Feverel in *The Ordeal of*

Richard Feverel and Sir Willoughby Pattern in *The Egoist*. Meredith explains to the reader, the general laws of human nature which are exemplified by the antics of his characters. In Meredith's psychological analysis, we find that he is passing from the outside point of view of an author in its probing the motive of his character to the inside point of view of a character thinking his thoughts. In Meredith, thus we reach the border line between proper psychological analysis and the dramatization of consciousness.

The modern psychological novel reflects a deeper and more searching inwardness of human experience. This turning inwardness was reflected in the writings of William James, Freud and Henry Bergson. In other words, the modern psychological novel is concerned with the depth of psychology and in the presentation of human personality takes into consideration in the various levels of consciousness. The exploration and understanding of the nature and process of human consciousness becomes more and more the preoccupation of the psychologist in the 20th century. Freud's theory of psychology allowed the imagination to probe the deeper areas of human mind. Freud recognized that below the sane mind there lay a great number of irrational motives involving sex, parental authority fixation and repressions. In fact all those things which make the unconscious, Freud defined psyche in terms of a duality between Ego and Id. Ego is the logical aspect of mind. Id is the irrational unconscious aspect of mind. Freud points out that in human personality, there is tension between the rational and non-rational motivation which is the very substance of characterization. He further pointed out that the super Ego, or the moral judgement holds the Id in rapport with the society. Henry Bergson is also the pioneer of modern psychological novel.

1.5.1 Check Your Progress

A) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Who were the first English language writers to create psychological novel?
2. What are the themes of George Eliot's fiction?
3. Which is the central character of 'The Mill on the Floss'?
4. What do mean 'Ego' and 'Id'?

B) State True or False.

1. In psychological novel, emphasis is given on the feelings and mental process of a character.
2. Bulstrode in 'Middlemarch' is a hypocrite.
3. The modern psychological novel reflects a deeper and more searching inwardness of human experience.
4. Freud's theory of psychology did not allow the imagination to probe the deeper area of human mind.

1.5.2 Glossary and Notes:

- **rapprochement** (n): a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.
- **duality** (n) : the quality or condition of being dual.
- **antics** (n) : comical tricks
- **renunciation** (n) : renouncing
- **illuminate** (v) : give light to, throw light on
- **devious** (aj) : roundabout

1.6 Summary:

In this unit, we have discussed about modernism and post-modernism as literary movements and their characteristics and differences between them. We have also studied about Absurd Dramas, Psychological novel, and experimentation in British Literature. No doubt, all these points will prove useful to you. They will enhance your understanding of the work of art.

1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress:

1.2.1

- A) 1. a. 20th century
2. a. 1920 & 1930
3. a. Europe and America

- B)**
1. Freud and Jung
 2. They are cultural phrases, continuous with one another and both emphasize the Now, and ignore history.
 3. For him, Modernism strives for truth, meaning and history while postmodernism believes only in representations of surface reality.
 4. Modernity means an 'active' forgetting of history.
 5. Paul De Man.
 6. For him, though modernist works attempt to forget history, it is clear that such attempts end in failure since these works remind the readers of history instead of making them forget it.
 7. Derrida.
 8. Derrida.
 9. Temporal distortion is a literary technique that uses a nonlinear timeline.
 10. Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
- C)**
1. False 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.
 6. True. 7. True. 8. True. 9. True.

1.3.1

- A)**
1. a. Henry James
 2. b. Edwin Muir
 3. c. USA
 4. d. 1865-1939
 5. c. 1830-1875
- B).**
1. There are three aspects :
 1. The break down of the public backgrounds of belief,
 2. The terrifying weapons of the World War-I.
 3. A number of new intellectual theories.
 4. Henry James, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

5. Virginia Woolf
6. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot
7. The poem is about linkage of power and sexuality.
8. It indicates vision of Christianity's peak and destruction after 2000 years.
9. Auden's poetry dealt with war, culture, morality and humanity.
10. His central theme is a pitiless exposure of the ills of the modern industrial civilization.
11. Jimmy Porter .

- C)** 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. False
 6. True 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. True

1.4.1

- A)** 1. b. 20th century.
 2. a. 1961
 3. a. 1942
 4. d. Samuel Beckett
 5. b. Russian

- B)** 1. Martin Esslin
 2. Albert Camus
 3. 'Absurd' means 'out of harmony'.
 4. The absurd drama developed with new themes like relationship between man and God, Man and Nature, Life and Death, Man and Man. It also deals with a few human problems like life, death, isolation, communication, anxiety and fear.
 5. Samuel Beckett, Eugene Lonesco, Arthur Adamov, Gean Genet, Harold Pinter.

- C)** 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. True

1.5.1

- A)** 1. George Eliot and Henry James.
2. the problem of choice and self-deception
3. Maggie Tulliver
4. Ego is the logical aspect of mind and Id is the irrational unconscious aspect of mind.
- B)** 1. True 2. True 3. True 4. False

1.8 Exercises:

A) Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the terms Modernism and Postmodernism.
2. Comment on the characteristics of Modernism and Postmodernism.
3. “The 20th century English Drama is called a ‘split drama’”. Discuss.
4. “Modern poetry is regarded as ant-traditional”. Explain.

B) Write short notes:

1. Modernism
2. Postmodernism
3. The Psychological Novel
4. Experimentation in fiction

1.9 References to Further Study:

1. Nayar, Pramod K. (2009). *A Short History of English Literature*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press of India.
2. Sharama, S. R. (2010). *Contemporary English Literature*. New Delhi: Mohite Publications.
3. Singh, D K. (2010). *English Literature Then and Now*. Daryaganj: Surendra Publications.
4. Woods, Tim. (2010). *Beginning Postmodernism*. New Delhi: Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.
5. Ford, Boris. *The Pelican Guide to British Literature*
6. Esslin, Martin. (1980). *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Penguin.
7. Stead, C. K. (1986). *Pound, Yeats, Eliot and The Modernist Movement*. London: Macmillan.

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Unit-2

Poems Selected from

A) The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse 1918-60

2.1 W. B. Yeats,

1. 'A Prayer for My Daughter'

Content :

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 A Prayer For My Daughter

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases

2.2.3 Summary

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.6 Broad question with answer

2.2.7 Exercises

2.3 Activities / Field work

2.4 Further Reading.

2.1 Objectives:

After studying this poem you will be able to –

- study distinction between traditional British Literature and Experimental Literature in Modern period.
- understand difference between Modern and Post-modern modes / Tendencies in British literature.
- know how each poet is different in his subject matter and treatment.
- know how poetry reflects the spirit of the age.
- realize the significance of the poetical language.

1.2 Introduction:

William Butler Yeats: (1865-1939) started writing poetry at the young age of twenty when some of his poems appeared in *The Dublin University Review* in 1885. In the initial stage of his career, he was under the influence of the English Romantic poets, especially William Blake, and Shelley. He wrote in the tradition of Spenser and Shelley. Yeats writes about his early poetry:

I had begun to write poetry in
imitation of Shelley and Edmund
Spenser, play after play for my father
exalted dramatic poetry above all
Other kinds – and I invented
fantastic and incoherent plots.

Critics regard this as the first phase of his poetic career. During this period, he published *Crossways of his Collected Poems*.

Then followed his Irish period with emotional turbulences in personal life. He fell desperately in love with the beautiful actress and Irish nationalist Maud Gonne. As a result, several poems expressing his turbulent passion for Maud appeared during this phase. During the second phase of his poetic career, he published two volumes of poetry. The first volume is *In the Seven Words* (1904); the second is *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910).

Later on he met Lady Gregory, a patron of Irish writers and spent several sojourns at the lady's country estate called Coole Park. In fact, Yeats' residence was close to the Coole Park. It became a symbol of joy, elegance, aristocracy in his poems. Lady Gregory's love of the theatre took Yeats also to the Irish National Theatre Movement. He managed the Abbey Theatre in Dublin for about eight years. With growing maturity and experience his poetry became very obscure, metaphysical and symbolic in this last phase. In fact he formulated a whole esoteric system of his own which he elaborates upon in his book *A Vision* (1926).

His poetry is an unusual combination of the seasons and the metaphysical, the lyric and the realistic, the concrete and the subtle. He has remained a major poet of our times along with Eliot, Auden and Pound.

2.2.1 A Prayer For My Daughter

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases:

Haystack: a huge pile of hay covered with mud etc.

Imagining in excited reverie: the poet is in a state of excited reverie.

Dancing to a frenzied drum: The beating of a drum was call to the members of a tribe to come quickly from wherever they were at the moment and get ready for battle.

The murderous innocence of the sea: The sea is destructive or murderous and yet innocent.

May she be granted beauty – and never find a friend: The poet wishes that his daughter should grow into a beautiful woman.

Helen being chosen ----- is undone: Helen was an extraordinarily beautiful woman.

Much trouble from a fool: The reference is to Paris, the Trojan Prince, with whom Helen fell in love thus creating trouble for herself and for others.

A bandy – legged smith for man: a lame blacksmith as a husband. The reference is to Hephaestus who is the god of blacksmiths.

Whereby the Horn of plenty is undone: which leads to ruin or disaster.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree --- perpetual place: The poet would like his daughter to grow like a flourishing tree hidden from the public gaze.

An intellectual hatred is the worst --- full of angry wind? : Refer to intellectual hatred of Maud Gonne had is the worst form of hatred.

2.2.3 Summary:

W.B. Yeats is a great Irish poet and dramatist. As a poet, he wrote volumes of poetry, most of them reflect on Irish Culture and the personal life of the poet. *A Prayer For My Daughter* is one of the most popular poems of Yeats. In this poem, he has paid a glowing tribute to his daughter.

The poem opens with an image of the child sleeping innocently through howling storm. A “great gloom” is on Yeats’ mind. The violence of Nature seems symbolic of a larger violence. The stream beneath his tower is “flooded”, and arising sea-wind screams. In such a setting, how can this birth, the child in the cradle, escape the nightmare violence to be born in Bethlehem when the rough beast of *The Second Coming* lies rocking where Christ had once been cradled?

Yeats prays that his daughter be like her mother rather than like Maud Gonne, that she “be granted” beauty and yet not / beauty to make a stranger’s eye distraught”, that she be kind, capable of the closest intimacy rather than like Helen bored and troubled by “a fool”, that she escapes the sort of “intellectual hatred” which had turned Maud Gonne into a jailed propagandist, her once lovely voice into “an old bellows full of angry wind.”

The poem is held tighter by a set of wind and tree images which are remarkable even for Yeats. Before he finishes, he has even turned the Horn of plenty into a wind instrument bartered by Maud Gonne for the “old bellows full of angry wind” with which she lectures the world. The poem balances the real storm “bred on the Atlantic” which strikes Yeats’ tower and the elms beneath it against the symbolic storm of future time which will threaten but not immediately destroy custom’s “spreading laurel tree”.

A Prayer For My Daughter is also called “A Wish For My Daughter,” because it is addressed to the particular deities and has no official religious symbolism. The blessings desired are qualified by great modesty and fastidiousness as the father reasons on their serviceability to the woman in her world: and the poem concludes: “Ceremony’s a name for the rich horn / and custom for the spreading laurel tree”. Ceremony and custom are climactic for the poem in being identified with the horn of plenty and the laurel tree, which have been mentioned earlier in the poem. The horn and the laurel tree have been treated by a cunning creative imagination, till they are virtually promoted to something like the status of religious symbols.

2.2.4 Self-Assessment Questions.

(A) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each:

- 1) Who was Anne Butler Yeats?
- 2) Who was the beloved of W.B. Yeats?

- 3) What do you mean by 'Horn of Plenty'?
- 4) Who was Helen?
- 5) Who is the goddess of beauty?

(B) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

- 1) *A Prayer For My Daughter* was written in the form of _____
 a) narrative b) lyric c) epic d) ballad
- 2) Another title suggested for *A Prayer For My Daughter* is _____
 a) A Token of Love b) A Wish For My Daughter
 c) My Beautiful Daughter d) My Aphrodite.
- 3) Helen was wife of _____
 a) Paris b) Troilus c) Menelaus d) Achilles.
- 4) W.B. Yeats was _____ poet.
 a) British b) Scottish c) Irish d) Greek.
- 5) W.B. Yeats was awarded Noble Prize for literature in _____
 a) 1923 b) 1939 c) 1965 d) 1920.

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions:

2.2.4 (A)

- 1) Anne Butler Yeats was daughter of W.B. Yeats.
- 2) Maud Gonne was the beloved of W.B. Yeats.
- 3) The 'Horn of Plenty' is, in ancient mythology, the horn of a goat represented as overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn. It connotes plenty and prosperity.
- 4) Helen, wife of Menelaus, was an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
- 5) Aphrodite is the goddess of beauty and love.

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) b 2) b 3) c 4) c 5) a

2.2.6 Broad question with answer:

Q. 1 – Bring out the significance of the title *A Pray For My Daughter*.

OR

Critically appreciate *A Prayer For My Daughter*.

Yeats's poetry and biography are closely interwoven. We cannot understand his poetry without an intimate knowledge of his life. A large number of his poems are based directly upon actual events in his life, including his friendships and relationships. Apart from that, there are numerous references to personal details in a number of poems.

A Prayer For My Daughter can be seen as a good example in this regard. It is a deeply personal poem expressing the poet's hopes and fears about the future of his daughter, Anne. This poem shows Yeats's disapproval of the kind of beauty which is self-centered, or which drives a lover crazy. It poem also shows Yeats' paternal solicitude and his desire for stability and equilibrium in life:

“O may she live like some green laurel.

Rooted in one dear perpetual place.”

Furthermore, the poem shows Yeats's faith in “custom and ceremony” which were to be found in Irish aristocratic households. It also reveals Yeats's opinion regarding Maud Gonne whom he condemns for her “opinionated mind” and whom he regards as an “old bellows full of angry wind” because of her propagandist activities.

A Prayer For My Daughter has a number of fine poetic touches. There is the tender feeling of the poet towards his child, reminding us of Coleridge's paternal feeling for his son as expressed in the opening stanza of *frost at midnight*. There is the skillful description of the kind of beauty that is not desirable in a woman – beauty that makes a stranger crazy or that makes a woman exult at her reflection in the mirror. Then, there are suggestive allusions to the story of Helen who had “much trouble from a fool,” and Venus who chose “a bandy – legged smith” as her husband, realistic and at the same time entertaining moral:

“It's certain that fine women eat

A crazy salad with their meat

Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.”

Then there are those hearts – warming lines expressive of affection, humanity, generosity, optimism, good-cheer, amiability etc.

In addition to that, we have several examples of the felicity of word and phrase: “the murderous innocence of the sea,” “an old bellows full of angry wind,” “rooted in one dear perpetual place”. There is a bit of moralizing which has its own appeal: “An intellectual hatred is the worst”, ceremony’s name for the rich horn / And custom for the spreading laurel-tree.

A Prayer For My Daughter might as well be given the title “A Wish For My Daughter,” because it is addressed to no particular deities and has no official religious symbolism. The blessings desired are qualified by great modesty and fastidiousness as the father reasons on their service ability to the woman in her world.

2.2.7 Exercises:

- 1) Bring out the significance of the title *A Prayer For My Daughter*.
- 2) Point out the autobiographical elements of the poem *A Prayer For My Daughter*.
- 3) Trace the use of symbolism in the poem *A Prayer For My Daughter*.
- 4) Critically appreciate *A Prayer For My Daughter*.

2.3 Activities / Field work

- 1) Read the story of Helen of Troy
- 2) Make a list of Greek gods and goddesses.
- 3) Point out various images used in *A Prayer For My Daughter*.

2.4 Further Reading :

- 1) Satish, Kumar. *Modern English Poetry*. Kanpur: Aradhana Brothers, 2002
- 2) Louis, Macneice. *The poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London : O.U.P., 1963.
- 3) B.L., Reid. *William Butler Yeats*. Cambridge University Press, 1968.

2. 'Leda and the Swan'

Contents

2.1 Objectives

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2.2.1 Leda and the Swan

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases

2.2.3 Summary

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions

2.2.6 Broad question with answer

2.2.7 Exercises

2.3 Activities/field work

2.4 Further reading

2.1 Objective

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 Leda and the Swan

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases

- 1) Sudden blow: The whole action of swan is sudden and totally unexpected by Leda.
- 2) Staggering of the girl: Zeus, in the shape of swan descends with great force upon Leda, and taking hold of her in order to rape her.
- 3) Terrified vague finders: Leda's fingers are vague because they are buried in the swan's feathers and they terrified because she does not understand what is happening.
- 4) feathered glory: the glory of Zeus who appeared in the shape of a bird

- 5) That white rush: the sudden attack by the swan (which has white feathers)
- 6) Loosening thighs: yielding thighs the idea is that Leda, in spite of her shock and terror, is already yielding to the sexual pressure of swan.
- 7) A shudder in Leda's loins is the sign of her orgasm.
- 8) Agamemnon: brother of Menelaus, husband of Helen.

2.2.3 Summary:

W.B. Yeats published volumes of Poetry. 'The Tower' is one of the volumes of Poetry 'Leda and The Swan' is taken from this collection.

'Leda and The Swan' is based on one of the episodes of ancient Greek mythology. Zeus, changing himself into a huge swan raped the princess Leda. Of this union was born Helen whose elopement with Paris subsequently led to the Trojan war. The poem pictures Zeus' rape of Leda and inconclusion, poses a question

Zeus, by his rape of Leda, begot not only Helen but also the whole consequence of Helen: the fall of Troy and the death of the Greek heroes. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see Leda and The Swan.

In the first part, that is lines 1 to 4, we notice that Zeus in the shape of a huge swan descending with great force upon Leda and taking hold of her in order to rape her. The girl is shocked and can hardly maintain her balance. The swan sets its dark webs on her thighs in order to establish a close contact with her flesh He holds her neck in his huge beak and allows his breast to rest upon hers; the whole action is sudden, and totally unexpected by Leda.

In the next 5 to 8 lines, we have the sheer helplessness of the girl. Though she is terrified she yet tries to push the bird away with her fingers, but her thighs are already yielding to his pressure. Her body, gripped tightly by the white bird, already feels and responds to, the beating of the heart of strange creature.

Lines 9 to 11 we notice that the climax of the sexual intercourse has been reached. At this moment of the climax, Leda conceives a child. This child will make history. The reference is here to Helen who according to this myth was born of Zeus union with Leda.

On growing up, Helen was married to Menelaus, a Greek warrior and brother of Agamemnon. Soon after her marriage, she ran with a lover Prince Paris of Troy. The Greeks prepared a huge which sailed to the city of Troy under the command of King Agamemnon. The city of Troy was besieged by the Greek forces and the war continued for ten years. Eventually the city of Troy was sacked and Helen restored to Menelaus. During Agamemnon absence, his wife Clytemnestra, developed a love affair with Aegisthus and, when Agamemnon returned home, she murdered him with the help of her paramour. Lines 10-11 compress the whole of this story in a few words.

Lines 11 to 14 throw light on the question : whether Leda had any inkling that her rape by the swan would lead to certain historic events. Leda certainly tasted the sexual vigour of the swan, but did she have any intellectual comprehension of the implications of rape? Perhaps she did have a vague notion of the importance of this event. If she did, her dreadful sexual experience was perhaps compensated for by the knowledge that she gained by this encounter with the supernatural.

At the end, one notices the changed moods of both Zeus and Leda. At the beginning of the poem, Zeus was passionate, while Leda was terrified and helpless. At the end of the poem, Leda is 'caught up' in Zeus' passion, while Zeus becomes indifferent.

2.2.4 Self-assessment question:

(a) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each :

- 1) What is a sonnet?
- 2) What do you about Zeus?
- 3) Who are the parents of Helen?
- 4) Why did the Greeks and the Trojans fight?
- 5) Who was Aegisthus?
- 6) Who was Clytemnestra?
- 7) Who was the lover of Helen?

(b) Complete the following sentence by choosing the correct option:

- 1) The form of Leda and The Swan is -----
a) a lyric b) a sonnet c) a narrative d) a ballad

- 2) Leda and The Swan refers to ----- mythology.
 - a) Greek
 - b) Irish
 - c) Indian
 - d) Scottish
- 3) The lover of Helen was -----
 - a) The Prince of Wales
 - b) The Prince of Troy
 - c) The Prince of Holland
 - d) The Prince of the Greeks.
- 4) Agamemnon was killed by –
 - a) Menelaus
 - b) Clytemnestra
 - c) Aegisthus
 - d) Clytemnestra and Aegisthus
- 5) The war between the Greeks and the Trojans took place -----
 - a) 10 years
 - b) 7 years
 - c) 4 years
 - d) 4 month

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions :

2.2.4 (A)

- 1) A sonnet is a poem containing fourteen lines with a formal pattern of rhymes.
- 2) In ancient Greek mythology Zeus is a god who raped Leda.
- 3) Zeus and Leda are the parents of Helen.
- 4) the
- 5) The Greeks and The Trojans fight for regaining Helen, wife of Menelaus, the warrior of the Greeks.
- 6) Aegisthus was the lover of Clytemnestra.
- 7) Clytemnestra who was wife of Agamemnon fell in love with Aegisthus and killed her husband.

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) b 2) a 3) b 4) d 5) a

2.2.6 Broad question with answer :

- 1) Critically appreciate *Leda and The Swan*.

OR

What are the different interpretations of *Leda and The Swan*?

W.B. Yeats is a great Irish poet. In his poetry Greek mythology and Irish culture are dominant. *Leda and The Swan* is based on one of the episodes of ancient Greek mythology. Zeus, changing himself into a huge Swan, raped the princess Leda. The result of the rape was the birth of Helen, whose elopement with Paris subsequently led to the Trojan war. The sonnet is not mere of rape. It is more than that. If one makes a careful study with the help of available critical material one comes to realize the different interpretations the poem. On the surface level, it is about the rape but in deeper level, it has layers of meanings. The poem has three distinct levels of significance. These are a levels of -----

- 1) dramatic fiction
- 2) condensed insight into Greek mythology,
- 3) fiction and insight combined to represent and hide a magical insight.

In order to highlight the sexual aspect of the poem, Yeats has employed Freudian imagery in his poem - the white rush, the broken wall, the burning roof and tower, etc. The phrase “terrified vague fingers” is remarkable in its ambiguity. Leda’s fingers are virtually vague because they are buried in the Swan’s feathers and emotionally vague because, in spite of the girl’s terror, her thighs are already loosening to the feathered glory of Zeus. The rest is all about the birth of Helen, the Trojan war and the tragic death of Agamemnon.

As a sonnet the poem is nearby perfect. Following the Petrarchan model it is divided into an octave and sestet. In the octave, Yeats has built up the octave Yeats has built up the imagery of the event in its sheer physicality. The sestet gives us its moral equivalent. The physical concreteness of the octave is symbolic; the sestet tells us what it is symbolic of. Lines 8 and 9 serve as a point of balance the two portions.

Yeats reminds the readers the two types of culture though the Greek mythology and pagan Christianity culture. *Leda and The Swan* is one of the remarkable sonnets of Yeats.

2.2.7 Exercises :

- 1) Critically appreciate *Leda and The Swan*.
- 2) What is the significance of the title *Leda and The Swan*?
- 3) What are the different readings of *Leda and The Swan*?

- 4) Bring out the Freudian imagery of the poem *Leda and The Swan*.
- 5) Write a note on Leda's daughter, Helen.

2.3 Activities / Field work

- 1) Collect material on Greek mythology.
- 2) Read the story of Helen of Troy.
- 3) Acquaint with the love affair of Yeats and Maud Gonne.

2.4 Further Reading :

- 1) Johan, Underecker. A Reader's Guide to W.B. Yeats. London : O.U.P., 1940.
- 2) B. Rajan. W.B. Yeats. New Delhi : Creative Books, 1972.
- 3) Underecker, John. ed. Twentieth Century Views. London : O.U.P., 1941.

3. 'Byzantium'

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2.1 Objectives

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2.2.1 Byzantium

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases

2.2.3 Summary

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions

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2.2.6 Broad question with answer.

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2.3 Activities / Field work

2.4 Further Reading.

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 Byzantium

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases.

Stanza I.

- 1) unpurged images: impure images; ugly or unpleasant sights.
- 2) recede: withdraw, fade away
- 3) The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed: The soldiers of the Emperor who are supposed to be patrolling the streets, have got drunk and gone to bed.
- 4) Night resonance recedes --- gong: the echoing sounds of the late hours of the evening are coming to an end.

- 5) A startlit and a moonlit dome: This refers to the dome of the cathedral of st. Sophia
- 6) Disdains: contemptuous of
- 7) All that man is --- human veins : all that pertains to humanbeings.
- 8) The fury and the mire of human veins : the struggle, the conflict, the confusion

Stanza II :

- 1) Shade more than man, more image than a shade: A shade means a spirit, while an image means a spirit that can be perceived by the eyes.
- 2) Hades' bobbin: Hades is the kingdom of the dead
- 3) Mummy cloth: a cloth in which a dead body is wrapped up.
- 4) Before one floats --- life-in-death: The poet sees a walking mummy or a ghost in the street

Stanza III :

- 1) Miracle bird --- crow: a golden bird perched on the branch of golden tree.

Stanza IV:

- 1) Flit: move about
- 2) Faggot : piece of wood to light a fire
- 3) Norsteel has lit : these flames have not been lit by the friction of steel with steel.
- 4) blood- begotten spirits : spirits which have come from the human world.
- 5) all complexities of fury : all the complex and conflicting passions
- 6) cannot singe a sleeve: cannot burn.

Stanza V:

- 1) astraddle : riding
- 2) dolphin: a kind of sea fish
- 3) spirit after spirit: spirits come one after the other riding on the backs of dolphins

- 4) The smithies breaks the flood: The flood by life beats against the border of the smithies where the souls are purified and shaped and where the water of life cannot penetrate
- 5) marbles of the --- complexity : The souls dance in ‘an agony of trance.’
- 6) Those images --- sea: These dancing images are begetting fresh images of their life experience in the process of dreaming back

2.2.3 Summary:

In the first stanza, the scene set in Byzantium itself. The time is evening. The late stragglers are rapidly moving out of the streets. The great cathedral’s gong sends the last night walkers singing out of sight. The city itself, architecturally coherent, “disdains all that man is.” Unlike architecture or art, man is a creature swept by emotion, and conflicting emotion at that: “The Fury and the mire of human veins.”

The second of stanza introduces “a walking mummy” in he streets which have been emptied of night walkers. This image floats into the poet’s sight already twice refined from flesh: “shade more than man more image than a shade”. Only the idea of a ghost, equipped not even with a ghost’s substantiality, Hades bobbin the thing that had once been a man, it may breathlessly summon the breathless months of those spirits about to be freed from life’s complexity and the round of re-incarnations. This “image” had once been a man. It is the purified spirit which has already unwound the winding path of its human incarnations and has dreamed itself back to its elemental form.

The third and fourth stanzas contain the details of the dancing place. The golden bird now is made of simple non changing staff, and “scorns aloud” things that change natural things like “the common bird or petel”, on the flowering perishable bough. Making his changeless bird now contemptuous of “all complexities of mire of blood.” Yeats insists that its song can be a derisive attack on natural things.

As the great cathedral gong strikes the witching hour of wind night. Purgatorial immaterial flames appear on the Emperor’s pavement. The dancing “blood begotten” spirits who have been Dolphin ferried across the seas of time and space begin the purgatorial dance so important to Yeats’ system. The dance itself reverses mortal experience purifying it until “all complexities of fury leave”. All spirits, in Yeats’ system, are of course purified before being reborn; but in Byzantium Yeats is

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) a 2) b 3) b 4) a

2.2.6 Broad question with answer:

- 1) Bring out the significance of the title 'Byzantium'

OR

- 2) Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'Byzantium'.

To quote Yeats:

Describe Byzantium as it is in the
system towards the end of the first
Christian millennium walking
mummy, Flames at the street corners
where the soul is purified, birds of
hammered gold singing in the golden
trees, in the harbor, offering their
backs to the wailing dead that they
May carry them to paradise

The statement of Yeats throws light on the subject of Byzantium. This poem is parallel to *Sailing to Byzantium*. In the earlier poem, the first stanza is concerned with the flesh-and-blood world that is being left behind, the world of "unpurged images". After that opening stanza, the miraculous golden bird, the purgatorial flames, even the spirits crossing the sea are all recalled, but in reverse order to their appearance in the earlier poem, for both the setting and the point of view have changed completely. *Sailing to Byzantium* represents the voyage and is written from the point of view of the uninitiated outsider who leaves the material world for the immaterial. *Byzantium* on the other hand is written from the point of view of the initiated individual who watches the uninitiated, unpurged spirits arriving from beyond the "gong tormented sea" which separates Byzantium's reality from the flesh-and-blood reality of the twentieth century world.

David Diaches aptly remarks:

The two Byzantium poems – *Sailing to Byzantium* and *Byzantium* --- distil their meaning into a quintessence, haunting the mind and probing the emotions as no English poet had done since the seventeenth century. The theme of both poems is the attempt to escape from old age and decay by escaping altogether from the world of biological change into the timeless world of art, symbolized by Byzantium. Images of breeding growth change and death give way in *Sailing to Byzantium* to images of a world of artifacts, “of hammered and gold enameling.” But the sense of loss in there, the golden bough may be changeless, but it is not the real tree. In *Byzantium* the poet subdues the flesh in the spirit, the world of nature is left behind for the “glory of changeless metal”, but even as the poet is astride the symbolic dolphin that carries him above the seething tide of human passion, that passion floods back: art is, after all, nourished by the very world of growth and change, of begetting and dying that it wants to leave behind in its search for permanence the spirit is based on the mire and blood it seeks to repudiate:

A straddle on the dolphin’s mire and blood,
spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood,
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn that gong tormented sea.

Byzantium turns out to be a poem not only about life and death but also about the balance sheet of art, the relation between permanence and change what is gained and lost by moving from life to art, It is essentially the theme of Keats’ Ode on a Grecian Urn.

2.2.7 Exercises:

- 1) Compare and contrast *Byzantium* and *Sailing to Byzantium*
- 2) What are the leading themes of *Byzantium*?
- 3) Bring out various images that Yeats employed in his *Byzantium*
- 4) Do you agree *Byzantium* a more obscure poem than *Sailing to Byzantium*?

2.3 Activities / Field work

- 1) To understand *Byzantium* better, make the study of *Sailing to Byzantium*
- 2) Try to get knowledge about *Byzantium*.

2.4 Further Reading:

- 1) Ramji, Lall. W.B. Yeats : An Evaluation of his Poetry. New Delhi : Rama Brothers, 1981
- 2) Ford, Boris. ed. The Pelican Guide to English Literature. London: O.U.P 1961
- 3) Hone, Joseph. W.B.Yeats. London : O.U.P. 1958

2.2 Philip Larkin

'Church Going'

Contents

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2.2 Introduction

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2.2.7 Exercises.

2.3 Activities / Field work

2.4 Further Reading.

2.1 Objectives:

After studying this poem you will be able to -----

- know – 'Church Going' is an autobiographical poem.
- know 'Church Going' is one of the most famous poems of Philip Larkin.
- know Larkin's feelings about Christianity.
- know the significance of religion in one's life.
- know that the poetry of the 1950s is the poetry of the loss of faith.

2.2 Introduction:

Philip Larkin (1922-1985) was born on 9th August 1922 at Coventry, Warwickshire, England, where his father was working as city treasurer. He studied at King Henry VIII School, and completed his graduation in 1943 at Oxford. At Oxford, he happened to meet great writers like John Wain, Alan Ross and Kingsley Amis, These various writers had tonic influence on Larkin. For example, his friendship with Amis helped him to reject his romantic ideas about poetry and to develop a healthy, robust, ironic attitude to experience. The political and social atmosphere of Oxford fostered a pragmatic approach in Larkin.

Larkin, having obtained his degree in 1943, launched on his career of writing poetry. Larkin's thirty poems appeared in 1945, under the title 'The North Ship.' He also writes a few novels. In 1950, he became sub-librarian at Queen's University Belfast, where he found his poetic identity.

Larkin's thirty poems appeared under the title 'The Less Deceived.' His next volume of poems has 'Various poems.' Besides, being a poet, he works as an editor, editing *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* in 1973. Two more collections of poetry came out – *The Whitson Weddings* (1964), and *High Window* (1974).

Larkin, one of the groups known as 'the movement poets,' is a popular poet for his choice of subject matter (everyday life), style (plain), and tone (ironic, witty). Larkin delivered snapshot and in fairly simple detail. His famous poem is 'Church Giving' which describes a very quiet scene, a man visiting a Country Church:

Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thus shut
Another Church: matting, seats, anol store,
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut
For sunday, brownish now some brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ.
And a tense, musty unignorable silence,
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I takes of
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence.

The poem conceals a deeper philosophy: it wonders about the slow disappearance of faith itself.

A shapeless recognisable each weak,
A purpose more obscure, I wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to seek
This place for what it was.

There is a lot of Church and religious symbolism in Larkin's poetry, though his apparent theme of the loss of faith has often been revealed as ambivalence toward religion.

Larkin writes of human companionship, loss, and loneliness in terms that are more recognizable than that of modernism.

---- yet when the guest
Has stepped into the windy street, and gone,
Who can comfort the instantaneous grief of being alone?
(‘Kick Upths Fire’)

OR

Get out as early as you can,
and don't have any Kids yourself.
(‘This Bethe Verse’)

This kind of poetry has provoked the view that Larkin had a generally pessimistic outlook on life and was a thorough skeptic. Larkin also used four-letter words with regularity in *High Windows*, and achieved a measure of notoriety. Larkin was trying to use the language of the time, when profanity was common place.

2.2.1 The text

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases:

Stanza 1:

thud: dull sound of the door when shut.

Sprawling of flowers: flowers spread out loosely

cut for Sunday: brought for Sunday service.

Stanza 2 :

font : a vessel for keeping baptismal water

lectern : a Church sloping

peruse : read lightly

hectoring : heroic; also bullying.

Stanza 3:

cathedrals: main Churches.

parchment: manuscripts written on skin

pyx: vessel in which consecrated bread used at communion is kept.

Stanza 4:

dubious women: women of ill – repute

pick ---- cancer : collect medical herbs for cancer.

simples: medicinal herbs.

weedy pavement: pavement covered with wild plants.

brambles : prickly shrubs.

buttress: supporting frame against the wall.

Stanza 5

rood lofts: the word ‘rood’ refers to Christ’s cross.

ruin – bibber : a person who loves ruins.

randy : boisterous, aggressively clamoring for

my representative : one of my kind.

Stanza 6

tending : coming to attend

accoutered : clustered

frowsty : foulsmelling

Stanza 7

a hunger in himself : an ardent lover of God calling to serve God.

2.2.3 Summary :

‘Church Going’ is one of the most important poems, taken from the collection *The Less Deceived*. The poem is read and analyzed on different levels. One of the readings is that the poem is regarded as an autobiographical poem. Critics have highly appreciated the poem for its content and form. George Macbeth, in his book *Poetry 1900-1965*, remarks that the poem “represents a highly serious attempt by a reverent agnostic to express and to come to terms with his feelings about religion, particularly about Christianity.” Another critic remarks that ‘Church Going’ is “one of Larkin’s most famous poems”. Larkin says about the poem: “I am concerned in ‘Church Going’ with going to Church – not religion. I tried to suggest this by the title and the union of the important stages of human life – birth, marriage and death that going to Church represents.” He is not concerned with the problem whether to believe in God or not, but with what to substitute for God.

The poem is composed in seven stanzas. Each stanza contains nine lines. The first two stanzas describe the minute details noted by the poet. In the middle of the poem, we come across speculations of the poet; there are questions raised by the poet or sometimes assertions that power of some sort or other will do on and that the Church will be less recognizable each week. The poet tries to imagine who could be very last person to seek its purpose.

The poem has been admired for its technical perfection. The poem consists of seven stanzas with end line generally in pentameter. His lines and rhymes seem to have some sort of deceptive ease. His verse moves with a delicate variety and the poem is remarkable for its very English understatement. He has made use of the alternate rhyme – scheme except the variation in the fifth line. The poem illustrates a combination of strong rhymes with weak rhymes. There is a punning ambiguity in the title – It is both Larking going to Church and the Church going to disintegration.

2.2.4 Self-Assessment questions

a) Answer the following question in one word / phrase / sentence each:

- 1) What do you mean by the word ‘thud’?
- 2) How many lines are in each stanza?
- 3) What is the major theme of the poem, *Church Going*?
- 4) What is the name of Philip Larkin’s first poem?

5) What is the form of the poem, *Church Going*?

b) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

- 1) '*Church Going*' is taken from the collection _____
 - a) The Less deceived
 - b) The North Ship
 - c) Various poems
- 2) *Church Going* contains _____ stanzas
 - a) 9
 - b) 7
 - c) 6
 - d) 10
- 3) Philip Larkin is _____ poet.
 - a) Seventeenth century
 - b) Twentieth century
 - c) Fourteenth century
- 4) Philip Larkin was born on _____
 - a) 9th August 1922
 - b) 9th April 1920
 - c) 3rd May 1930
- 5) Philip Larkin was identified with _____
 - a) The Movement
 - b) The Romantic School
 - c) The Imagist School

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.4 (A)

- 1) 'Thud' means dull sound of the door when shut.
- 2) Each stanza contains nine lines.
- 3) The major theme of *Church Going* is different stages of human life – birth, marriage and death.
- 4) His first poem is "Ultimatum".
- 5) *Church Going* is a reflective poem.

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) a 2) b 3) b 4) a 5) a

2.2.6 Broad Question with answer:

Q. Justify the significance of the title *Church Going*

OR

What is the underlying theme of *Church Going*?

OR

Discuss, *Church Going* as a satirical poem.

Ans: Philip Larkin is the modern poet. One of the modern themes of literature is the loss of human faith. Larkin has reflected this theme in most of his poetry. *Church Going* is one of them.

Church Going is taken from Larkin's collection of poems, "The Less Deceived". The poem is interpreted on different levels. On surface level, it is a religious poem on the deeper level; the poem is regarded as an autobiographical poem. Larkin says otherwise: "I am concerned in 'Church Going, with going to Church not religion. I tried to suggest this by the title and the union of the important stages of human life – birth, marriage and death – that going to Church represents." He is not concerned with the problem whether to believe in God or not, but with what to substitute for God. Women might visit Church for various reasons, some for cure of children and some visit Church to pick simples for a cancer or to see the spirits of the dead walking on certain nights. The poet wonders to look into these pretty things of women. If disbelief has ended, then, which is the position of the Church. In that case, grass would grow, pavement would be covered by wild plants, rough, thorny shrubs. There might be supports against the wall and the sky slone would be visible.

In the next stanza, he seriously thinks of the position of Church in future. The poet feels ignorant of the significance of Church going :

'It pleases me to stand in silence here' The poet concludes that the church is a serious place on a serious earth because man meets here on all important and solemn occasion in life like birth, baptism, marriage and death – occasions which decide man's destiny.

The poem has been much admired for its technical perfection. The poem consists of seven stanzas with end line generally in pentameter. His lines and rhymes seem to have some sort of the wonders about what would happen when Churches

would go ‘out of use’ and seems to conclude that the substitute for god may be an unquestionable faith in human and individual potential.

Church Going is composed in seven stanzas. The first stanza opens with Larkin himself who enters the Church expecting that there is nothing going on. He steps inside and allows the door to shut with a thud. He notices a number of things inside of the Church. He wonders to see tense, musty, and unignorable silence. Larkin comments that god alone knows how long the silence is brewing are there. He is hatless and hence in order to show respect, he takes off this cycle clips.

In the second stanza, he writes more of his observations of the Church. He notices the Bible, read some verses. He became skeptical about the purpose of Churches, and feel that the Churches would serve no purpose at all. He further seeks that the rest of the church buildings might be given free of rent to rain and sheep. The poet wonders whether the people would avoid the Church – buildings as unlucky places, deceptive ease. His verse moves with a delicate variety and the poem is remarkable for its very English understatement. He has made use of the alternative rhyme – scheme except the variation in the fifth line. The poem illustrates a combination of strong rhymes with weak rhymes. There is a punning ambiguity in the title – it is both Larkin going to church and the Church going to disintegration.

To conclude, according to Geoffrey Harvey “Church Going” is a typical movement poem which deals directly and honestly with some of the profounder experiences of daily living”. Larkin speaks about the traditional significance of the Church and its likely purpose in the future. He wonders for what purpose the Churches will be used when they become obsolete. He wonders whether people would avoid them as unlucky places. He ironically ponders over the question who might be the last person to visit the Church and then he seems to realize the eternal value of the Church.

2.2.7 Exercises

- 1) What is the significance of the title Church Going?
- 2) What is the major theme of the poem, Church Going?
- 3) Discuss Church Going as a satirical poem.
- 4) Critically appreciate Church Going.

2.3 Activities / Field work

- 1) Visit a Church, and record its paraphernalia.
- 2) Meet the father of the Church and ask him the role of Church today.
- 3) Make a list of various popular Churches of the world.

2.4 Further Reading:

- 1) Nayar, Pramod K. A short History of English Literature. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2009.

2.3 Sylvia Plath

A) Frog Autumn, B) Metaphors

A) Frog Autumn

Contents

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2.2.5 Answers to the self assessment question

2.2.6 Broad question with answer

2.2.7 Exercises

2.3 Activities Field work

2.4 Further reading

1.1 Objectives:

After studying this poem you will be able to

- ③ know who is Sylvia Plath and what she has written
- ③ know that Sylvia Plath writes autobiographical poems
- ③ know her tragic life
- ③ know her leading themes such as monotony and conformity.
- ③ learn her poetic devices

1.2 Introduction

Sylvia Plath (1932-63) was a famous American poet and novelist. She is known for her confessional poems as appeared in collections like *Crossing the Water* (1971), *Winter Trees* 1971, *Ariel* (1965) and *The Colossus* (1960). Her best known work is *The Bell Jar* 1963, a novel published posthumously in 1963. She has published many short stories, *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (1978), *Letters Letters Home* (1975), and *Journals of Sylvia Plath* (1983).

Sylvia Plath was in Boston Mass on October 27, 1932 to well educated parents. She lost her father Otto Emil Plat, a Polish when she was just eight years old. Her mother Aurelia Schober, an Austrian, was a staff in a college to support the family. Sylvia attended Smith College and even experienced a nervous breakdown. She graduated in 1955. In the following year, she married a great English poet Ted Hughes when she was doing her education at Cambridge on Fulbright Fellowship. Yet, the couple did not live happily and for long. After the birth of their first child the marriage broke apart.

The winter of 1962-63, one of the coldest in centuries, found Sylvia living in a small London flat, now with two children, ill with flu and low on money. The hardness of her life seemed to increase her need to write, and she often worked between four and eight in the morning, before the children woke, sometimes finishing a poem a day. In these last poems it is as if some deeper, powerful self has grabbed control; death is given a cruel physical allure and psychic pain becomes almost tactile.

On February 11, 1963 Sylvia Plath killed herself with cooking gas at the age of 30. Two years later, *Ariel* a collection of some of her last poems was published; this was followed by *Crossing the Water and Winter Trees* in 1971, and in 1981, the collected poems appeared, edited by Ted Hughes.

As in mentioned above Sylvia Plath has written four collections of poems:

- 1 *Crossing the Water* (1971)
- 2 *Winter Trees* (1971)
- 3 *Ariel* (1965)
- 4 *The Colossus* (1960)

Her first book *The Colossus* is known for her themes of pains and losses. She writes about her life's heroes. Poems like 'Spinster', 'All the Dead Dears', 'Departure', 'Hard Castle Crags', 'Show', 'Two Sisters of Persephone', 'Lonelier', 'Snake Charmer', 'Aftermath', 'The Colossus', 'A Wintership', 'The Manor Garden', 'Who' and a host of others' reflect upon Sylvia Plath's his personal experiences; reflect upon women's problem and description of nature.

The second collection *Crossing the Water* consists of thirty four poems that reflect upon Sylvia Plath's experiences of life.

The third collection *Winter Trees* has many poems of note. It has two sections. "Three Women" shows the fusion of the public and private. "Mary's Song" displays religious persecution and sacrifice "Lesbos" gives an account of a fusion of external and internal landscape. "Rabbit Catcher" presents the dilemmas of Plath's visions and tensions. "Purdha" deals with the themes of oppression.

Ariel, the book of poems is her posthumous volume published in 1965. The volume contains poems like "Elm" "The Rival" "Berck Plage," "The Arrival of the Bee Box," "Cu", "Lady Lazarus," "A Birthday Present" reflect on diverse experiences of Sylvia Plath. It is said that *Ariel* connects up the themes of female subjectivity; Suffering and negativity to the holocaust and questions of racial identity.

Plath was a brilliant technician and her lucid verse and clear diction expose the raw nerves and pressured life she sought to keep hider control. Along with Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton and others, Plath was part of the confessional school American poetry.

2.2.1 Frog Autumn

Summer grows old, cold blooded mother.

The insects are scant, skinny.

In these palustral homes we only
croak and wither.

Mornings dissipate in somnolence.

The sun brightens tardily

Among the pithless needs. Flies failus.
The fen sickness.
Frost drops even the spider clearly
The genius of plenitude
Hoses himself elsewhere. Our folk thin
Lamentably.

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases:

cold blooded: emotionless, deliberately cruel, heartless, unfeeling

insect (metaphor) : Any of a large class of arthropods having three distinct body segments, three pairs of legs, one pair of antennae, and usually two pairs of wings.

scant: to treat briefly or inadequately.

skinny: without sufficient flesh, too thin.

croak: low pitched cry, to utter a hoarse.

wither: become limp or dry.

dissipate: become dispersed or scatter.

somnolence: drowsy, tending to induce drowsiness

tardily: late, dilatory, sluggish.

reeds: the slender, frequently jointed stem of certain tall grasses growing in wet places.

pithless: any soft central part, the essential part.

fen: a marsh, bog.

plenitude: the state of being full, complete, or abounding.

2.2.3 Summary (Text is not available.)

2.2.4 Self-assessment question:

(A) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each:

1. Who wrote The Bell Jar?

2. Who did Sylvia Plath commit suicide?
3. How is Sylvia Plath known to her public?
4. At what age Sylvia Plath lost her father?
5. Who was the husband of Sylvia Plath?

(B) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

1. The Colossus was published in _____
a. 1960 b. 1971 c. 1965 d. 1963
2. Sylvia Plath's posthumous volume is _____
a. Crossing the Water b. Winter Trees
c. Ariel d. The Colossus.
3. Sylvia Plath married Ted Hughes in the year _____
a. 1932 b. 1955 c. 1972 d. 1963
4. Sylvia Plath was awarded _____ Fellowship for her education at Cambridge
a. Faulkner b. Fulbright c. Emerson d. Arthur Miller.

2.2.5 Answer to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.4 (A)

1. Sylvia Plath wrote The Bell Jar.
2. Bored of social constrictions and husband's rigidity in matters of woman's conduct, she committed suicide.
3. Sylvia Plath is known to her public by her confessional poems.
4. When Sylvia Plath was eight years old she lost her father.
5. The British poet – Ted Hughes – was the husband of Sylvia Plath.

2.2.4 (B)

1. a 2. c 3. b 4. b

2.2.6 Broad question with answer.

..... The Poem is not received.....

2.2.7 Exercises:

1. Discuss Sylvia Plath as a confessional poet.
2. Which are the lending themes of her poetry?
3. Critically appreciate 'Frog Autumn'.
4. Write briefly life and work of Sylvia Plath.

2.3 Activities / Field work.

Make a list of women poets who died at the young age.

2.4 Further Reading.

1. Masal, N.B. Diss. *Sylvia Plath : A critical Study*, Kolhapur : Shivaji University, 2006.
2. Buck, Claire. ed. *Guide to Women's Literature*. London: Bloomsbury, 1992.
3. Hughes, Ted. ed. *The Art of Sylvia Plath*. London: Indiana University Press, 1971.

B) 'Metaphors'

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 Metaphory

2.2.2 Difficult words & phrases

2.2.3 Summary

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions

2.2.5 Answers to Self-answers

2.2.6 Broad question with answers

2.2.7 Exercises

2.3 Activities /Field work

2.4 Further Reading

2.2.1 B **Metaphors**

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers !
This loaf's big with its yeastly rising.
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
I've eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

2.2.2 **Difficult words and phrases**

metaphor : A figure of speech in which one object is likened to another by speaking of it as if it were that other, as in The Sun was a chariot of fire.

riddle : A puzzling question or conundrum . Any mysterious object or peson.

ponderous : Having great weight, bulky.

melon : Any of various trailing plants of the gourd family bearing large, many-seeded fruits with a thick rind and sweet, pulpy flesh.

stroll : go from one place to another.

tendrils : One of the slender, threadlike, usually coiling organs serving to attach a climbing plant to a supporting surface.

timber : Growing or standing trees, forests.

yeastily : restless, unsettled.

2.2.3 Summary :

In the poem Metaphors the playfulness of the riddle and of the word game is evoked. The 'nine syllables' indicate both the nine syllable lines of the poem as well as the nine months of pregnancy. Here, pregnancy is the answer to this riddle:

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils !
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers !
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising !

The train image in the poem does not suggest the death driven necessity of the later poems. Yet as it signifies birth and new life, the railroad image of 'metaphors' does point toward the death-car of the late poems. It anticipates the theme of birth-death fusion which is central to Sylvia Plath's final vision.

2.2.4 Self assessment questions:

(A) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each:

- 1) What is the name of a collection of letters that Sylvia Plath wrote and published?
- 2) Of which school of poetry did Sylvia Plath belong?
- 3) What is the meaning of metaphor?
- 4) At what age did Sylvia Plath expire?

(B) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

- 1) Sylvia Plath wrote _____ volumes of poetry.
(a) Four (b) Three (c) Five (d) Six

2.4 Ted Hughes

'An Otter'

2.1 Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.2.1 An Otter

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases

2.2.3 Summary

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.6 Broad question with answer

2.2.7 Exercises.

2.3 Activities / Field work

2.4 Further Reading.

2.1 Objectives:

After studying this poem you will be able to :

- know that Ted Hughes is a prolific writer of poems.
- know that Ted Hughes is a modern poet of animals.
- know that Hughes has some affinities with D.H. Lawrence, in dealing with animals poems.
- know that the imagery is not only forceful and striking but also intellectually disciplined.
- know that Hughes describes even wild animals in a witty, sophisticated style.

2.2 Introduction

Ted Hughes is a remarkable British poet of the 1970s. He is widely recognized as a distinguished poet for his 'fierce power of expression. He has written thirty volumes within the last four decades. Mervin calls him 'a heavily anthologized poet.'

Hughes was born in 1930, so he is still young enough to be thought of as a promising poet, whose best work is still to be written. He began writing poetry when he was a school going boy. He wrote poems on Nature. In 1956, he married the poetess Sylvia Plath; in 1957, he visited America where he was able to make a living by writing and teaching. On his return to England in 1957, Hughes found that his first volume of poems, *The Hawk in the Rain*, had been made a Poetry Book. It had been much praised by the critics. He was influenced by W.B. Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, G.M. Hopkins and Dylan Thomas. *The Hawk in the Rain* includes in all forty poems. These forty poems deal with a variety of themes such as Animal, Nature, Human world, containing men and women, love and hatred, war and death, time, sex, lust, violence, marriage etc. *The Hawk in the Rain* labeled him as 'animal poet' and 'Nature' poet. The Fox, Jaguar, Pike, Hawk, Fish Magpies, Owls, Rabbits, Rats and Curlews are frequently published in the anthologies.

His second volume of poems, *Lupercal*, published in 1960, takes its name from the festival of the Roman wolf god.

The most obvious feature of Hughes's style is his use of violent unusual phrases. His poetry has the youthful vigor that we associate with Marlowe, and the love of verbal acrobatics, such as using nouns as verbs, that we associate with G.M. Hopkins or Dylan Thomas.

Though Hughes is so fond of wild animals, he has learnt from Donne and Eliot how to describe them in witty, sophisticated way. He makes his readers sit up and notice his unusual similes. With a kind of 'metaphysical' wit he describes the tiger and lion in the zoo as fatigued with indolence. His style is as modern as his ideas about animals are realistic and unsentimental.

2.2.1 AN OTTER

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases:

- 1) The structure of the poem produces several impressive contrasts. There is one between the otter living naturally and the otter hiding under water from the hounds and huntsmen; there is another between the live otter and the dead otter.
- 2) Vermin poles: Otter hunters, who treat otters like vermin, carry long poles in order to force otters from their homes.
- 3) Walloping: The word combines the idea of galloping with wandering.

2.2.3 Summary:

Ted Hughes is a great modern British poet of the 1970s. He is known for his prolific writing and style of expression. His poetry is influenced by W.B. Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, Dylan Thomas, and G.M. Hopkins. *The Hawk in the Rain* was his first volume of poems. The main focus of Hughes is the description of animals. Hughes is the description of animals. Hughes obviously has some of animals. Hughes obviously has some affinities with D.H. Lawrence. His poems about animals show the sort of sympathy with them that D.H. Lawrence shows in his poems. *Bat and Snake*; more important, they share Lawrence's admiration of the essential sanity and goodness of our instinctive impulses. Hughes admires positive qualities in the animals that he describes. As the critic Alvarez shows, the horses in Hughes's poem 'A Dream of Horses' remind us of the strange, savage horses which terrorize Ursula Bran Gwen at the end of *The Rainbow*.

Hughes writes so often about animals and birds because he finds in them the unsophisticated vitality that urban man is in danger of losing. The hawk or the otter, trying to survive the murderous attacks of man, symbolizes the attempt of beauty, passion, and natural vital instincts to survive in an artificial society.

He excels in ingenious ways of finding words for physical shocks and sensations such as the sudden sharp hot stink of fox, or in words that brilliantly suggest action as when the otter 'Re-enters water by melting' or the macaw bristles in a staring / combustion.

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions.

(A) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each:

- 1) When did Ted Hughes marry Sylvia Plath?
- 2) Why did Ted Hughes visit America?
- 3) Who wrote the poem 'February'?
- 4) When did Ted Hughes visit America?

(B) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

- 1) When Ted Hughes married Sylvia Plath, her age was ____
a) 28 b) 30 c) 35 d) 20
- 2) An Otter was written in ____ parts
a) 4 b) 2 c) 6 d) 3
- 3) *The Hawk in the Rain* was published in ____
a) 1956 b) 1957 c) 1960 d) 1965
- 4) Ted Hughes was born in ____
a) 1940 b) 1935 c) 1956 d) 1930

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.4 (A)

- 1) Ted Hughes married Sylvia Plath in 1956.
- 2) Ted Hughes visited America with a view to make a living by writing and teaching.
- 3) Ted Hughes wrote the poem February.
- 4) Ted Hughes visited America in 1957.

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) a 2) b 3) b 4) d

2.2.6 Broad question with answer:

Q. Critically appreciate *An Otter*.

Ted Hughes is a remarkable British poet of the 1970s. He is widely recognized as a distinguished poet for his 'fierce power' of expression. He has written thirty volumes within the last four decades.

Hughes wrote poems on Nature and animals. His first collection *The Hawk in the Rain* includes in all forty poems. The forty poems deal with a variety of themes such as animal, Nature, human world. The poems that present these animals and birds are among his very best because they concentrate on a single animal or bird and cohere round a single theme. The imagery is not only forceful and striking; it is also intellectually disciplined to drive home a limited number of relevant ideas. With this perspective at the back of mind, let us see the poem '*An Otter*.'

'An Otter' is composed in two parts, the first part contains four stanzas whereas the second contains five stanzas. Hughes begins with a list of the various abilities of the Otter, but ends with the sad picture of it when it reverts to nothing at all, to this long pelt over the back of a chair. Hughes implies that it is a loss to the world that so versatile and vigorous an animal should be reduced to such a dull, pointless ornament.

Hughes is fond of animals. He describes them in a witty, sophisticated way. He makes his readers sit up and notice his unusual similes, such as when he describes an otter take root like the badger; like a king in hiding.

The structure of the poem produces several impressive contrasts. There is one between the otter living naturally and the otter hiding under water from the hounds and huntsmen; there is another between the live otter and the dead otter.

The style of *An Otter* is as modern as his ideas about animals are realistic and unsentimental.

2.2.7 Exercises:

- 1) Write a note on the married life of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath.
- 2) Describe Ted Hughes as a poet of animals.
- 3) Critically appreciate An Otter.

- 4) What are the leading themes of Ted Hughes's poetry?
- 5) Write a note on the use of imagery in the poetry of Ted Hughes.

2.3 Activities / Field work.

- 1) Read poems of D.H. Lawrence, like *Bat and Snake*.
- 2) Make a list of Domestic Animals.
- 3) Write a description on Tom Cat.

2.4 Further Reading:

- 1) Black, E.L. *Nine modern poets: An anthology*, London: Macmillan, 1966.
- 2) Satish Kumar. *Modern English poetry*. Kanpur: Aradhana Brothers, 2002

2.5 T. S. ELIOT

'Little Gidding'

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2.1 Objectives:

After studying this poem you will be able to

- ③ know that T.S. Eliot is a great major poet of twentieth century.
- ③ learn the multifarious personality of T.S. Eliot.
- ③ see the world as a Wasteland.
- ③ focus on religious symbolism in four quartets.
- ③ learn T.S. Eliot as a great poet as well as great critic.

2.2 Introduction:

The Age of T.S. Eliot was the age of “confusion, bewilderment and disillusion”. W.H. Hudson has rightly pointed out the conditions that prevailed in the society. To quote him “Life had become broken and craggy, no longer like a pastoral landscape, but rather a prospect of granite mountains and chasms”. The world had virtually become “the waste land,” a spiritually dry and materially bittered place.

During this epoch Eliot emerged as a luminous planet in the firmament of poetry. He became the “literary orbiter of the age”. This poem especially ‘The Waste Land’ presented the confused vision of the state of contemporary world in nonromantic imagery and in free verse. He became a recognized force in poetry and controlled the main current of poetry and criticism for a whole generation.

Eliot was born in America in 1888. He came to England in 1914 at the age of twenty six. His poetry consists of five creative periods.

- a) **First period (1905-1909)** : During this period, Eliot published his poems in various college and school magazines such as *Smith Academy Record* and *Harvard Advocate*.
- b) **Second period (1909-1917)** : This is the period of urban poetry. The collection entitled ‘Prufrock and Other Observations’ came out in 1917. The most important poems of this collection are: *The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *The Preludes*, *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*, *The Boston Evening Transcript*, *Mr. Apollinax*.
- c) **The Third Period (1918-1925)**: This is the period of most significant poems, such as *Geration*, *Burbank with a Baedekar*, *Sweeney*, *Erect*, *A Cooking Egg*, *Sweeney among the Nightingales*, *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men*.
- d) **Fourth period (1925-1935)**: This is the period of Eliot’s religious or Christian poetry. The most important poems of this period are: *Ash Wednesday*, *Journey of the Magi*, *Animila*, *Marina*, *Choruses from “The Rock, Coriolanus.”*
- e) **Fifth period (1935-1943)**: This is the period of the famous Four Quartets of Eliot, published as follows: *Burnt Norton* (1936), *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), *Little Gidding* (1942).

In addition to his poetry, Eliot also wrote dramas such as *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, *The Elder statesman*, *The Rock*, a pageant play; he also attempted prose work, that is his literary Criticism, such as *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, *The Idea of a Christian Society*, *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture*, *Selected Essays, on Poetry and Poets*, *To criticize the Critic*, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, *Poetry and Drama*, *The Function of Criticism*, *The English Metaphysical Poets* and *The Frontiers of Criticism*. Apart from literary criticism, Eliot also did journalistic writing. He edited the *Criterion* from 1922 to 1939.

2.2.1 Little Gidding (the text)

2.2.2 Difficult words and phrases:

Part I:

sempiternal : eternal

short day : St. Lucy's day

That is the heart's heat: precondition of the coming of holy spirit.

bruzier : fire place

pentecostal fire : festival, holy ghost.

voluptuary : luxury.

broken King : Charles I (1645).

pig-cty: farm

dull façade : church.

tombstone : fence.

Part II :

parched : hot

eviscerate : vital contents

This is the death of earth: scornfully stares.

sanctuary : altar

choir : place where Christ sits

before : dawn

compliant : agree

empty-pail : vessel

laceration : distress

Part III :

The live and the dead nettle : plant

servitude : force

the spectre : charm

Part IV :

suspire : die painfully

Part V :

ostentations : marked by a showy or pretensions displays.

diffident : shy, timid / showing or characterized by a lack of confidence.

2.2.3 Summary:

Eliot wrote and published *Four Quartets*, which consists of *Burnt Norton* (1936), *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), and *Little Gidding* (1942). In his early religious poetry, Eliot used Christian imagery and tradition. In his fifth phase of his poetry, that is from 1935-1943, he examines the eternal problems of men without reference to the Christian tradition. 'Little Gidding' is the last poem of 'The Four Quartets'.

The author of 'The Four Quartets' has travelled a long way from 'The Waste Land' and cactus land of the hollow men where the idols receive the supplication of a dead man's hands. 'Little Gidding' is a chapel where you are to kneel and pray. If you come that way, whatever your route or wherever your starting-point may be, when you enter the chapel, you have to put off sense and notion. It is useless to come to 'Little Gidding' in the spirit of the historical researcher, verifying his scholarship or the journalist writing up a story. The chapel is a place where prayer has been valid. Prayer means the sense of living relationship with the timeless reality which drew together the original community at 'Little Gidding'. And it means to the sense

of living relationship with those men, for the communication of the dead is tongued with five beyond the language of the living.

In the second movement of 'Little Gidding' the poet describes his meeting with the ghost, which is really the poetic parallel to the Holy Ghost. The ghost will not speak to him of thought and theory in poetry, for that is a matter of continued ends and beginnings. These things have served their purpose in their time and are best forgotten. So is every new attempt: each is a different attempt and different kind of failure. Last season's fruit is eaten and when you are fully fed, you kick the empty pail. The poet visualizes his own work recede with the passage of time into the perspective of literary victory. In the concluding section of the 'Little Gidding,' he makes a final statement on the subject:

“Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning
Every poem an epitaph”.

In the fourth section we notice the descent of the Holy Ghost at the baptism of Christ, and of the tongues of flame which inspired the disciples so that they began 'to speak with other tongues'. In the final section, Eliot resumes successively all his major themes opening with 'The end is where we start from' this leads to a passage on words and form since every sentence is an end and a beginning. Stretching the comparison, every action is a step towards death, but may like wise be a step towards redemption.

The Four Quartets conclude with this benediction, quite in the manner of a religious poem. The poem reaches a finality in the enunciation that all,

‘..... shall be well.
All manner of things shall be well..

2.2.4 Self-assessment questions:

(A) Answer the following questions in one word / phrase / sentence each.

- 1) Which was the birth country of T.S. Eliot?
- 2) When did T.S. Eliot migrate to England?
- 3) Who wrote The Waste Land?
- 4) What is the major theme of 'The Four Quartets'?

5) Who wrote the Family Reunion?

(B) Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option:

- 1) The British Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for literature were awarded to T.S. Eliot in the year of _____
a) 1945 b) 1946 c) 1948 d) 1942
- 2) Eliot's famous religious poem Four Quartets has divided into _____
a) Four sections b) Five sections c) Three sections d) Two sections
- 3) Eliot's 'Little Gidding' was published in _____
a) 1938 b) 1939 c) 1940 d) 1942
- 4) Eliot's magnumopus is _____
a) Four Quartets b) Murder in The Cathedral
c) Ash Wednesday d) The Waste Land.

2.2.5 Answers to the self-assessment questions.

2.2.4 (A)

- 1) The birth country of T. S. Eliot was America.
- 2) T.S. Eliot migrated to England in 1914.
- 3) T.S. Eliot wrote 'The Waste Land'.
- 4) Religion is the major theme of Four Quartets.
- 5) T.S. Eliot wrote 'The Family Reunion'.

2.2.4 (B)

- 1) c 2) a 3) d 4) d

2.2.6 Broad question with answer.

Q. Attempt a critical appreciation of *Little Gidding*.

T.S. Eliot is the most prolific writer of the age. Eliot wrote poetry, drama, prose and acted as an editor for *The Criterion*. He came to light with his magnumophs, *The Waste Land*. The critics have almost criticized his work, and regarded him as the

most powerful poet of the age. He almost dominated the age. Therefore, twentieth century is known as The Age of T.S. Eliot.

Next to *The Waste Land*, is *The Four Quartets*. It is a specimen of his nature poetry born of a long period of experiment. In it he effected a modification and an enrichment of the whole poetic tradition. It is the nearest and the most successful approach to the meaning that Eliot wanted to communicate through his poetry. He has achieved this not by the use of myth or narrative but by means of various images and by changes in the rhythms of poetry.

‘The Four Quartets’ contain four poems, and each poem has five sections. *Burnt Norton*, *The Dry Salvages*, *East Coker* and *Little Gidding* – are the four sections of Quartets. ‘Little Gidding’ falls in the last category.

If in “The Dry Salvages”, the promise of rebirth is the moment of annunciation, in “Little Gidding” the fulfillment of that promise is symbolized in the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire which is the feast of Pentecost. Fire is the chief element in the poem; it appears in its fourfold aspect, as the emblem of destruction, of purgation, of illumination and the divine love itself.

Unlike the other quartets, it opens with a moment of kindling illumination. A vivid impression of mind-winter spring is given; the precise antithesis to the scene in *East Coker*. Here everything refracts and radiates light. The second paragraph asserts human purpose while the third brings up the particular purpose of the poet here.

The third movement opens with a tone of confidence and the rhythm is almost gay in keeping with the tone. The charge in human beings from attachment to detachment is thus felt to be something natural, taking place in the proper course of things.

The fourth movement deals with the love which is the meaning of the passion of the Lord. The fires which have flamed and glowed throughout the poem have break out and declare their nature. Man cannot help loving; his choice is between the fire of self-love and the fire of the love of god. When the fire and strength of the soul is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, then its fire becomes a fire of life and its strength becomes the strength of triumphing love. The final movement is noted for its assurance and serenity. All shall be well when all is gathered in love, and the rose, the symbol of natural love and natural beauty is one with the fire, the love by which all things are made.

‘Little Gidding’ is a poem of fire which is torment to the self-loving, purgation to the penitent, and ecstasy to the blessed, and it closes with mortal and resurrection symbol of the rose of heaven. The poem deals with the spirit of charity. In the mystical sense, its subject is the Holy Spirit the gift to Resurrection.

The experience which lies behind ‘The Hollow men’ and ‘Ash-Wednesday’ compelled Eliot to another vision. He enters into himself, his own music, and his own language. The poem deals with the “nature of the universe; its two interrelating spheres of existence as turning world and eternal pattern as the transient and the enduring, and of the way they create man’s inextricably involved in both.”

2.2.7 Exercises:

- 1) Attempt a critical appreciation of *Little Gidding*.
- 2) Assess the literary value of the Four Quartets.
- 3) What are the chief features of Modern poetry?
- 4) Write a note on T.S. Eliot’s impersonality of theory.
- 5) Discuss Eliot’s idea of dissociation of sensibility.
- 6) Write a note on Eliot’s use of myth.

2.3 Activities / Field work:

- 1) Make an acquaintance with other poems of T.S. Eliot like The Waste Land.
- 2) Collect material on modern poetry, its characteristics.

2.4 Further Reading:

- 1) T.S. Eliot. *Four Quartets*. London : Faber and Faber, 1960.
- 2) Indu, Mishra. *The poetry of W.B. Yeats*. Kanpur: Sahitya Ratnalaya, 2007
- 3) Satish Kumar. *Modern English poetry*. Kanpur: Aradhana Brotheres, 2002.

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Unit-3

Selected Stories : Katherine Mansfield

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3.3. Check Your Progress

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3.5. Terms to Remember

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3.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to:-

- Know about Catherine Mansfield
- Know the World of Short Stories of K. Mansfield
- Understand her art of narration
- Understand use of psychology in her short stories

3.1 Introduction:

Katherine Mansfield was born in 1888 into a socially prominent family in Wellington, New Zealand. She was the daughter of a banker in a middle-class colonial family. She was a cousin of author Countess Elizabeth von Armin. She had two elder sisters and a younger brother. Her father, Harold Beauchamp, became the chairman of the Bank of New Zealand.

She attended school in England in her early teens. She returned home after completing her education, but was dissatisfied with colonial life. When she was nineteen years old, she persuaded her parents to allow her to return to England. She had an affair with Garnet Trowell and became pregnant. Then, her first marriage with George Bowden, a young musician lasted for one day only. In England, she was interested particularly in the works of the French Symbolists and Oscar Wilde. She became lifelong friend with the South African writer Ida Baker.

From 1903 to 1906 she travelled into continental Europe, mainly to Belgium and Germany. After returning New Zealand in 1906, she began to write short stories. She had several works published in the *Native Companion (Australia)*, which was her first paid writing work, and by this time she had her mind set on becoming a professional writer. In 1912 she met the editor and critic John Middleton Murry and soon she shared the editorship of the 'Blue Review' and 'Rhythm' with him. They began living together and married in 1918, when Bowden finally consented to a divorce. Her health started deteriorating. She suffered from tuberculosis. She refused the idea of sanatorium. She moved to Bandol, France, stayed at half-deserted cold hotel, where she became depressed. She suffered a fatal pulmonary haemorrhage in January 1923. She died on 9th January and was buried in a cemetery in the

Fontainebleau district in the town of Avon. Nonetheless, she worked almost continuously, writing until the last few months of her life.

Major works of Katherine Mansfield:

1. In a German Pension(1911)
2. The Little Governess (1915)
3. Prelude (1918)
4. The Garden Party and Other Stories (1922)
5. The Dove's Nest and Other Stories (1923)
6. Bliss and Other Stories (1923)
7. The Montana Stories (1923)
8. Poems (1923)

Films about Katherine Mansfield:

1. A Picture of Katherine Mansfield (1973), T. V. Series
2. Leave All Fair (1984), directed by John Reid.
3. A Portrait of Katherine Mansfield: The Woman and the Writer (1987), directed by Julienne Stretton
4. The Life and Writing of Katherine Mansfield (2006), Directed by Stacy Waymack Thornton.
5. Bliss (2010), produced by Michel Fant.

Most of her stories show both perfection in technique and maturity of vision. Her stories were plotless. Her observation of human nature was acute and minute. Psychological understanding of characters with the help of the stream of consciousness proved her to be very important modern short story writer. Her painfully developed insight into human experience led her to deal almost exclusively with inner rather than outer events. From a rather broad and sometimes crude satirist, she developed into a master of irony. She was at her best in the delineation of young children, adolescent girls, and old women, perhaps because the experiences and observations of her own adult life were too close to her own view in perspective. Her stories range from the dewy childish awareness of family life in New Zealand,

through the wearinesses and frustrations of her English life to the sad and sometimes bitter loneliness of dwelling in the strange land of the continent.

3.2 A) The Garden Party:

As it isn't possible to give the text here, the stories are summarized here.

i) At the Bay:

The story 'At the Bay' is composed of thirteen short episodes in which a number of lives are intertwined. The story takes place at a settlement of families living in separate houses at the side of a bay. The readers are challenged to guess the relationships of the characters. It is the part of Mansfield's narrative technique. Though there are thirteen episodes, a reader gradually senses that this story has a kind of unity, not radically different from that of a more conventional story. The story lasts for a complete day, from early morning until late at night.

The first and the last episodes frame the story with description of a nature. In the first, the only moving beings are a herd of sheep, a sheepdog, and a shepherd. In the brief last episode, no living thing appears. Both episodes provide the description of the sea, waves, plants and buildings on the shore line. The second episode is about the swimming of Stanley Burnell and Jonathan Trout. The third episode is about aunt Beryl's advice to Kezia, not to play with food, and Stanley's leaving house for work. The fourth one is about children's play in the sand and in the fifth one, Beryl gets changed in front of her friend. The sixth episode is about Linda's memories where as the seventh episode is about the dialogues between Mrs. Fairfield and Kezia, about death. The eighth episode is about Alice's visit to Mrs. Stubbs and in the ninth, the children Kezia, Lottie and Isabel are shown playing cards. In the tenth, episode, Uncle Jonathan and Linda are shown talking while she is charmed by him. In the eleventh episode Stanley comes back and apologises profusely for not saying good bye to Linda in the morning. The twelfth episode is about Aunt Beryl's worries about being single and growing old alone.

The major themes of the story are pressure of men on children and women, ie. male domination; search for identity and four stages of womanhood- Grandma, Linda, unmarried Beryl and little daughters.

Stanley Burnell is a strong, dynamic person who doesn't like to rely on others. In order to support his family, he makes sacrifices. He is sensitive and kneels every night for prayers. He is a rich businessman. Linda is his wife. She always remains in her dreams. There is no close relationship with Stanley. Linda and Beryl Fairfield are sisters. Beryl flirts with Stanley. Lottie, Isabel and Kezia are the daughters of Stanley. Mrs. Fairfield is the Grandma. Mrs. Harry Kember is an eccentric who smokes heavily and likes to play bridge. Mrs. Stubbs is a friend of Alice. She runs a shop near the beach. Uncle Jonathan Trout likes music and books and he is the leader of the church choir. Pips and Rags are cousins of Burnells.

The story is written in the modernist mode without a set structure, and with many shifts in the narrative. The language is lyrical.

ii) The Garden Party:

The short story 'The Garden Party' was first published in 1922 in 'The Garden Party and other Stories'. The central theme of the story is commonly perceived to be the contrast between life and death, and also difference between the life of the rich and the poor. Laura, Meg and Jose- the three sisters- of the Sheridan family are preparing for the garden party. They inspect the proposed site for the marquee. Several trays of pink lilies have been brought. Sandwiches and cream puffs also have been brought. All the characters are in jolly mood.

Suddenly, the news of the death of a local carter living in the neighbourhood of the Sheridans came. Laura wants to cancel the party immediately, but both other sisters resist that thought. They advocate that there is no need to consider the feelings of their impoverished neighbours. Laura is the central character. She is young, idealistic and sensitive girl. Mrs. Sheridan is the mother of three sisters. She is an old shallow-minded woman.

Finally, the party takes place. At the end of the party, Mrs. Seridan asks Laura to give the leftover of the party, to the family and widow of the poor, dead carter. When she takes it to the Carter's house, she is moved by the atmosphere at the Carter's house. The widow's sister takes her to the dead body. Unexpectedly, she is overwhelmed by the peaceful beauty of the corpse.

W.S.Walker contended that the conclusion of this story is flawed by Laura's ambiguous response to the carter's corpse. The story presents different oppositions like life and death, dream and reality, youth and maturity, beauty and ugliness, rich

and poor, etc. According to some critics, it is a story of young girl's attempt to establish her own identity.

There is artistic unity which create thematic tension, throughout the story. Mansfield uses the stream of consciousness technique for narration. There is a good deal of use of irony and symbolism in the story.

iii) The Daughters of the Late Colonel:

It is subtle short story about two daughters of the Late Colonel. They are left with the task of preparing his funeral and getting on with their lives after their father's death. They know that they had relied on father for every need. Their life has become harder than expected. They lack power and conviction to drive them into a fulfilling life.

Constantia and Josephine-the Colonel's daughters, lack the self- confidence to make sound judgments. In the opening, the girls are unable to decide to whom they should give their father's top hat. We feel that the Colonel must be a firm, controlling man. Even after his death, the daughters are afraid to enter even into his room.

Another interesting aspect of the story is their interactions with their maid, Kate. She was arrogant. She doesn't obey their orders. They think to dismiss her from her job, but can't decide. Towards the end, a glimmer of future shines through but quickly falls prey to doubt and fear. They lack the burning fire of individuality.

The characters have overcome obstacles and barriers to achieve their dreams. Mansfield shows how relying on some one-else could take our individuality away from us.

The story is slow- starting. It lacks depth and suspense, and so do the characters in the story. The theme 'don't rely on others for your own decisions' is quite explicit. Years of dependence on their domineering father has sapped them of any decision-making powers.

iv) Mr. and Mrs. Dove:

It is beautiful story of Mr. and Mrs. Dove. Its speciality is the minute description of the characters and their inner world. Mr. Dove is a young man, Reginald (Reggie), a widow's son who works on a fruit farm in Rhodesia. His annual income was about 500 to 600 pounds. His business in the East Africa had knocked him out so thoroughly that he had to take six months' leave. Anne was a young and beautiful

Mrs. Dove. Her parents were very rich. Due to his joblessness there was no good relation between them. Anne was the daughter of Colonel Proctor. He lived with his daughter in England.

Though she had rejected his love and marriage with him, he was always in her thoughts. He remembered every of her actions. She had a mysterious laugh. He had always a thought in his mind that a tall, handsome, brilliant stranger stepped in front of him and took his place- 'the kind of man that Anne and he had seen often at the theatre, walking on to the stage from nowhere, without catching the heroine in his arms, and after one long, tremendous look, carrying her off to anywhere'. He was unhappy and sad while parting from her. To his surprise, finally, she called him back, and he went back to her.

The inner world of a young man is powerfully presented by Mansfield. His feelings, thoughts, his dialogues with Anne are presented skillfully. The end of the story is on the hopeful note. All the world of imagination of Reggie is vividly penned by Mansfield. The theme of love and courtship make its presence in the story. The readers feel great sympathy for Reggie.

v) Life of Ma Parker:

It is a touching story of a widowed charwoman. She works as a servant, wife, and mother and represents working class female. The readers come to know her pathetic story. The story moves around her. She lived with her grandson. Her dwelling place was in the basement-back at Number 27.

Though she was born in Stratford-on-Avon, she knew nothing about Shakespeare. At the sixteen, she came to London and worked as kitchen maid. The cook, who was a cruel woman, treated her badly. After leaving a doctor's house, she married a baker. She had thirteen babies from him. Seven of them were dead. Due to the work in the bakery, his lungs, were filled with flour and he bid good bye to the family forever. Ma Parker had to serve her husband's sister like a baby, she fell down and hurt her spine for five years. Ethel was her youngest son who married a good for nothing waiter. They had a son-Lennie. Lennie is the most beloved of Ma Parker then. He became the true source of her life. But when Lennie left this world, she lost the very reason to live. Her life, then became very miserable.

The story gives a fine and perfect tragic character sketch of Ma Parker. Mansfield has portrayed it with genuine sympathy. The keenness in portraying Ma

Parker suggests that she might have had such a maid servant come across in her real life. The story represents the poverty stricken working class woman's life of the contemporary society. It's really a pathetic but very simple short story.

vi) Marriage a La Mode:

It's a different type of story in which Mansfield talks about marriage. A serious subject which brings together two lives, sometimes, people think of it how lightly. Marriage becomes a tool of laughter and gossip. It throws light on the faith between husband and wife upon each other.

Isabel-William's wife, enjoys her life with her friends. Their parties, swimming, drinking and all other types of amusements and neglecting children, point out a mother's dryness towards her children. The relationship of husband and wife has been strained.

Bobby, Bill, Moira, Dennis etc. hope to bridge the gap between Williams and Isabel. At the end of the story, Isabel receives a letter from William. The beginning of the letter is quite interesting and all her friends think that it is a love letter. But as she reads the letter further, she starts sobbing and comes to know the real message of William. The sentence 'God forbid, my darling, that I should be a drag on your happiness' throws the light on their strained relationship and on the question of divorce.

vii) The Voyage:

It is a story of a voyage made by a grandmother and a grand-daughter-Fenella. The minute description of the boat-Old Wharf, the night, sea, the cabins in the boat, different sounds at the night and innocent questions of Fenella are the plus points of the story. Love between them is at the centre of the story. Father's (Frank) love and care for his daughter fenella as well as his mother (grandmother) are shown very keenly. The parting scene is very touching. His advice to his daughter for not troubling her grandma and at last, her crying for her father while entering into the boat, really bring tears in our eyes.

The clothes, shoes, umbrella, cabin etc. are described in the minutest details. We feel pity towards the motherless, innocent Fenella. After getting down from the Old Wharf, their journey by a little cart and meeting with the Grandfather (Walter) are vividly and plainly portrayed. The characters really loving. Love among three

generations-Mary and Walter (grandparents), Frank (father) and daughter (Fenella) is the main stream in the story. The story shows Mansfield's mastery over psychological study of the characters.

viii) Miss Brill:

It is a story about Miss Brill, a middle-aged English teacher in an unnamed French vacation town. It was her hobby to spend her time on walking and sitting in the park, wearing an old but beloved fur, on every Sunday afternoon. She sees the world as if it were a stage and enjoys watching the people around her, often judging them condescendingly. She also feels that the park is a stage and all the people in it are actors.

She always likes to listen to the dialogues and talking of the people sitting in the park. She wears a necklet of beads. On one Sunday, a young couple sitting on a bench was watching her fur stole (collar). When the couple makes fun of her fur collar, she feels nervous and finally, she puts it in the box.

Miss Brill's loneliness and alienation have become an important theme of the story. The appearance and reality also have been an important theme of the story. The setting of the story is 'Jardin's Publiques' (Public Gardens) in a French town.

All the inner thoughts of Miss Brill are revealed by Mansfield successfully. The story, therefore, is an interior monologue of Miss Brill. The narrative technique, no doubt, is stream of consciousness.

ix) Her First Ball:

It is a very fine story of a young country girl-Leila. She is twenty-two years old. She is going to join a dance party-her first Ball dance. She had learnt to dance at the boarding school. On every Saturday, she used to join the dancing class of Miss Eccles of London. The hall was rather poor. But now, when she reached the Ball Dance Hall, the whole atmosphere was strange and dazzling. The golden floor, the sliding and gliding music, well costumed young men and women ready to dance, all this atmosphere was quite attractive for men. There was a complete contrast in the atmosphere.

Though there were Meg, Laura, Laurie, Jose, etc. with her, in the hall, somebody else would be her partner for Ball. The colourful and musical hall was completely a new world. Her eyes were dazed. She saw strange faces and heard

strange voices. She was expecting a good partner. A young man danced with her tenderly and she came to know the difference between dancing with a male partner. She was happy. Then a fat, bald headed, shabby looking man joined her. He was quite experienced in the art of dancing. For the last thirty years, he was in this field. While dancing, he pointed out the truth that in course of time, her beauty will be over, and if nobody wanted to kiss her in the party, she would feel very sad. At this speech of that mans suddenly, she stopped dancing and began to think. She became very sad and nervous. All her good and happy mood was disappeared. All the waves of thoughts enterd into her mind and she remained silent. She wanted to go home. Finally, a young man with curly hair bowed before her and asked her to dance with him. Suddenly, her mood changed, and she forgot all her sad thoughts and enjoyed dancing with him.

x) The Stranger:

‘The Stranger’ is written by Mansfield in 1921. It was first published in the ‘London Mercury’.

The story takes place in Auckland. Mr. Hammond is waiting for his wife, back from Europe. After talking to some other people waiting at the harbour, she lands in but takes her time, leading him to wonder if she was sick during the voyage-she was not.

In the hotel, Hammond said they would spend the next day sightseeing in Auckland, before going back to Napier, where they lived. She then appears distant, and eventually reveals that she took a while to leave the ship because a man had died onboard, and she was alone with him when that happened. The husband is put off. The major characters, no doubt, are Mr. John Hammond and his wife Mrs. Janey Hammond. Besides, the Scott family, Captain Johnson, Mr. Gaven are other minor characters.

The major themes of the story are love and death.

Mr. Hammond is of the positive and protective attitude. When Mrs. Hammond is leaning on the rail of the deck, and talking to some woman and at the same time watching him, it strikes him. Mr. Hammond is constantly trying to avoid others so that he can have time alone with her. We see the conflict in Hammond’s insecure feelings, both past and present, about his relationship with his wife surfaced when she returned from saying good bye to the doctor and came up again in their hotel

room. When Janey reveals to her husband about being alone for a considerable length of time with a sick young man who died in her arms on ship, he is stunned, practically speechless. His insecurities about her feelings for him reach a negative high as she finishes her tale.

B) The Dove's Nest (1923) (The Text-II)

i) The Doll's House:

The story was first published in 1923. Like most of her stories, it also has the psychological plot. The characters in the story are Isabel Burnell, Lottie Burnell, Kezia Burnell, Beryl, Lil Kelvey, Else Kelvey, Lena Logan.

One day, Mrs. Hay gives a Doll's house to the Burnell children (Lottie, Isabel, Kezia). It has been described very minutely, with special emphasis on a lamp inside of it, which the youngest girl, Kezia, thinks is the best part of the doll's house. The next morning they cannot wait to show it off to their school friends. Isabel thinks herself as their boss and says she will be the one to decide who is allowed to come and see it in the house as she is the eldest. The Kelvey's, two poor girls, Lil and Else, will not be allowed to do so because they are of a much lower social class. Later, Isabel and two of her friends, Emmie Cole and Lena Logan, taunt the Kelveys about their low social status. Soon afterwards Kezia impulsively decides to show them the house anyway; Aunt Beryl, worried about an insistent letter from Willie Brent, walks in on them, shoos away the Kelveys, scolds Kezia, then feels better. The Kelveys have managed to see the lamp and Else smiles joyfully which is rare. The story ends with them being silent once more.

The major themes of the story are- **1) Class consciousness**-the Burnell children from the higher class whereas the Kelveys are from the lowest social class. Kelveys are treated like outcasts. **2) Rural life**-the Kelveys girl represent the rural life. **3) The Doll's House**- the artistic description (two chimneys, roof, windows, tiny porch, etc.) of the house draws the attention not only of the children but also of the readers.

ii) A Cup of Tea:

It is a fine short story and a wonderful piece of irony. The main theme of this story is selfishness often shown by rich women in the society. The story is about the contrast between the lowest and upper classes of the society.

The protagonist of the story is Rosemary Fell. She is very rich and hence, lives a luxurious life. Her habits and hobbies are suitable to her class. She is an extensive reader. She is extremely choosy about her purchasing the flowers and many antique objects. Her shopkeepers are also the same and fixed. They treat her as an honoured customer. Even the shops are from the posh London area.

Due to extensive reading, there is great impact of Dostoyevsky's novels on her. This impact can be seen in her encounter with a beggar like girl, Miss Smith, outside the shop of antique things. A sudden bookish and romantic idea comes to her mind and she brings Miss Smith home for a cup of tea and also to help her in her future too. But when, Rosemary's husband, Philip remarks that she is beautiful, all her resolutions, decision and plans in her mind to help the girl are kept outside and jealousy and selfishness enter into her mind.

She changes her thoughts, gives her three pound notes, paints her own face, and tries to express her love towards her husband.

A sudden U turn in her behaviour, is an example of irony and jealousy. Rosemary's exclusive shopping habits, romanticism, and frivolous requests, expose her self-serving personality.

iii) The Fly:

Mansfield wrote this story in Paris in 1922 while undergoing x-ray treatment for tuber culosis. At that time, it is likely she was hard-pressed for money to pay for her medical treatment.

There are various themes in the story. An important theme is the brutal horror of World War-I, along with the hopelessness and despair left in its wake. Another theme is the inevitability of death and man's unwillingness to accept this truth. Thirdly, the fly symbolizes the boss, soldier and Mansfield herself. Fourthly, time is a great healer of all grievances.

The central character of the story is the boss. He has been a representative of the generation that sent its sons to their slaughter in a cruel war,. He is very rich friend of Woodifield. He has lost his son in the World War I. Mr. Woodifield is an old infirm man who lives with his wife and daughters. Gertrude is Woodifield's daughter.

Mansfield uses the metaphor of a fly to represent the memories and struggle of the boss. This metaphor is used to extend meaning through the entire story and to

help enhance the motivations and thoughts of the boss. By comparing the struggle of the fly to the struggles of the boss and the death of the fly to the death of the boss' memories, the reader can more clearly understand how the death of his son in the war has affected the boss.

The story is told in the third person. The boss is motivated only by his dead son. He decides to torment a helpless housefly in the latter half of the story because he sees the struggle the fly undergoes when it falls in his inkpot, and in turn feels the need to test the fly's strength. In seeing the fly's struggle and its ability to overcome it, the boss sees himself.

The story reflects the sadness and cruel nature of war. It is an anti-war story in order to show people the personal effects which war and death have on the families of fallen soldiers. At the end of the story, after killing the fly, readers wonder, what will happen to him later: will he meet the same ill-ending as the fly? Or will he continue to be selfish and tormenting?

iv) The Canary:

It is the last completed story of Katherine Mansfield. In the final years, she was suffering from T.B. She came to know that the death was approaching her.

It is a story of an old woman. Her profession is cooking meal for others. She has kept a bird, canary in the cage. Her life is dull, dry and mechanical. She is alone in the world. Every human being needs company. Being alone in the world, she becomes the bird's friend, not only a friend, but like a son. The very bird has become the very symbol of her life. She speaks with bird; she loves to listen him singing sweetly. She tells the readers that the passersby, used to stop at the gate to listen his song. She shares her life with the bird. It shows clearly that the canary has become a part and parcel of her life. She also believes that the bird is a 'perfect company'. Whenever she feels sad and lonely, the canary's sound beautifully comforts her.

At the end of the story, the readers see that the bird is no more. It seems that something in her is dead. Her sorrow of the death of the bird is more powerful than the sorrow of illness, poverty and death. The bird has become a very breathing of her life.

But she is aware that she has to overcome this sorrow and face the realities of loneliness in life regularly.

The readers are moved by the hide and seek of her emotions and her memories of the bird. She doesn't want to have another bird because again, one day, she will have to part from him, which makes her more sorrowful. The story reveals her inner mind very clearly.

3.3 Check Your Progress:

A) Answer the following question in one word / phrase /sentence each:

- 1) Why does Laura think of cancelling the planned garden party?
- 2) What are the names of the three daughters of Stanley Burnell?
- 3) What was the relationship between Colonel Proctor and Anne in 'Mr. and Mrs. Dove'?
- 4) What were the names of the daughters of late Colonel?
- 5) Where was the fruit farm of Mr. Dove?
- 6) At which place was Ma Parker born?
- 7) What was the name of the boat by which the Grandma and Fenella travelled?
- 8) What was the profession of Miss Brill?
- 9) Whose dancing classes did Leila join?
- 10) Who died in the arms of Janey?

B) Choose the correct alternative:

- 1) 'The Dove's Nest' was published in
a) 1920 b)1921 c)1922 d)1923
- 2) Rosemary Fell decided to help to poor Miss
a) Brill b)Smith c)Lottie d)Kezia
- 3) Gertrude is Woodfield's
a) wife b)daughter c)sister d)aunt
- 4) The Canary was a
a) sweet singing bird b) dancing fish
c) jumping frog d) laughing monkey

5) There are Short episodes in 'At The Bay'.

- a) 11 b)12 c)13 d)14

3.4 Summary:

Catherine Mansfield is a modern short story writer. In a short span of her life, she produced a number of marvelous short stories and the collections of short stories.

Two of such short story-collections are for the present syllabus. The first one is 'The Garden Party' (1922) and the second one is 'The Dove's Nest' (1923). Both the collections include beautiful stories of inner world and ideas of the characters.

'The Garden Party' includes ten stories. 'The Garden Party' is a story of class consciousness whereas 'At The Bay' gives us minute details of the bay and people. 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' is a story of two young girls who do not have decision making powers and who always relied for the trifling decision also on their father. Mr. and Mrs. Dove presents the theme of love and courtship; but 'Life of Ma Parker' is a pathetic story of Ma Parker. 'Marriage a La Mode' throws light on the faith between husband and wife. 'The Voyage' describes tender human emotions of love and affection of three generations. 'Miss Brill' is a story about her loneliness and alienation. 'Her First Ball' is a story of a young country girl who experiences sadness and joy in the dancing ball. 'The Stranger' really creates an emotional storm in the life of Mr. Hammond due to a stranger.

'The Dove's Nest' includes four stories. 'The Doll's House' is a master piece of Mansfield. It gives an artistic description of the doll's house and the class struggle is also an important theme. 'A Cup of Tea' presents beautiful characters sketch of Rosemary Fell and her selfishness. 'The Fly' presents the horrible effects of war. 'The Canary' is a fine story of an old woman, her loneliness and her love for the bird.

3.5 Terms to Remember:

- **quaint**- strange.
- **siesta**- rest or sleep in the afternoon
- **marquee**- tent
- **spring**- small twig with leaves
- **extravagant**- spending money excessively

- **marmalade**- jam made from oranges or other citrus fruits
- **meringue**- sweet made with white of egg and sugar
- **imbecile**- a person of very low intelligence
- **jetty**- landing pier
- **toque**- woman's small, round, brimless hat
- **appetite**- hunger
- **grudge**- complain
- **poky**- small and inconvenient
- **nougat**- a confection made of a sweet paste filled with chopped almonds.
- **malignant**- filled with a desire to hurt
- **rotunda**- a round building
- **corrugate**- to contract into wrinkles
- **wheeze**- to make a whistling sound while breathing
- **cavern**- a deep hollow place in rocks
- **snug**- cosy
- **wistfully**- showing or expressing a vague desire
- **drowsy**- feeling sleepy

3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress:

- A) 1) due to the neighbouring labourer's death
 2) Isabel, Kezia and Lottie
 3) father-daughter
 4) Josephine and Constantine
 5) Rhodesia
 6) Stratford-on-Avon
 7) 'Old Wharf'

8) teacher of English

9) Miss Eccles

10) a young sick man

B) 1) -d 2)-b 3)-b 4)-a 5)-c

3.7 Exercises:

- 1) Write a critical note on the narrative technique of Catherine Mansfield
- 2) How does Mansfield describe, nature, people and their inner world.
- 3) Which stories from the present selections you like the most? Why?
- 4) Appreciate the stories 'A Cup of Tea', 'The Garden Party' and 'The Voyage'
- 5) How does Mansfield reveals the inner world of various characters in her stories?

3.8 References for Further Study:

- Berkman, Sylvia-*Katherine Mansfield: A Critical Study*(Yale University Press and O.U.P,London,(1951)
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Unit – 4

Inside the Whale and Other Essays : George Orwell

Contents

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction & Essays Prescribed

- 1) Inside the Whale (1940)
- 2) Down the Mine (1937)
- 3) England Your England (1941)
- 4) Shooting an Elephant (1936)
- 5) Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool (1947)
- 6) Politics Vs. Literature : An Examination of Gulliver's Travels (1946)
- 7) Politics and the English Language (1946)
- 8) The Prevention of Literature (1945/6)
- 9) Boys' Weeklies (1940)

4.2 Critical Analysis of the Essays

4.3 Check Your Progress

4.4 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.4 Exercise

4.6 References for further study

4.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to understand –

- George Orwell as an essayist.
- Orwell’s views regarding politics, power, poverty, English language and literature.
- The classification of Orwell’s essays into literary, cultural, autobiographical, sociological and political etc.

4.1 Introduction:

With the strong interest in the lives of the working class, George Orwell (1903 – 1950) – born in India to a middle-class family, but brought up in Britain-held the post of Assistant Superintendent in the British Imperial Police in Burma from 1922 to 1927. He was obliged to enforce the laws of an imperial power against his will. He developed a strong distaste for totalitarian regimes. This distaste has been reflected in “Shooting an Elephant”, and in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

4.2 Critical Analysis of the Essays

Orwell’s essay “**Inside the Whale**” begins as a review of *Tropic of Cancer*, a novel by American author Henry Miller. Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* describes the narrator’s struggling life in Paris during the 1930s. Orwell’s discussion of Miller’s novel leads him to discuss English literature in the 1920s and 1930s. Orwell alludes to the biblical story of Jonah and the whale in the title of his essay. Jonah in the original story is inside the whale and it therefore completely protected from the problems of the outside world. This story becomes a metaphor of accepting experience without seeking to change it.

Orwell has divided his essay into three parts. In **Part-I**, Orwell notes that a novel written about the Americans in Paris can hardly be called a novel of outstanding value as its mental atmosphere belongs to the 1920s rather than the

1930s. Orwell is concerned with the way Miller writes about the man in the street. He sees its value not by revealing what is strange, but what is familiar, and in this respect it has much in common with James Joyce in *Ulysses*. He describes the prose as astonishing. Orwell introduces a comparison with Walt Whitman whose literature is one of “acceptance” of life as it is rather than a struggle to change it. It is because he is passive to experience that Miller is able to get nearer to the ‘ordinary man’. This is out of key with the times when writers had an active involvement in politics and is reflected in the difference between the literature of the Spanish civil War written by “cocksure partisans telling you what to think” and that of the Great War literature written by “victims”.

In Part II, Orwell sets *Tropic of Cancer* against its literary context. It takes a survey of literary trends since the First World War. First there is A.E. Housman with nostalgic descriptions of the countryside and adolescent despair in *Shropshire Lad*. After Housman and the nature poets there was a new movement of the 1920s of unrelated writers with a similar outlook such as Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, Wyndham Lewis, Aldous Huxley and Lytton Strachey. These were noted by their pessimistic outlook and lack of interest in politics in the narrower sense. In the 1930s writing took on a serious purpose with the W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender group including people like Cecil Day Lewis and Christopher Isherwood, people from an almost identical public-school-university-Bloosbury background.

Orwell notes the left-leaning tendency of this group and its fascination with communist. He describes the communist as a Russian publicity agent. The group has the common ground of anti-fascism. After the debunking of Western civilization and the disappearance of traditional middle class values and aspirations, people need something to believe in and Communism has replaced Catholicism as the escapist ideal. Orwell identifies another factor which is the softness and security of life in England. People have no experience of the secret police and summary executions.

In Part III, for Orwell, Miller is a writer who gets away from being a political animal. His passivity is illustrated by his declaration that Orwell’s plan to go to Spain was “the act of an idiot”. Miller used the analogy of Jonah and the Whale to apply to Anais Nin, and this is taken up by Orwell as describing the final unsurpassable stage

of irresponsibility. Referring again to the great war Orwell notes the surviving readable works are those written from a passive negative angle and he highlights *Prufrock* by T.S. Eliot. Miller's is a human voice among bomb explosions. Orwell predicts the breakup of laissez faire capitalism and of the liberal-Christian culture and suggests that any novel worth reading will have to follow the lines of Miller's work. Orwell writes, "Miller is a writer out of the ordinary, worth more than a single glance; and after all he is a completely negative, unconstructive amoral writer, a mere Jonah, a passive acceptor of evil, a sort of Whitman among the corpses".

Orwell wrote "**England Your England**" during The Blitz of 1941 as bombers of Nazi Germany flew overhead. It is his attempt to define British culture and the British people for the rest of the world. He fears that it might soon be wiped from earth by the Nazi armies. He also states that England would not change into a fascist state and cannot unless she is thoroughly broken.

Orwell also describes England as one of the most democratic nations on the earth at the time. It, however, lacked a true and correct worldview and replaced it with a level of fervent patriotism. English gentry and businessmen thought Fascism was a system that was compatible with the English economy. The gentry believed that simply because Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler were staunchly opposed to communism that their views were "England-friendly" and thus they cheered whenever Mussolini's bombers would sink a ship ferrying supplies to support more centrist groups. It was not until the election came around and they realized that Franco's accession would be a severe blow to England. Thus, they realized that Fascism is bad for England due to its revolutionary origins or heavily military-dependent system of policing and control. Orwell himself, however, admits that Fascism is a better system for the wealthy, unless you were a Jew, than Communism or Socialist Democracy.

Orwell argues that Britain, although divided between many nationalities such as Scots, Welshmen, English, etc..., everyone considers themselves British as soon as a need to defend their land arises. He also theorizes that it might be more appropriate to divide Britons by financial classes which would result in two, or may be even three or four, Britains.

Orwell's "**Shooting an Elephant**" describes the experience of the English police officer called upon to shoot an aggressive elephant in Burma. Because the locals expect him to do the job, he does so against his better judgement. The officer's anguish is increased by the elephant's slow and painful death. The story is regarded as a metaphor for British imperialism, and for Orwell's view that "when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys."

By the time Orwell moved to Moulmein, in 1926, "he was most probably ambivalent about the colonial state of which he was a part. The Kipling-inspired romance of the Raj had been worn thin by the daily realities of his job in which he witnessed 'the dirty work of Empire at close quarters.' Orwell writes how he was trapped between his own resentment towards the Empire and the Burmese people's resentment towards him. As a member of the ruling power, he is cornered into doing what the 'natives' expect of him: *He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it.*"

In Moulmein, the narrator – Orwell, writing in the first person-is a police officer during a period of intense anti-European sentiment. Although his intellectual sympathies lie with the Burmese, his official role makes him a symbol of the oppressive imperial power. As such, he is subjected to constant baiting and jeering by the local people.

After receiving a call regarding a normally tame elephant's rampage, the narrator, armed with a .44 caliber Winchester rifle and riding on a pony, goes to the town where the elephant has been seen. Entering one of the poorest quarters, he receives conflicting reports and contemplates leaving, thinking the incident is hoax. The narrator then sees a village woman chasing away children who are looking at the corpse of an Indian whom the elephant has trampled and killed. He sends an orderly to bring an elephant rifle and, followed by a group of roughly a few thousand people, heads towards the paddy field where the elephant has rested in its tracks. Even though he does not want to shoot the elephant, he feels pressured by the will of all the natives around him. Unwilling to defy their expectations and risk looking foolish, he does what he thinks they want and kills the elephant.

An anti-imperialist essayist, Orwell frequently and clearly states his displeasure with colonial Britain: "I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil

thing... I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.” Trapped in a system not of his own making, he adds, “all I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served ... I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind.” Reflectively, the narrator realizes that being forced to impose strict laws and to shoot the elephant—he states his feelings against the act, but submits after comprehending he “had got to shoot the elephant” — illustrates an inherent problem of hegemony: “when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys.” By enforcing the strict British rule, he is forfeiting his freedom while concurrently oppressing the Burmese. A call to end imperialism, “Shooting an Elephant”, ironically, appeals to the British to cease colonialism to maintain *their* freedom and sense of democracy.

“**Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool**”, an essay by Orwell, was inspired by a critical essay on Shakespeare by Leo Tolstoy, and was first published in *Polemic* No.7 (March 1947).

Orwell analyzes Tolstoy’s criticism of Shakespeare’s work in general and his attack on *King Lear* in particular. According to Orwell’s detailed summary, Tolstoy denounced Shakespeare as a bad dramatist, not a true artist at all, and declared that Shakespeare’s fame was due to propaganda by German professors towards the end of the eighteenth century. Tolstoy claimed that Shakespeare was still admired only because of a sort of mass hypnosis or “epidemic suggestion”.

After having recapitulated Tolstoy’s indictment and Tolstoy’s criteria for literary merit, which Shakespeare does not meet, Orwell writes: “One’s first feeling is that in describing Shakespeare as a bad writer he is saying something demonstrably untrue. But this is not the case. In reality there is no kind of evidence or argument by which one can show that Shakespeare, or any other writer, is ‘good’ ... Ultimately there is no test of literary merit except survival, which is itself an index to majority opinion. Artistic theories such as Tolstoy’s are quite worthless, because they not only start out with arbitrary assumptions, but depend on vague terms (‘sincere’, ‘important’ and so forth) which can be interpreted in any way one chooses. Properly speaking one cannot *answer* Tolstoy’s attack. The interesting question is: why did he make it? But it should be noticed in passing that he uses

many weak or dishonest arguments. Some of them are worth pointing out, not because they invalidate his main charge but because they are, so to speak, evidence of malice.”

After a detailed, itemized analysis aimed to show that a great number of Tolstoy’s arguments are false, dishonest and malicious, Orwell identifies Tolstoy’s chief quarrel with Shakespeare as “the quarrel between the religious and the humanist attitude towards life.” The exuberance with life that characterizes Shakespeare, his interest in everything, the poetic brilliance – the very qualities for which people tend to admire Shakespeare – are precisely the qualities that make him unendurable to Tolstoy, who preached austerity and whose “main aim, in his later years, was to narrow the range of human consciousness. One’s interests, one’s points of attachment to the physical world and the day-to-day struggle, must be as few and not as many as possible.” Since Shakespeare’s attitude to life threatens Tolstoy’s, Tolstoy is incapable of enjoying Shakespeare and mounts an assault on him in order to try to ensure that others cannot enjoy him either.

Orwell then proceeds to examine Tolstoy himself and notes that the special hatred Tolstoy reserved for King Lear could well be due to the curious similarity of his own story to Lear’s, and to the fact that he suffered disappointments of the same nature after renouncing his estate, his aristocratic title and his copyrights.

In conclusion, Orwell mentions how little difference Tolstoy’s thunderous attack on Shakespeare has made. According to Orwell, the only criterion for the merit of a work of art is that it continues to be admired, and hence, the verdict on Shakespeare must be “not guilty”, since more than a hundred years after Tolstoy’s pamphlet Shakespeare remains as admired as ever.

“Politics vs. Literature: An Examination of Gulliver’s Travels” is a review of *Gulliver’s Travels* with a discussion of its author Jonathan Swift. The essay first appeared in *Polemic* No.5 in September 1946.

With the essay, Orwell refers to receiving a copy of *Gulliver’s Travels* on his eighth birthday and opines that he has read it not less than half a dozen times since. He refers to it as “a rancorous as well as a pessimistic book”, going on to add that “it

descends into political partisanship of a narrow kind.” Orwell admits that while it might seem that his object in writing the essay was to “refute” Swift and “belittle” him, adding that he is against Swift in a political and moral sense, he nevertheless states that Swift is “one of the writers I admire with least reserve”.

Orwell declares that *Gulliver’s Travels* is an attack on humanity, the aim being to “humiliate Man by reminding him that he is weak and ridiculous, and above all that he stinks”. He notes that Swift’s political affiliations were perversely reactionary and were partly driven by personal disappointment. Orwell also finds fault with Swift’s highly critical attitude to pure science and discovery. Nevertheless there appear to be moments when Swift loses hold of the satire and introduces some constructive political thought – particularly in identifying the dangers of totalitarianism.

Swift, claims Orwell, had much in common with Tolstoy in incuriosity and intolerance. A third criticism is Swift’s constant harping on disease, dirt and deformity – and Orwell introduces his view of these as particular horrors of childhood. He concludes that Swift is a diseased writer, riven with disgust, rancour and pessimism. Although against Swift in a moral and political sense, he nevertheless admires *Gulliver’s Travels* highly. Arguing that enjoyment can overwhelm disapproval, he rejects the argument that a book cannot be good if it expresses a palpably false view of life and concludes that in spite of its author, *Gulliver’s Travels* is a great work of art.

In “**Politics and the English Language**”, George Orwell criticizes “ugly and inaccurate” contemporary written English.

Orwell said that political prose was formed “to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind”. Orwell believed that, because this writing was intended to hide the truth rather than express it, the language used was necessarily vague or meaningless. This unclear prose was a “contagion” which had spread even to those who had no intent to hide the truth, and it concealed a writer’s thoughts from himself and others. Orwell advocates instead Plain English.

Orwell related what he believed to be a close association between bad prose and oppressive ideology:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the Indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them.

One of Orwell's major points follows:

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink.

The insincerity of the writer perpetuates the decline of the language as people (particularly politicians, Orwell later notes) attempt to disguise their intentions behind euphemisms and convoluted phrasing.

Orwell said that this decline was self-perpetuating. It is easier, he argues, to think with poor English because the language is in decline. And as the language declines, “foolish” thoughts become even easier, reinforcing the original cause:

A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks [...] English [...] becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.

To give an example of what he is describing. Orwell “translates” Ecclesiastes 9:11 –

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happened to them all.

-into “modern English of the worst sort,”

Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to the commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

The headmaster’s wife at St Cyprian’s School, Mrs. Cicely Vaughan Wilkes (nicknamed “Flip”), taught Orwell English and preached the virtues of “simplicity, honesty, and avoidance of verbiage”, and the qualities Flip most prized were later to be seen in Orwell’s writing.

Orwell said it was easy for his contemporaries to slip into bad writing of the sort he describes, and says the temptation to use meaningless or hackneyed phrases was like a “packet of aspirins always at one’s elbow.” In particular, such phrases are always ready to form the writer’s thoughts for him to save him the bother of thinking, or writing, clearly. However, he concludes that the progressive decline of the English language is reversible and offers six rules which will help avoid most of the errors in his previous examples of poor writing:

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. if it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Orwell's sixth rule means that the writer should break the previous rules when necessary for a proper sentence. Also, the writer should not use the English language to manipulate or deceive the reader. He mentions that each of the five are used by people who believe in barbarous things but must communicate them to a civil society. John Rodden claims, given that much of Orwell's work was polemical, he sometimes violated these rules and Orwell himself concedes he has no doubt violated some of them in the very essay in which they were included.

Orwell criticizes bad writing habits which spread by imitation. He argues that writers must rid themselves of these habits and think more clearly about what they say because thinking clearly "is a necessary step toward political regeneration."

Orwell chooses five specimen pieces of text, by Harold Laski ("five negatives in 53 words"), Lancelot Hogben (mixed metaphors), an essay on psychology in *Politics* ("simply meaningless"), a communist pamphlet ("an accumulation of stale phrases") and a reader's letter in *Tribune* ("words and meaning have parted company"). From these, Orwell identifies a "catalogue of swindles and perversions" which is classified as "dying metaphors", "operators or verbal false limbs", "pretentious diction" and "meaningless words". (see *clichés, prolixity, peacock terms and weasel words*).

Orwell notes that writers of modern prose tend not to write in concrete terms but use a "pretentious Latinized style," (compare English) and he compares an original biblical text with a parody in "modern English" to show what he means. Writers find it is easier to gum together long strings of words than to pick words specifically for

their meaning. This is particularly the case in political writing when Orwell notes that “[o]rthodoxy ... seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style.” Political speech and writing are generally in defense of the indefensible and so lead to a euphemistic inflated style. Though corrupts language, and language can corrupt thought. Orwell suggests six elementary rules that if followed will prevent the type of faults he illustrates although “one could keep all of them and still write bad English.”

Orwell makes it clear that he has “not been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing thought.” He also acknowledges his own shortcomings and states “Look back through this essay and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against.”

“**The Prevention of Literature**” is concerned with freedom of thought and expression, particularly in an environment where the prevailing orthodoxy in left-wing intellectual circles is in favour of the communism of the Soviet Union.

Orwell introduces his essay by recalling a meeting of the PEN club, held in defense of freedom of the press, in which the speakers appeared to be interested primarily in issues of obscenity and in presenting eulogies of Soviet Russia and concludes that it was really a demonstration in favour of censorship. In a footnote he acknowledges that he probably picked a bad day but this provides an opportunity for Orwell to discuss attacks on freedom of thought and the enemies of intellectual liberty. He declares the immediate enemies of freedom of thought in England to be the concentration of the press in a few hands, monopoly of radio, bureaucracy and the unwillingness of the public to buy books. However he is more concerned with the independence of writers being undermined by those who should be its defenders. What is at issue is the right to report contemporary events truthfully. He notes that 15 years previously it had been necessary to defend freedom against Conservatives and Catholics, but now it was now necessary to defend it against ‘Communists’ and fellow-travelers declaring that there is “no doubt about the poisonous effect of the Russian mythos on English intellectual life”.

Orwell cites the Ukrainian famine, the Spanish Civil War and Poland as topics that the pro-soviet writers fail to address because of the prevailing orthodoxy and

sees organized lying as integral to totalitarian states. Orwell notes that prose literature is unable to flourish under totalitarianism just as it was unable to flourish under the oppressive religious culture of the Middle Ages. However, there is a difference which is that under totalitarianism the doctrines are unstable, so that the lies always have to change to keep up with a continual re-writing of the past. This is leading to an age of schizophrenia rather than an age of faith.

Orwell suggests that, for various reasons, poetry can survive under totalitarianism whereas prose writers are crippled by the destruction of intellectual liberty. Speculating on the type of literature under a future totalitarian society Orwell predicts this to be formulaic and low grade sensationalism, but notes that one factor is that general populace is not prepared to spend as much on literature as on other recreations. In criticizing the Russophile intelligentsia Orwell complains of the uncritical and indifferent attitude of scientists who anyway have a privileged place under totalitarian states. For Orwell, literature is doomed if liberty of thought perishes, but the direct attack on intellectuals is coming from intellectuals themselves.

In “**Boys’ Weeklies**”, Orwell analyses those weekly story-paper publications for boys which were current around 1940. The essay deals primarily with the School Stores published in *The Magnet and The Gem* and also with the ‘Truepenny Bloods’ published by D.C. Thompson.

He suggested that the style of **The Magnet and Gem** was deliberately formulaic so that it could be copied by a panel of authors whom he erroneously supposed to lie behind the author’s names. He also denigrated the works as outdated, snobbish and right-wing. He characterizes the mental world of *The Magnet and Gem* as being “1910 – or 1940, but it is all the same... there is a cosy fire in the study... The King is on his throne... Everything will be the same forever.”

He then addressed what he regarded as more up-to-date papers, DC Thompson’s truepenny bloods. He notes that the stories were shorter and faster paced and tend to be dominated by a single figure.

He suggests the working classes are depicted in a stereotyped manner in both types of paper and regrets the absence of any Socialist perspective.

Charles Hamilton later published a reply to his comments about *The Magnet and Gem*, under the *Magnet* pen-name of Frank Richards; this reply included his first public acknowledgement of himself as author of both papers and defended the wholesome nature of the stories as being appropriate for his audience.

4.3 Check Your Progress:

- 1) Which novel of Henry Miller Orwell refers to in “Inside the Whale”?
- 2) Which Biblical story the title ‘Inside the Whale’ refers to?
- 3) What is the keynote of the post-war writers?
- 4) What is the keynote of the new writers?
- 5) What, according to Orwell, were Hitler’s three targets of attack?
- 6) Which, according to Orwell, is the marked characteristic of English civilization?
- 7) What are Tolstoy’s views on Shakespeare?
- 8) Who is the writer of “Gulliver’s Travels”?
- 9) What picture is described in book IVth of ‘Gulliver’s Travels’?
- 10) What the essay ‘Boys’ Weeklies’ deals with?

4.4 Answers to check your progress:

- 1) Tropic of Cancer.
- 2) The story of Jonah and the Whale.
- 3) Tragic sense of life.
- 4) Serious purpose.
- 5) Great Britain, France and U.S.S.R.
- 6) Gentleness.

- 7) A man of no genius, an average author.
- 8) Jonathan Swift.
- 9) Picture of an anarchistic society.
- 10) The stories – The Magnet, The Gem and Tuppenny Bloods”.

4.5 Exercise:

- 1) Write a note on Orwell as an essayist with reference to the essays prescribed for your study?
- 2) Discuss Orwell’s views on politics and literature?
- 3) How does Orwell define British culture and British people in ‘England your England’ for the rest of the world?
- 4) Describe Orwell’s experience as Police Officer in Burma with reference to ‘Shooting an Elephant’.
- 5) Write a note on Orwell’s ideas regarding Shakespeare’s ‘King Lear’.
- 6) What are the rules of Language Orwell offers to avoid errors?

4.6 Reference for further study:

- 1) George Orwell : *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (1940).
- 2) Jeffrey Meyers : *A Readers Guide to George Orwell, Thames & Hudson, London, 1975.*

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Unit-5

Mrs. Dalloway : Virginia Woolf

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5.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- ③ understand the subject-matter of modern novel.
- ③ find relationship between living life and horrible death.
- ③ study the nature of human relationships.
- ③ know the impact of war on human sensibility.
- ③ explain the 'stream of consciousness' novel.

5.1 Introduction:

Dear students, literature includes various forms such as poetry, drama, essay, novel etc. You have studied all these forms at undergraduate level. Every form has its own origin as well as development. It has its own silent feature also. The novel as a form of literature was started in the 18th century in England but its roots lay much deeper. Let us study one modern novel.

5.2 Life and work of Virginia Woolf:

Life:

Adeline Virginia Woolf (1882 – 1941), born in London, was a famous English author, essayist, publisher, and writer of short stories. She was one of the foremost modernist literary figures of the twentieth century. The young Virginia was educated by her parents in their literate and well-connected household at 22 Hyde Park Gate, Kensington. Her parents had each been married previously and been widowed, and consequently, the household contained the children of three marriages. Virginia was taught the classics and English literature. The sudden death of her mother in 1895, when Virginia was 13, and that of her half-sister Stella two years later, led to the first of Virginia's several nervous breakdowns. The death of her father in 1904 provoked her most alarming collapse and she was briefly institutionalized. According to modern scholars, her breakdowns and subsequent recurring depressive periods were also influenced by the sexual abuse she was subjected to by their half-brothers George and Gerald Duckworth. During the interwar period, she was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Her most famous works include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928), and the book-length essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929), with its famous dictum, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Her Work:

Woolf began writing professionally in 1900, initially for the *Times Literary Supplement* with a journalistic piece about Haworth, home of the Brontë family.

Her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, was published in 1915 by her half-brother's imprint, Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd. This novel was originally entitled

Melymbrosia, but Woolf repeatedly changed the draft. An earlier version of *The Voyage Out* has been reconstructed by Woolf scholar Louise DeSalvo and is now available to the public under the intended title. DeSalvo argues that many of the changes Woolf made in the text were in response to changes in her own life.

Woolf went on to publish novels and essays as a public intellectual to both critical and popular success. Much of her work was self-published through the Hogarth Press. She has been hailed as one of the greatest novelists of the twentieth century and one of the foremost modernists.

Woolf is considered one of the greatest innovators in the English language. In her works she experimented with stream-of-consciousness and the underlying psychological as well as emotional motives of characters. Woolf's reputation declined sharply after World War II, but her eminence was re-established with the surge of Feminist criticism in the 1970s.

Her work was criticised for epitomising the narrow world of the upper-middle class English intelligentsia. Some critics judged it to be lacking in universality and depth, without the power to communicate anything of emotional or ethical relevance to the disillusioned common reader, weary of the 1920s. She was also criticised by some as an anti-semitic, despite her being happily married to a Jewish man. This anti-semitism is drawn from the fact that she often wrote of Jewish characters in stereotypical archetypes and generalisations, including describing some of her Jewish characters as physically repulsive and dirty. The overwhelming and rising 1920s and 30s anti-semitism possibly influenced Virginia Woolf. She wrote in her diary, "I do not like the Jewish voice; I do not like the Jewish laugh." However, in a 1930 letter to the composer, Ethel Smyth, quoted in Nigel Nicolson's biography, *Virginia Woolf*, she recollects her boasts of Leonard's Jewishness confirming her snobbish tendencies, "How I hated marrying a Jew- What a snob I was, for they have immense vitality." In another letter to her dear friend Ethel Smyth, Virginia gives a scathing denunciation of Christianity, seeing it as self-righteous "egotism" and stating "my Jew has more religion in one toe nail—more human love, in one hair." Virginia and her husband Leonard Woolf actually hated and feared 1930s fascism with its anti-semitism knowing they were on Hitler's blacklist. Her 1938 book *Three Guineas* was an indictment of fascism.

Virginia Woolf's peculiarities as a fiction writer have tended to obscure her central strength: Woolf is arguably the major lyrical novelist in the English language. Her novels are highly experimental: a narrative, frequently uneventful and commonplace, is refracted—and sometimes almost dissolved—in the characters' receptive consciousness. Intense lyricism and stylistic virtuosity fuse to create a world overabundant with auditory and visual impressions.

The intensity of Virginia Woolf's poetic vision elevates the ordinary, sometimes banal settings – often wartime environments – of most of her novels. For example, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) centres on the efforts of Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-aged society woman, to organise a party, even as her life is paralleled with that of Septimus Warren Smith, a working-class veteran who has returned from the First World War bearing deep psychological scars.

To the Lighthouse (1927) is set on two days ten years apart. The plot centres around the Ramsay family's anticipation of and reflection upon a visit to a lighthouse and the connected familial tensions. One of the primary themes of the novel is the struggle in the creative process that beset painter Lily Briscoe while she struggles to paint in the midst of the family drama. The novel is also a meditation upon the lives of a nation's inhabitants in the midst of war, and of the people left behind. It also explores the passage of time, and how women are forced by society to allow men to take emotional strength from them.

Orlando (1928) is one of Virginia Woolf's lightest novels. A parodic biography of a young nobleman who lives for three centuries without aging much past thirty (but who does abruptly turn into a woman), the book is in part a portrait of Woolf's lover Vita Sackville-West. It was meant to console Vita for the loss of her ancestral home, though it is also a satirical treatment of Vita and her work. In *Orlando* the techniques of historical biographers are being ridiculed; the character of a pompous biographer is being assumed in order for it to be mocked.

The Waves (1931) presents a group of six friends whose reflections, which are closer to recitatives than to interior monologues proper, create a wave-like atmosphere that is more akin to a prose poem than to a plot-centered novel.

Her last work, *Between the Acts* (1941) sums up and magnifies Woolf's chief preoccupations: the transformation of life through art, sexual ambivalence, and meditation on the themes of flux of time and life, presented simultaneously as

corrosion and rejuvenation—all set in a highly imaginative and symbolic narrative encompassing almost all of English history. This book is the most lyrical of all her works, not only in feeling but in style, being chiefly written in verse. While Woolf's work can be understood as consistently in dialogue with Bloomsbury, particularly its tendency towards doctrinaire rationalism, it is not a simple recapitulation of the coterie's ideals.

Her works have been translated into over 50 languages, by writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Marguerite Yourcenar.

5.3 Historical background:

5.3.1 What is a Novel:

The novel as a form of literature is now recognized as a distinct form. Ordinarily it is written in prose in the form of a story that is mainly fictitious. The portrayal of life is its main subject matter. As a work of art, novel must have the unity and coherence of a plot as well as a defined intention or attitude of the author. The novel is often wrongly identified with fiction that has wider meaning. Fiction includes not only the novel but also the prose romance, narrative poetry and even drama. The early type of fiction was written in verse but later on prose became the popular medium of fiction.

The novel is defined in different ways. Different critics and writers have given different definitions of the novel. According to Fielding the novel is 'a comic epic in prose'. Clara Reeve defined the novel as 'picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written'. According to Prof Warren, the novel is a fictitious narrative which contains a plot'. 'The novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity', R. L. Stevenson says, 'from all its chapters, from all its pages, from all its sentences the well-written novel echoes and reaches its one creative and controlling thought'. All these definitions touch different aspects of the novel. We can also define the novel as 'the interpretation of human life by means of fictitious narrative in prose'. Human life is the subject matter of the novel.

At present the novel is the only literary medium through which a writer can discuss a great majority of the problems which are cropping up in the contemporary society. It deals with political, economic, religious and social questions. It serves as a

social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, and criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas. The novel has no definite rules to observe. We are told that the novel is anything and everything. No limits are prescribed for it. E.M. Forster in his *Aspects of the Novel* remarks about the novel: 'Principles and systems may suit other forms of art, but they cannot be applicable here ... or if applied their results must be subject to re-examination'. In fact the novelists from the earliest days of the history of the novel have asserted their right to do as they please without caring for any rigid rules and regulations.

The novel is a form of art on account of two important reasons: firstly, the author in the novel attempt to exhibit or represent life. Secondly, the author gives this external shape to his vision of life with the purpose of giving pleasure to the reader. The main features of art and literature are the imitation or representation of life, and the producing of delight among the readers. As a good novel possesses these two features, there should be no hesitation in considering it as a form of art, in spite of the fact that there is more elasticity and freedom in this form than any other. A novel may be written for the sake pf propaganda or preaching some principles, but if at the same time it is a portrayal of life, and gives us pleasure, it is definitely a piece of art.

5.3.2 Trends in the Modern Novel:

The novel is a very important and famous literary form in the modern times. The main reason is that the novel is the only literary form that meets the needs of the modern world. The poets of today find themselves isolated from society, and so they write in a language which cannot be understood by all. Sometimes the isolation of the poet is so extreme that their writing cannot be understood by anyone but themselves. Because of this poetry has lost its popularity in the modern times and it has offered an opportunity to fiction to flourish. In case of prose the ambiguity can be clarified. These things which are no longer assumed can be easily explained in a novel. Science insists on the analytical approach that also helped the novel to gain more popularity. It is because the method of the novel is also analytical as opposed to the synthetical. The modern man is also not interested in metaphorical expression that is one of the features of poetry. Moreover, the progress of psychology in the 20th century has made men so curious about the motivation of their conduct that they feel intellectually fascinated when a writer exposes the inner working of the mind of a character. This is possible in the novel form only.

The main features of modern novel can be discussed in detail. Firstly, we can say that modern novel is realistic as opposed to idealistic. The modern novelist is 'realistic' in the sense that she/he thinks that truth to observed facts – facts about the other world, or facts about his own feelings – is the great thing. The modern novelist is dealing often with the rather more sordid side of contemporary life as we see in the novels of Zola. Under the influence of Flaubert and Turgenev, some modern novelists like Henry James, Virginia Woolf have taken great interest in refining the construction of the novel. Subtle points of view, reserved and refined characters, and intangible delicacies of motive have been introduced by them into the novel that was not attempted before by any English novelist.

Secondly, the modern novel is psychological. The psychological problem is related to the nature of consciousness and its relation to time. The modern novelists have some difficulties to think of consciousness as moving in a straight chronological line from one point to the next. The presentation of the story in a straight chronological line becomes unsatisfactory and unreal to the modern novelists as well as readers. People are what they are because of what they have been. We are memories, and to describe as truthfully at any given moment means to say everything about our past. This method to describe this consciousness in operation is called the 'stream of consciousness' method. The novelist claims complete omniscience and moves at once right inside the characters' minds. Since the 'stream of consciousness' novelists, like Virginia Woolf, believe that the individual's reaction to any given situation is determined by the sum of his past experiences, it follows that everyone is in some sense a prisoner of his own individuality. It therefore means that 'reality' itself is a matter of personal impression rather than public systematization, and thus real communication between individuals is impossible. In such a world of loneliness, there is no scope for love, because each personality, being determined by past history, is unique. This idea is further strengthened on account of disintegration of modern society in which there is no common basis of values. That is why the modern novelist regards love as a form of selfishness or at least as something much more complicated and problematical than simple affection between two persons. D.H. Lawrence believes that true love begins with the lovers' recognition of each others' true separateness. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* rejected Peter Walsh, the man she really she loved, because of the fear that his possessive love would destroy her own personality.

The 'stream of consciousness' novelist is dissatisfied with the traditional methods. S/he has realized that it is impossible to give a psychologically accurate account of what a man is at any given moment, either by static description of his character, or by describing a group of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. S/he is interested in those aspects of consciousness which are essentially dynamic rather than static in nature and are independent of the given moment. His/her technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension. Thus, the author is able to give us a complete picture of the character both historically and psychologically.

The 'stream of consciousness' technique is helpful to us in many ways. At first, it helps to reveal the character completely, historically as well as psychologically. Secondly, it presents development in character which is in itself very difficult. For example, James, Joyce in *Ulysses*, the events of a single day, has made the reader to see the germ of the future in the present without looking beyond the present. Similarly Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway*, by relating the story of one day in the life of a middle aged woman, and following her 'stream of consciousness' up and down in the past and the present, has not only given complete picture of Mrs. Dalloway's character, but also she has made the reader feel by the end of the book that he knows not only what Mrs. Dalloway is, and has been; but what she might have been he knows all the unfulfilled possibilities in her character.

Thirdly, the modern novel deals with sexual matters frankly. It was rather an inevitable result of the acceptance of the 'stream of consciousness' technique. Sometimes a striking sexual frankness is used by writers like D.H. Lawrence to evade social and moral problems. Fourthly, the earlier novel generally dealt with the theme of relation between gentility and morality. On the other, the modern novel deals with the relations between loneliness and love. Virginia Woolf was particularly sensitive to the disintegration of the public background of belief. She was concerned with rendering experience in terms of private sensibility. Thus, the novel in the hands of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Dorothea Richardson or Katherine Mansfield borrowed some of the technique of lyrical poetry on account of emphasis on personal experience. There are such fine delicacies of description and narrative in modern novels which remind us the works of great English poets. Let us enjoy some passages from the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.

5.4 Brief Summary of the Plot of *Mrs. Dalloway*:

The World War I was over. It was the early fine morning of the middle of June. Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway wanted to buy the flowers herself. She was middle-aged woman over fifty. She was to give dinner party in the evening. Lucy, her maid servant, was very busy with her work. Mrs. Dalloway wanted flowers for her evening party. She was recently attacked by influenza but she did not lose the capacity to enjoy life. She was very happy with the fine morning. She had been living with her husband Richard, a member of parliament in a part of Westminster for over twenty years. Even today she was enjoying the scenes and sounds around her with zest as if a girl of eighteen as she then was.

Mrs. Dalloway was positive and loved Victoria Street which was full of life and movement – the swing, tramp, and the trudge, the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, brass bands, barrel organs, and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead. She was attracted by laughing girls in their muslin frocks. The shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their past diamonds, their lovely old sea-green brooches in 18th century settings to tempt Americans. She too loved it and wanted to purchase it for her daughter Elizabeth. But she was aware of the economic condition after World War I.

The early fine morning of June reminded her the equally fine mornings at Bourton in the countryside. When Mrs. Dalloway was young and unmarried girl of twenty she lived with her parents at Bourton. She remembered morning walk and the pleasant atmosphere. She also remembered her meetings with Peter Walsh who was her bosom friend. She loved him and vice versa. Peter wanted to marry her but she didn't. She still remembered everything about him. Peter Walsh was in India and it was expected that he may be back any day. Someone told her at a concert that Peter had married a woman met on the boat going to India. It made her angry.

Mrs. Dalloway reached St. James Park. She stood for a moment, looking at the omnibus in Piccadilly. There was perfect silence in the park. Then she turned and walked back towards Bond Street where she came across her old friend Hugh Whitbread who had a little job at court. Hugh told Clarissa the reason of his visit to London that his wife Evelyn was ill again. They had to consult the doctors. Hugh gave the complements to Clarissa saying, 'she looked like a girl of eighteen'. He promised Clarissa to come to her party in the evening and left the place.

Mrs. Dalloway had a divine vitality. Actually, she knew no history, no language. She had a very little knowledge. But her only gift was knowing people by instinct. Bond Street was famous for its flags flying, its shops etc. She passed by the window of a glove shop. She remembered: her old Uncle William used to say a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves. She had a passion for gloves, but her own daughter, her Elizabeth cared not a straw for either of them. Elizabeth really cared for her dogs most of all. The whole house this morning smelt of tar. Elizabeth also took care of her tutor Miss Doris Kilman dressed in a green mackintosh coat. Miss Kilman lived in a slum without a cushion or a bed or a rug. Her soul was rusted because of her dismissal from school during the War. She was a poor, embittered, unfortunate creature. Mrs. Dalloway hated her and this hatred gave her physical pain and spoiled her pleasure in beauty, in friendship, in being well, in being loved and making her home delightful.

There were diverse thoughts fleeting through her mind. She cried to herself ‘Nonsense, nonsense!’ She reached the shop of the florist Mulberry. Miss Pym, the saleswoman, greeted Mrs. Dalloway. The hands of Miss Pym were always bright red, as if they had been stood in cold water with the flowers. There were flowers, roses, irises. Mrs. Dalloway was observing the flowers and the tyre of motor car bursts out with a violent explosion. Mrs. Dalloway jumped up. Everybody looked at the car. But nobody knew whose car it was. Mrs. Dalloway looked at the car and saw Septimus Warren Smith passing with his wife Rezia (Lucrezia). Lucrezia was a little woman with large eyes in a sallow pointed face; an Italian girl. She was only twenty-four without any friends in England. Her husband was a more piece of bone. She had left Italy for his sake. They had been married five years ago. Septimus frightened poor Lucrezia by saying, ‘I will kill myself’.

Gliding across Piccadilly, the car turned down St. James’s Street and then to the Mall. The traffic was excessive. It was going to Buckingham Palace where the Queen lived. The war had orphaned and widowed thousands and still the British were adored. Other people were also looking at the car and suggested the sense of the life of common man around. Suddenly Mrs. Coates looked up into the sky. The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd. It was adverting “toffee” Mrs. Dalloway looked at it. Septimus and Rezia also looked at it as they were sitting on a bench in Regent’s Park. Septimus was a soldier who fought bravely in the war. But now he had fear of war. He could talk only of killing himself. Dr. Holmes had

told Rezia to make her husband take interest in things outside him self. Septimus was not ill. Rezia felt that her husband was going mad but she could not tell it to anyone. She was lonely and loneliness was unbearable for her. She suffered from spiritual anguish. Maisie Johnson, a passer by, thought them a queer couple quarrelling and about to separate.

Mrs. Dalloway came back home purchasing the flowers. Now she was happy. She felt grateful to Richard who gave her freedom and called her a perfect hostess. Her happiness was momentary. Lucy informed her that Richard would lunch out that day with Lady Bruton. Mrs. Dalloway felt astonished. Lady Bruton had invited her husband and not her. She shivered as a plant on the river-bed felt the shock of a passing oar and shivers. Her thoughts now turned to Lady Bruton. Millicent Bruton was an old lady. With wrinkles on her face, she feared time that was making her old. She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated that rippled the cold contact of man and woman or of women together. At such moments she felt for women what men feel for them.

But this question of love, falling in love with woman came to her mind and reminded her relation in the old days with Sally Seton, her girlhood friend. Sally's power was amazing, her gift, her personality. Mrs. Dalloway remembered how she would sit on the floor, with her arms round her knees and smoke cigarettes. She could not take her eyes off her in her first meeting with Sally. Once Sally ran necked along the passage to get her sponge that shocked the family members. She was an intelligent girl. They spoke of marriage as a catastrophe which would part them. She felt a strange sort of protective feeling for Sally. Once came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down!

Yet how much she owed Peter Walsh later. She owed him in words: 'sentimental', 'civilized'; they started up every day of her life as if he guarded her. She had not yet completed her fifty-second year. She had seen her face many million times in the glass and found her face – pointed; dart-like; definite. Her evening dresses hung in the cupboard. She liked green dress but it was torn out. As her maids had too much work, she would mend it. Actually her servants liked her, loved her and helped her a lot.

Peter had returned England after five long years in India. He said to the servant, 'she will see me. After five years in India, Clarissa will see me.' Clarissa made to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy. Peter Walsh kissing both her hands said, 'And how are you?' He was exactly as her used to be before he left for India. He thought that that nothing in the world is so bad as marriage. Both were agitated. They could not help remembering the post. Still the post rose before Peter like a 'a ghostly beautiful moon'. He told her as her wife died he was vow in love with a Major's wife with two small children a boy and a girl. He had come to London to arrange for divorce. Listening to this, Clarissa surprised that though fifty two, he was still capable of love. She thought that perhaps she committed a mistake in refusing him. Suddenly, Peter Walsh burst into tears and as result Clarissa kissed him passionately. Clarissa felt light hearted and thought, 'If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day!' The thought 'take me with you' passed impulsively through her mind. Now she had only the attic room, the lovely soul. She was not happy in spite of all her material comforts, she would have been very happy with her old friend Peter who loved her. She thought that Peter like Richard would not have gone out to lunch with lady Bruton without her. Peter asked, 'Are you happy, Clarissa? Does Richard ... ?' At once the door opened and Clarissa said, 'Here is my Elizabeth'. Big Ben stroke 11.30 am. Peter suddenly left the place and Clarissa asked him, 'Remember my party to-night'.

Peter Walsh was alone in London and thought of Clarissa's words, 'Remember my party, remember my party'. He also thought, 'why does she give these parties?' He again thought of Clarissa. She was rather cold. Suddenly Peter came across boys in military uniform marching along. Peter felt too young and delightful. Then he saw a young beautiful lady walking in front. He followed her till she entered her home. Then he turned towards Regent's Park. He sat on a seat beside a grey nurse and snored. He woke up with the extreme suddenness with words: 'the death of the soul'. There were a number of people in the Regent's Park. Peter thought of the past at Bourton. He remembered the evening when Richard Dalloway first came to Bourton. He felt at once that all was over with him and that Clarissa would surely marry Dalloway. Perhaps he demanded too much from her but he certainly loved her. He decided to settle the matter. He asked her, pressed her and told her the truth. He felt that she was unyielding, like iron, like flint, rigid up to the backbone. But said firmly,

‘it is no use, it is no use, this is the end’. Tears ran down his cheeks. She went away. He never met her again.

Peter was in Regent’s Park. Though he was frustrated in love, he enjoyed a child playing with a lady. He found London beautiful after five years in India. The lady was Lucrezia (Rezia) Warren Smith with her husband. Rezia was unhappy like Peter. Her husband was not in normal condition. She suffered terribly though she did nothing. Her thoughts turn to the past. She lived happily with her sisters in their home five years ago in Milan, Italy. She had given up her home and come to London for the sake of Smith. Her husband talked to himself. He had hallucinations – he saw his friend Evans who had been killed in the war and talked to him. Suddenly he said, ‘Now we will kill ourselves’. He said that he saw faces laughing and calling him, talked Miss Isabel Pole whom he loved before married her. He imagined that he knew the secret and meaning of life. His secret was that the trees are alive, that in the world there is no crime and no love. The beauty of Nature pleased him and muttered, ‘beauty was everywhere’. Rezia told him it was time for them to the doctor. Septimus sang an ode to Time. He also fancied that Evans in grey dress was coming towards him. He was horrified and shouted, ‘for God’s sake do not come’.

It was quarter to twelve and Peter had to visit his lawyer. He thought every woman he passed by beautiful and fell in love with her. He saw manners had changed and young people mixed up freely than before. He remembered Sally Seton who had married and lived in a large house at Manchester. He also thought of Clarissa’s hatred of Hugh Whitbread. Clarissa told Peter that Hugh was vulgar. Hugh had read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing. Clarissa hated Hugh for he had once tried to kiss her in the smoking room. Hugh was the greatest snob. He married Evelyn. He took the help of Richard Dalloway in his job. Peter spoke of Richard. Richard was sensible man. He was practical but he lacked imagination and intelligence. He was wasted in politics. His practicalness liked Clarissa. Thus again Peter turned to Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway. Peter thought how Clarissa could accept Richard’s view on poetry and Shakespeare. Clarissa was more shrewd than Sally. Peter remembered that Clarissa had a feminine gift of making a world of her own wherever she had happened to be and impressing everybody present. Peter assured himself that he was no longer in love with her. She hated failures like Peter and respect for the British aristocracy. She cared too much for rank and position. She had a zest for life, good and beautiful things, meeting people, lunching, dining, giving

parties etc. she was fond of playing hockey. Peter concluded that he did not love her any longer but she loved him. He felt jealousy that she had married another and was the wife of another.

Peter then reached a crossing where he saw a poor, old woman was begging. He gave her some money. Rezia and Septimus also reached that very crossing and heard the song of old woman that meant good fortune. Septimus married her to find security and refused to have children. Rezia wanted a son. Rezia went to Dr. Holmes. Dr. Holmes found nothing wrong with Septimus and advised them to consult Sir William Bradshaw, the great specialist.

Big Ben struck twelve o'clock. Clarissa finished mending her dress. On the other hand, Rezia and Septimus reached Dr. William Bradshaw, Harley Street. Sir William was the son of a shopkeeper. He had a son at Eton. He diagnosed Septimus and reported as grave – complete physical and nervous breakdown, with every symptom in an advanced stage. Rezia told him everything about Septimus. Sir William advised that Septimus must go to a delightful home away from Rezia in the country. He worshipped proportion. Being a professional man, he was regarded as a healer. He liked to impose his will on others. He imposed it on Lady Bradshaw and felt bored with life. His income was more than two thousand a year. Rezia didn't like him because he wanted to separate her from Septimus. Rezia returned home in anguish. It was half-past one. Hugh Whitbread was going to the luncheon with Lady Bruton. He had a little job at court. He had known lady Bruton for twenty years. He always brought a bunch of flowers for her. Lady Bruton had her secretary Miss Brush. She preferred Richard Dalloway to Hugh. Still she invited Hugh because he had been so kind to her in the past and wrote fine letters.

Lady Millicent Bruton was a perfect May fair hostess. She was polite, hospitable and observing all social proprieties. She was more interested in politics than in people. She told them about Peter Walsh. They all remembered Peter's hopeless passion for Clarissa and his failure. Still Richard Dalloway had a great liking for Peter. He was product of the system. He was not every wise, intelligent but decent simple and affectionate. After finishing lunch, Richard and Hugh walked homeward. They parted Richard purchased some flowers for Clarissa and tell her that he loved her. He had never told her so for years. He was very happy in his life.

Big Ben struck 3.30 p.m. Richard reached home. Clarissa was in worry- She had not invited Ellie Henderson to her party but Mrs. Marsham, her friend, invited her own on Mrs. Dalloway's behalf .Secondly, Elizabeth was locked in with Doris Kilman, her tutoress. Richard gave her flowers but could not say, 'I love you'. Clarissa told about Elizabeth but Richard was in a hurry. He asked her to sleep for an hour as per the advice of the doctor. Clarissa was alone once again with her memories. She felt Peter laughing at her parties. She knew that it was life she loved; her parties gave her the flavour of life. And it was an offering; to combine, to create, but to when? Mrs. Dalloway had no answer to the question. She gave parties to bring people together and make them happy. But she herself was to unhappy. Elizabeth aged seventeen had come to tell her mother that she was going out with Miss Kilman Miss Doris Kilman hated Clarissa and Clarissa hated her. Miss Kilman lost her job as a school teacher at war time. She taught history to Elizabeth. Elizabeth does not like parties and she thought young men were silly. Clarissa knew that Miss Kilman was evil. She was ugly and clumsy. Elizabeth left the place in her very well-cut clothes. Elizabeth would like to be a doctor or a farmer. Moving through the Strand, she thought of business, of law and of administration. As she remembered the party she boarded a bus homeward. Black clouds appeared in the sky. Elizabeth admired the beauty of it. She was anxious to reach home at the earliest.

Lying in his room, Septimus also saw the clouds. He was not afraid of anything. He took an interest in what Rezia was doing. Rezia was making a hat for Mrs. Filmer's married daughter. He commented that the hat was too small and made a joke. Rezia was sure that no one could separate them against their will. Septimus laughed. They were happy then. Dr. Holmes pushed Rezia a side and entered the room. Septimus was afraid. He searched for a razor and found nothing. He sat on the sill and flung himself down with great force. Rezia was in a trance Peter Walsh saw the ambulance carrying the body of Septimus. He was on his way to his hotel. He remembered a number of rides with Clarissa on the top of buses they took together. They were young then. There was immeasurable influence of Clarissa on his life. He also remembered the delicious long walks in each other's company. Had they married they would have changed the world.

It was a beautiful evening. Peter Walsh was with full of ideas in his mind. The beauty of the evening impressed Peter and decided to go to Clarissa's party. Moving through London Street, he felt London had improved during the last five years. He

reached Clarissa's street. The house of Clarissa was brilliantly lighted. With brave courage Peter entered the house. The rooms were full with the guests and the party was going on. There were the servants; Lucy the maid servant; Mrs. Walker, the cook; Mrs. Parkinson, old Ellen Barnet and Mr. Wilkins. There were lovely, unwanted women like Ellie Henderson. There were lords and ladies and grand majestic women like Lady Burton. There were colonels, professional men, poets, philosophers, artists etc. The party was a grand success. The Prime Minister himself was there. Peter Walsh was there. There were the Bradshaw whom Mrs. Dalloway disliked. Lady Bradshaw reported Clarissa that a young man had killed himself. So Septimus too came to Mrs. Dalloway's part not in life but in death. Mrs. Dalloway disliked the Bradshaw's talk of death at her party. Septimus had thrown himself from a window. Dr. Bradshaw might be the cause of his death. Mrs. Dalloway felt Sir William had impressed him with his power, might he not then have said: life is made intolerable; they make life in tolerable, men like that? It was unveiling of Sir William Bradshaw. As there was emotional unity between Clarissa and Septimus, Clarissa was identified with Septimus. She felt that it was she who had failed. She went away from her party and entered a little room. She was alone with the thought of that young man who killed himself. Peter was chatting with Sally. He was laughing at Clarissa and her parties, her snobbery. He found out fault with her. He was waiting for her to come and Sally wanted to go. Peter thought to himself, 'What is this terror? What is this ecstasy? what is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement? It is Clarissa'. He didn't want to go without talking with Clarissa. And there she was.

5.5 Characters:

A. Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway:

Central figure—the whole story revolves round her—middle-aged—over fifty—the wife of Richard Dalloway, an MP—In youth—charming beauty—Peter Walsh and Richard loved her—an immense zest for life—finds beauty in everything—likes to give parties—'To combine, to create' her mission in life—love before marriage and love after marriage—an affectionate mother—an affectionate wife—an affectionate beloved—feminine gift of making a world of her own—her passionate love for Sally Seton—hates Miss Doris Kilman—hates Lady Bruton—all servants liked her, loved her, and wanted to be helpful—she was gentle, generous and large-hearted—always ready to help those in trouble—rounded figure—all the stages—a

girl, a beloved a wife, a mother, and a perfect hostess.—beloved's love for Peter wifely love for Richard and motherly love for Elizabeth—her deficiencies—not a thinker, not a writer, cannot play the piano—loves success and hates discomfort—loves London—pure hearted—the most adorable character.

B. Peter Walsh:

Most important character next to Clarissa—middle aged—over fifty—condition in young age—loved Clarissa—failure—went to India –after five years back to London—still loves Clarissa—interested in science, in politics, in philosophy, and in poetry—called Clarissa a perfect hostess and sentimental—plays with his big pocket-knife—thinks marriage as a bad thing—though fifty-two—capable of love—Asks Clarissa ‘Are you happy, Clarissa? Does Richard --?’—proud of England—frustrated in love—felt jealousy towards Clarissa and the reason is that she had married another and the wife of another—a great favourite with ladies—in love with twenty-four years old Daisy, married woman with two children—too possessive in love –wayward and unconventional—bold and adventurous—rather eccentric—party without speaking with Clarissa indeed love with Clarissa.

C. Richard Dalloway:

Husband of Mrs. Clarissa—a conservative member of parliament,—has a daughter- Elizabeth—well to do –lived in Westminster Lunch with Lady Bruton—a very practical and sensible man—lacked imagination and intelligence—wasted in politics—a product of the system—decent, simple and affectionate good as an individual—did not care a straw about emigration—sally considers him a man with a second-class mind.

D. Sally Seton:

A girlhood friend of Clarissa—as a girl gifted with extraordinary beauty—large, dark eyed—bold—acted impulsively—smoke cigars—ran naked along the corridors-unconventional views—spoke of having a child before marriage—disliked by Clarissa's father—Clarissa felt for her what men feel for women—an idealist—a social reformer—rounded character—a mother of five enormous boys.

E. Elizabeth:

Only daughter of Clarissa and Richard—seventeen years old –a perfect sense of humour –serious—Miss Doris Kilman her tutoress—taught history—dark,—chinese

eyes in a pale face—an oriental mystery—gentle—considerate--full of life – beautiful—loves country—thinks young men are silly.

F. Miss Doris Kilman:

Representative of religious type—frustrated woman—tutress to teach History to Elizabeth—wants to capture Elizabeth for god—Clarissa considers her an evil—ugly—lost her job as a school teacher when the war come—Clarissa hated this vulgar woman –tea with Elizabeth in the Army and Navy stores—eating the only pure pleasure left her—indulges in self pity—a suffering soul—a great thirst for power and possession.

G. Lucrezia Warren Smith: Rezia

Young and beautiful wife of Septimus Warren Smith—loneliness—before marriage lived with sisters in Italy—liked silent people—wants to see England—affectionate and dutiful wife—no friend, no relative in London—her husband a case of nervous breakdown she doesn't desert him – Dr. Bradshaw's advise—Dr. Holmes cut her joy, when Septimus throws him self from a window.

H. Septimus Warren Smith:

'Other self' of Mrs. Clarissa—representative of bad effects of war—suffers from neurosis—In his young age pale—faced—a clerk—in love with Miss Isabel Pole—at first volunteer in the war—death of his fast friend Evans—become a neurotic—'We will kill ourselves'—jumps from the window—kills himself—tragedy—criticism on

I. Sir William Bradshaw:

A son of a shopkeeper—hard work successful and prosperous doctor and psychiatrist in London—representative of professional type—materialistic—his grey car a symbol of success—has a son at Eton—grey hair—diagnoses the case of Septimus –advise to send Septimus to delightful home in the country—his wife Lady Bradshaw also help his patients—worships proportion and conversion—dominate will—quick and form decision—a master of his own action—income was move than two thousand a year—though the evil friend and relatives admired him.

J. Lady Bruton:

Conservative—ironic portrait of a perfect May fair hostess—follower of convention and traditions—polite observes all social proprieties—invites both though and Richard to lunch—the basic reason to write a letter to the Times—similar

to William Bradshaw—more interested in politics than people—ironic portrait of contemporary society.

Themes:

a. Mental illness: Septimus, as the shell-shocked war hero, operates as a pointed criticism of the treatment of mental illness and depression. Woolf lashes out at the medical discourse through Septimus' decline and suicide; his doctors make snap judgments about his condition, talk to him mainly through his wife and dismiss his urgent confessions before he can make them. Dr. Holmes remarks that Septimus "was not ill. Dr Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him"

Woolf goes beyond criticizing the treatment of mental illness. Using the characters of Clarissa and Rezia, she makes the argument that people can only interpret Septimus' shell-shock according to their cultural norms. Throughout the course of the novel Clarissa does not meet Septimus. Clarissa's reality is vastly different from that of Septimus; his presence in London is unknown to Clarissa until his death becomes idle chat at her party. By never having these characters meet, Woolf is suggesting that mental illness can be contained to the individuals who suffer from it without others who remain unaffected ever having to witness it. This allows Woolf to weave her criticism of the treatment of the mentally ill with her larger argument, which is the criticism of society's class structure. Her use of Septimus as the stereotypically traumatized man from the war is her way to show that there were still reminders of the First World War in 1923 London. These ripples affect Mrs. Dalloway and readers spanning generations. Shell shock or post traumatic stress disorder is an important addition to the early 20th century canon of post-war British Literature.

There are similarities in Septimus' condition to Woolf's struggles with bipolar disorder (they both hallucinate that birds sing in Greek and Woolf once attempted to throw herself out of a window as Septimus does). Woolf eventually committed suicide by drowning.

b. Existential issues: When Peter Walsh sees a girl in the street and stalks her for half an hour, he notes that his relationship to the girl was "made up, as one makes up the better part of life." By focusing on character's thoughts and perceptions, Woolf emphasizes the significance of private thoughts rather than concrete events in

a person's life. Most of the plot in *Mrs Dalloway* is realization that the characters subjectively make.

Fueled by her bout of ill health, Clarissa Dalloway is emphasized as a woman who appreciates life. Her love of party-throwing comes from a desire to bring people together and create happy moments. Her charm, according to Peter Walsh who loves her, is a sense of *joie de vivre*, always summarized by the sentence "There she was." She interprets Septimus Smith's death as an act of embracing life and her mood remains light even though she hears about it in the midst of the party.

c. Feminism: As a commentary on inter-war society, Clarissa's character highlights the role of women as the proverbial "Angel in the House" and embodies sexual and economic repression and the narcissism of bourgeois women who have never known the hunger and insecurity of working women. She keeps up with and even embraces the social expectations of the wife of a patrician politician but she is still able to express herself and find distinction in the parties she throws.

Her old friend Sally Seton, whom Clarissa admires dearly, is remembered as a great independent woman: She smoked cigars, once ran down a corridor naked to fetch her sponge-bag and made bold, unladylike statements to get a reaction from people. When Clarissa meets her in the present day, she turns out to be a perfect housewife, having married a self-made rich man and given birth to five sons.

d. Homosexuality: Clarissa Dalloway is strongly attracted to Sally at Bourton — 34 years later, she still considers the kiss they shared to be the happiest moment of her life. She feels about women "as men feel" (from "Mrs Dalloway", Penguin Popular Classics 1996, page 36 OR Harcourt, Inc. (2005), Page 35) but she does not recognize these feelings as signs of homosexuality.

Similarly, Septimus is haunted by the image of his dear friend Evans. Evans, his commanding officer, is described as being "undemonstrative in the company of women". Woolf describes Septimus and Evans behaving together like "two dogs playing on a hearth-rug" who, inseparable, "had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other..." Jean E. Kennard notes that the word "share" could easily be read in a Forsteran manner, perhaps as in Forster's *Maurice* which shows the word's use in this period to describe homosexual relations. Kennard is one to note Septimus' "increasing revulsion at the idea of heterosexual sex",

abstaining from sex with Rezia and feeling that "the business of copulation was filth to her.

Style:

In *Mrs Dalloway*, all of the action, except flashbacks, takes place on a day in June. It is an example of stream of consciousness storytelling: every scene closely tracks the momentary thoughts of a particular character. Woolf blurs the distinction between direct and indirect speech throughout the novel, alternating her narration with omniscient description, indirect interior monologue, direct interior narration follows at least twenty characters in this way but the bulk of the novel is spent with Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith.

Because of structural and stylistic similarities, *Mrs Dalloway* is commonly thought to be a response to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a text that is often considered one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century (though Woolf herself, writing in 1928, apparently denied this). In her essay 'Modern Fiction' Woolf praised James Joyce's *Ulysses*, saying of the scene in the cemetery, "on a first reading at any rate, it is difficult not to acclaim a masterpiece". The Hogarth Press, run by her and her husband Leonard, had to turn down the chance to publish the novel in 1919, because of the obscenity law in England, as well as the practical issues regarding publishing such a substantial text. im before the end."

5.6 Check your progress:

A) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase or sentence each:

1. Who is the central character in the novel?
2. What was Richard Dalloway?
3. Where did Dalloway family live?
4. What was the background of the novel?
5. In which month did Mrs. Dalloway organize the party?
6. Which are the two towns where the setting of the novel is based?
7. How many years Peter Walsh was in India?
8. Who was the wife of Hugh Whitbread?
9. What was the complement given by Hugh to Clarissa?

10. Who was the tutor of Elizabeth?
11. Why was Miss Kilman frustrated?
12. What did Mrs. Dalloway want to purchase for the party?
13. Who was Mr. Mulberry?
14. Who was Miss Pym?
15. Who was Rezia?
16. Who informed Clarissa that Richard would lunch out that day with Lady Bruton?
17. What did Peter do when he met first time to Clarissa after five years in India?
18. What was the habit of Peter to play with?
19. How old was Peter Walsh?
20. Who was Daisy?
21. What did the boys in military uniform represent?
22. What was the business of Rezia's sister?
23. Who was Evans?
24. Whom did Septimus love before he married Rezia?
25. What was the secret of Septimus?
26. Where did Sally Seton live?
27. Why did Clarissa hate Hugh?
28. Where did Hugh work?
29. What was the feminine gift of Clarissa?
30. How was Sylvia killed?
31. What did the song 'If someone should see that what matter they?' mean?
32. What was Miss Isabel Pole?
33. What was the subject of Isabel's lecture?

34. Why did Septimus marry Rezia?
35. Who advised Rezia to consult Sir William Bradshaw?
36. Why did Lady Bradshaw feel bored with life?
37. Why did Rezia hate Sir William Bradshaw?
38. Whom did Lady Bruton invite for lunch?
39. Who was Miss Brush?
40. Why did Lady Bruton invite two friends together for lunch?
41. Why did Sally Seton say that Richard will never be in the cabinet?
42. Why did Mrs. Dalloway give parties?
43. How was the atmosphere when Elizabeth was returning home?
44. For whom Rezia was making a hat?
45. How did Septimus end his life?
46. How old was Daisy?
47. Who is the symbol of the majesty of England?
48. Who brought the news of Septimus' death to the party?
49. What is the theme of the novel?
50. What are the deficiencies of Clarissa?
51. Why did Clarissa marry Richard rather than Peter?
52. How old was Lady Lexham?
53. Who lectured on Milton?
54. Who was Lady Rosseter?
55. How old was Sally?
56. How did Clarissa hide her dress when Peter came?

B) Choose the correct alternative and complete the following sentences:

1. *Mrs. Dalloway* was published in _____
a. 1920 b. 1922 c. 1925 d. 1927
2. Mrs. Dalloway was _____ years old.
a. fifty b. fifty-two c. fifty-four d. fifty-six
3. _____ was the maid servant of Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway.
a. Mary b. Sally c. Lucy c. Cury
4. _____ was an intimate friend of Mrs. Dalloway whom she did not marry.
a. Hugh b. Peter c. Richard d. William
5. _____ was Mrs. Dalloway's girlhood friend of special beauty.
a. Mary b. Sally c. Lucy d. Rezia
6. Mrs. Dalloway had a daughter named _____
a. Kilman b. Elizabeth c. Rezia d. Lucy
7. Rezia was _____ years old.
a. twenty b. twenty-two c. twenty-four d. twenty-six
8. Rezia was from _____ country.
a. Italy b. England c. India d. America
9. An aeroplane overhead in the sky was advertising _____
a. coffee b. toffee c. coca-cola d. zandu balm
10. Lady Bruton was _____
a. young b. middle-aged c. old d. a child
11. Clarissa Decided to wear _____ dress for the evening party.
a. a green b. a pink c. a black d. a blue
12. Peter Walsh returned England after _____ years in India.
a. three b. five c. seven d. two

13. After five years in India, Peter finds London _____
a. ugly b. dirty c. beautiful d. good
14. Rezia lived happily five years ago with her sisters in _____
a. Washington b. Tokiyo c. London d. Milan
15. _____ said, "Now we will kill ourselves".
a. Dr Holmes b. Isabel c. Septimus d. Rezia
16. Septimus fancied that Evans was dressed in _____
a. grey b. blue c. black d. white
17. _____ was the sister of Clarissa.
a. Elizabeth b. Lucy c. Elyvan d. Sylvia
18. Clarissa was fond of playing _____ in her young age.
a. tennis b. hockey c. cricket d. basket ball
19. _____ sang the song 'If someone should see that what matter they?'
a. Clarissa b. Peter c. old woman d. Kilman
20. Clarissa finished mending her dress at _____ o'clock.
a. eleven b. twelve c. one d. two
21. Dr William Bradshaw lived at _____
a. Harley Street b. Regent's Park c. Victoria Street d. Piccadilly
22. Sir William was the son of _____
a. a teacher b. an advocate c. a doctor d. a shopkeeper
23. Sir William had _____ years experience of his profession.
a. twenty b. twenty-five b. thirty d. thirty-five
24. Lady Bruton was very much interested in _____
a. politics b. education c. culture d. cooperative world
25. Lady Bruton wanted to draft a letter to _____
a. The Mirror b. The Indian Express c. the Times d. the Caverly

26. _____ possessed the art of writing letters to the Times.
a. Richard b. Clarissa c. Peter d. Hugh
27. _____ was not very wise, intelligent but decent, simple and affectionate.
a. Richard b. Clarissa c. Peter d. Hugh
28. Having lunch with Lady Bruton, Richard purchased _____ for Clarissa.
a. gold b. gems c. flowers d. sweet
29. After lunch with Lady Bruton, Richard returned home at _____.
a. 2.00 pm b. 2.30 pm c. 3.00 pm d. 3.30 pm
30. While giving flowers to Clarissa, Richard wanted to say _____
a. I hate you b. I love you c. good morning d. I detest you
31. Elizabeth was _____ years old.
a. fifteen b. sixteen c. seventeen d. eighteen
32. Miss Kilman taught _____ to Elizabeth.
a. history b. politics c. geography d. civics
33. _____ thinks young men are silly.
a. Kilman b. Elizabeth c. Clarissa d. Rezia
34. Elizabeth would like to _____ or _____
a. a doctor, a farmer b. a doctor, a lawyer
c. an advocate, a farmer d. an engineer, a lawyer
35. The story of *Mrs. Dalloway* took place within _____
a. a single day b. a week c. a month d. a year
36. _____ was a cook at Clarissa's house.
a. Lucy b. Mrs Walker c. Mrs Bruton d. Kilman
37. _____ was Clarissa's aunt.
a. Mrs Walkar b. Lady Bradshaw c. Helen Peary d. Rezia Smith
38. _____ might be the cause of the death of Septimus.
a. Dr. Bradshaw b. Lady Bruton c. Dr. Holmes d. Rezia

39. *Mrs. Dalloway* is a fine example of _____ novel.
 a. historical b. romantic c. gothic d. stream of consciousness
40. _____ was called Clarissa the 'perfect hostess'.
 a. Richard b. William c. Peter d. Hugh
41. _____ represents possessive love and corrupt religion.
 a. Miss Kilman b. Mrs Walker c. Lady Bruton d. Miss Pym
42. _____ was dressed in a green mackintosh coat.
 a. Mrs Walker b. Miss Kilman c. Lady Bruton d. Miss Pym
43. _____ wanted to possess the soul of Elizabeth.
 a. Miss Kilman b. Mrs Walker c. Lady Bruton d. Miss Pym
44. Richard described _____ to Clarissa as 'an intolerable ass'.
 a. Septimus b. Hugh c. Peter d. Holmes
45. Sally Seton married a rich _____
 a. lawyer b. doctor c. farmer d. industrialist
46. _____ became the conventional mother of five enormous boys at Eton.
 a. Mrs Walkar b. Lady Bradshaw c. Sally Seton d. Rezia Smith
47. 'To combine, to create' is the mission of _____ in the life.
 a. Clarissa b. Lady Bradshaw c. Sally Seton d. Rezia Smith
48. *Mrs. Dalloway* is largely a _____ novel.
 a. optimistic b. pessimistic c. scientific d. farcical
49. _____ were the victims of Sir William Bradshaw and Dr Holmes.
 a. Neighbours b. Relatives c. Patients d. None of them
50. Virginia Woolf has shown her distaste for religious possessiveness through _____
 a. Lucy b. Mrs Walker c. Mrs Bruton d. Kilman
51. Lady Bradshaw did not spend her leisure in _____
 a. catching fish b. embroidery c. watching tv d. knitting

5.7 Some broad questions with model answers:

A) How did Virginia Woolf depict the impact of war on human sensibility in *Mrs. Dalloway*?

Ans: The two World Wars proved a tremendous impact on Virginia Woolf. With her sensitive awareness of the horrors and devastation of these global conflicts she could not certainly have squeezed life into the convention of comedy without an outrageous falsification of the contemporary social reality.

Virginia Woolf whose novels are a mirror of twentieth century sensibility, saw life in the raw. She had an acute awareness of the indescribable horror and suffering of war.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* Septimus Warren Smith represents the generation which has survived the devastating effects of war. A shell-shocked soldier, Septimus becomes a universal character representing a generation of young men driven by the harrowing experience of war to seek release from mental torture in suicide. Septimus, a promising, romantic and idealistic young man, goes to London for intellectual and emotional sustenance. He reads Shakespeare, Dante and Shaw and falls in love with Isabel Pole who lectures on Shakespeare. As a clerk in an estate agent's office, he impresses his employer by his ability and efficiency. But then, as he attends the evening classes, the war-drums begin to beat. Septimus is one of the first to volunteer. He proves a remarkably brave soldier and serves the army with great distinction. He goes to France with thoughts of saving an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays and Isabel Pole. In the course of his career as a soldier he learns to value friendship and just as his relationship with Isabel Pole has been one of love as an idealized experience, his friendship with Evans proves to be a source of perfect emotional fulfillment. But Evans gets killed in the war leaving Septimus distressingly alone. As the war ends and the dead are buried, Septimus has a queer experience. He becomes aware of great change in respect of his emotional response. He could not feel. As he opened the door of the room where the Italian girls sat making hats, he could see them; could hear them; they were rubbing wires among coloured beads in saucers; they were turning buckram shapes this way and that; the table was all strewn with feathers, spangles, silks, ribbons; scissors were rapping on the table; but something failed him; he could not feel.

Neither love nor friendship is a thrilling experience to him now. His relationship with Lucrezia, his wife, is totally devoid of the emotional warmth he had experienced

with Isabel pole. Even while sitting close to each other, they have a sense of yawning gap. Both have feeling of alienation and loneliness.

The death of Evans also means nothing emotionally. They have been good friends. It was a case of two dogs playing on a hearth-rug; one worrying a paper screw, snarling, snapping, giving a pinch, now and then at the old dog's ear; the other lying somnolent, blinking at the fire, raising a paw, turning and growling god-temperedly. They had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other. But when Evans was killed just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognizing that here was the end of friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably.

The War, however, had taught him to take shell explosions and consequent death, with indifference. Love and friendship had lost all, the warmth and thrill.

Septimus realizes with shock that human beings have neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond what serves to increase the pleasure of the moment. They hunt in packs. Their packs scour the desert and vanish screaming into the wilderness. They desert the fallen. They are plastered over with grimaces.

That Virginia Woolf did not consider Septimus' view of life altogether wrong and meriting contemptuous rejection becomes increasingly clear as the novel moves to a close. Clarissa's first reaction to the news of Septimus' suicide is one of anger that death should have been mentioned at her party. But howsoever hard she may try to ignore the painful fact of death by keeping herself engaged in laughter and idle gossip, the reality of it is inescapable. Septimus' death proves in a sense a moment of vision for Mrs. Dalloway.

Septimus Warren Smith represents those who suffer because of their lonely pursuit of vision. The ex-soldier, thus, becomes a tragic figure who even after having survived the war has no chance of honourable living. One of the motives that cause war is to motive to dominate. Holmes and Bradshaw represent the spirit of tyranny, forcing people to live in a manner they consider right. Septimus rebels against their tyranny. He would not submit to their idea of normality and proportion. With a pretence of solicitude for his health they would invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stone six come out weighing twelve. But he would not let them violate the integrity of his spirit. If

escape from tyranny becomes altogether impossible, he has no alternative but to embrace death.

The tragic effect of Septimus Warren Smith's life and death is heightened when Rezia, the frustrated Italian wife, is unable to know the cause of his suffering. Rezia is fascinated by London and its horses. She has married Septimus in order to lead a better life. She had a beautiful home in Milan where things had been pretty happy. Hat-making kept her busy and gave her calling. Her marriage with Septimus, however, gives her no sense of meaningful companionship. Her agony finds expression in silent gazes, gestures of despair and stifled verbal articulation. "Everyone gives up something when they marry. She had given up her home". She wishes to have children. Even after four or five years of married life she has not become a mother. Septimus refuses to have children. One cannot perpetuate suffering or increase the breed of the lustful animals that men are. Rezia thus suffers silently and all alone. Neither her husband nor the larger world has any idea of what she has been doing through.

There are moments when she feels that it is quite possible for them to get restored to the bliss of their early married life. A trifling joke reminiscent of the earlier times made her perfectly happy. She would not let anybody separate them. The world, however, must go its own tyrannical way. Though she bars the passage for Holmes saying that she would not allow him to see her husband, the doctor pushes his way up. The result is Septimus's jump to death. Rezia runs to the window, she see and understands what has happened. What is really tragic about her is not her husband's suicide so much as the unfriendly manner in which the world treats them. Rezia provides a deep insight into Virginia Woolf's view of the essential nature of human tragedy.

B) "One of the basic concerns of Virginia Woolf as a novelist is the failure of ideals". Discuss.

Ans: Characters in the novels of Virginia Woolf fall into two distinct groups-the young and the old. The young have ideals and aspirations. They think not so much in terms of personal advancement as of improving the world in which they live. As they look around, they see misery and pain on all side and feel distressed by the spectacle of human suffering. They realize also that poverty and squalor are a result of man's

folly and it is not at all difficult to rectify the situation if only men act unitedly for setting things right.

In Mrs. Dalloway the failure of ideals is quite perceptible in the character of Clarissa. We are provided a glimpse of Clarissa's past through the stream of consciousness of her onetime lover Peter Walsh. As a young girl she had been remarkably sensitive to beauty. The beauty of nature fascinated her most. She impressed people as an intelligent young woman who could know men and women simply by instinct. She gave evidence of keen interest in poetry and politics which she discussed frequently with Peter and Sally Seton. She loved independence and thirsted to lead a life of her own even after marriage. She refused to marry Peter Walsh even though she loved him, for she feared that it would mean a sacrifice of freedom which she prized so highly. She had deep love for Sally Seton, a friend and companion of her youth. But all this is a matter of the past. As we see her in her middle age, she hardly reveals any enthusiasm for her earlier pursuits. She is never seen reading a book except a few memories. She has lost her former interest in poetry and politics. Social gatherings and parties are a source of greater pleasure to her now. But these can be no substitutes for what she has lost. Peter Walsh feels that the entire pattern of Clarissa's life now is determined by her notion of what the wife of a rising politician should do in order to help him in his political career. This is how he interprets Clarissa's activities.

Another character in the novel, and Clarissa's early love, Sally Seton, is also an idealist in her youth. She is a radical. She reads Plato and Shelley. Her youthful ambition is to work for a total change in social life she discusses poetry and politics with eagerness and enthusiasm.

Sally Seton ridicules conservatism wherever it is manifest. She has strong abhorrence for convention, rules and authority. She expresses her sense of revolt against conventionalism by smoking cigars. We find her outrageously frank. She does not mind hurting Hugh Whitbread by telling him that he represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class life. She told him that she considered him responsible for the state of those poor girls in Piccadilly. She found him thoroughly superficial. He had read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing. The stable boys had more life in them than Hugh. He was a perfect specimen of the public-school type. No country but England could have produced him.

The portrait of Sally we have here is that of a rebel against the middle-class values. As a young girl she has known hunger and privation and the spirit of revolt against the propertied class is quite in keeping with the background of her life. But when we meet Sally at Clarissa's party, she is an altogether different woman. She is now in her middle age. She married a bald millionaire and is the mother of five sons. Clarissa in those days of their intimate friendship had thought that Sally Seton's career was bound to end in some awful tragedy: her death; her martyrdom. Instead of which she had married, quite unexpectedly, a bald man with a large buttonhole who owned, it was said, cotton mills at Manchester. And she had five boys!

Sally shows no sign of her former idealism any more. All her old fire is gone. She has resigned herself to a meek submission to the convention of the class to which she now belongs. She loves wealth and worldly success. She is now Lady Ressestor, and a mere ghost of her previous fiery, idealist self.

It was with this hope that he went to India. But years later when he returns to England, he is a dejected man with a painful consciousness that his entire life has been a failure. As a young man Peter went to Oxford and dreamt of an ideal life of beauty and joy. In his retrospection many years later he painfully realizes the failure of his dream. He had had been a socialist. But, then, his social ideals had come to nothing. Still the future of civilization lies, he thought, in the hands of young men like that; of young men such as he was, thirty years ago; with their love of abstract principles; getting books sent out to them all the way from London to a peak in the Himalayas; reading science; reading philosophy.

It is obvious that Peter has lost his youthful hope and enthusiasm. Virginia Woolf sets very sharply and suggestively the ideals of a young man against the quantum of his achievement, rather non-achievement, in life. In this respect Peter Walsh joins hands with John Hirst and Jacob Flanders of the two earlier novels. Virginia Woolf always makes us deeply aware of the hiatus between the dream and reality in respect of the youthful ideas. If Peter Walsh sheds tears it is because his life has been a failure and not because he meets after a long time the woman whom he once loved. There is some talk between Peter and Clarissa. But after a few brief questions and answers each lapses into his or her own private thoughts. Peter Walsh also thinks of Burton, his love for Clarissa and his subsequent love affair in India. All the time he is tormented by the idea that he has made a mess of life and that his talents and powers have gone waste.

Failure has an altogether different meaning in the world of Septimus. Young Septimus had gone to war with a sense of total dedication to the ideal of freedom which he believed, was seriously threatened by the German hordes. He felt that the defeat of England and its allies would mean a deadly blow to all those ideals and values of life which supported human culture. The grim experiences of war, however, give him a new vision of truth. War, he realizes now, is always a destructive process. Its impact on human sensibility is invariably disastrous. Septimus also had been a potential poet like Peter Walsh. But he cannot reach outside himself and thus the poetry he dictates to Rezia becomes hallucinatory, indrawn, with merely occasional patches of beauty. He cannot fall in love like Peter who though middle-aged, can still fall passionately in love. He has had the undaunted optimism of Jacob but the war has caused an irreparable damage to his psyche and the shell shocked soldier seeking a refuge, withdraws himself into the deeper layers of his mind. He suffers from the sense of guilt at having been unable to feel sad at the death of his friend. His whole life seems to be stricken by a strange sense of inertia from which even his marriage cannot save him. He is not able to bring the depth of his emotion to the expressive surface.

When finally Septimus is able to express himself, he does so in an explosive, self-destructive violence of revolt against society and marriage. His refusal to give Rezia a child and his hostility towards society are the distorted parallels of Clarissa's coldness and prudishness. As her double Septimus may also be said to atone for Clarissa's guilt arising from her power-drives (her love of authority and society) by his rebellion against these forces. The novel ends with Clarissa achieving a sense of identity with this young stranger. She seems to believe that Septimus in his madness has defied the society and its constricting conventions which, in her case, have imprisoned her and turned her into a snobbish hostess.

The novel ends with a clear sense of failure in the life of both Septimus and Clarissa. Clarissa may appear happy and contented with her wealth, but she has a vivid awakening to the serious inadequacy of her life. It is an inadequacy resulting from the absence of ideals and values which alone could make living meaningful. The absence of ideals and values war has destroyed.

5.8 Glossary and Notes:

- ③ **plunge** (n) : dive, to involve deeply
- ③ **grumpiness** (n) : practical good sense and ability, courage
- ③ **stiff** (v) : to become hard
- ③ **kerb** (n) : narrow place in verandah
- ③ **trudge** (v): to walk with effort
- ③ **dowager** (n) : a woman with title or property from her dead husband
- ③ **instinct** (n) : in born tendency, a natural feeling
- ③ **interminable** (adj) : unending, endless
- ③ **tweed** (n) : a coarse woolen cloth
- ③ **mackintosh coat** (n) : a raincoat, a waterproof coat
- ③ **iris** (n) : the circle round the pupil of the eye
- ③ **implore** (v) : to beg earnestly for
- ③ **preening** (v) : to smooth with the beak
- ③ **fling** (v) : to throw; to rush violently (past form : flung)
- ③ **sardonically** (adv) : scornfully, mockingly
- ③ **gentry** (n) : the class of well-born and well-bred people
- ③ **guaze** (n) : a very thin cloth
- ③ **spasm** (n) : a violent contraction of muscles, a sudden shock
- ③ **fidelity** (n) : faithfulness, loyalty
- ③ **swerving** (v) : turning aside
- ③ **perambulator** (n) : a small four-wheeled carriage in which a baby is pushed about
- ③ **benignant** (adj) : kind, here favourable
- ③ **eddied** (v) : to move in small circles
- ③ **flounder** (v) : to struggle vainly

- ③ **marmalade** (n) : a preserve made from pulp of oranges
- ③ **scud** (v) : to move swiftly
- ③ **susceptibility** (n) : sensitiveness, readiness to receive impressions
- ③ **incredible** (adj) : unbelievable, surprising
- ③ **conglomerate** (v) : to gather together in a mass
- ③ **mitigate** (v) : to make mild, to soften
- ③ **presumably** (adv) : probably
- ③ **snivel** (v) : to run at the nose, to affect a fearful state
- ③ **pother** (n) : noise, confusion
- ③ **rivulet** (n) : a very small stream
- ③ **spangle** (n) : a small thin circular piece of glittering metal
- ③ **squabble** (n) : a petty quarrel
- ③ **intoxication** (n) : drunkenness
- ③ **perpetuate** (v) : to keep from being forgotten
- ③ **grimace** (n) : an ugly or funny smile
- ③ **porridge** (n) : a semi-liquid food made by boiling oatmeal in water or milk
- ③ **incessant** (adj) : never ceasing, continual
- ③ **fugitive** (adj) : running away, passing swiftly
- ③ **impulse** (n) : a thrust, a sudden inclination, a push
- ③ **infallible** (adj) : free from error, reliable, sure
- ③ **acquiesce** (v) : to accept, to agree quietly
- ③ **genially** (adv) : cheerfully
- ③ **fraternally** (adv) : brotherly
- ③ **swoop** (v) : to make a sudden attack, to rush at
- ③ **impeccable** (adj) : faultless
- ③ **exquisite** (adj) : very lovely, acute

- ③ **pedigree** (n) : a list of ancestors, a family tree
- ③ **rectitude** (n) : honesty, moral virtue
- ③ **lugubriously** (adv) : sadly, gloomily
- ③ **emigration** (n) : leaving one's country
- ③ **emancipation** (n) : liberation, freedom
- ③ **costermonger** (nn) : a hawker of fruit or vegetables
- ③ **hyacinth** (n) : a spring plant
- ③ **smattering** (n) : slight knowledge
- ③ **primeval** (adj) : original, primitive
- ③ **gigantic** (adj) : very huge, mighty
- ③ **vanquish** (v) : to get the better of, to defeat, to overcome
- ③ **satchel** (n) : a small bag of leather
- ③ **robust** (adj) : strong and healthy, sturdy
- ③ **impetuous** (adj) : violent, acting rashly
- ③ **hatchet** (n) : a small light axe
- ③ **scourge** (v) : to punish
- ③ **buckram** (n) : coarse cloth stiffened with paste
- ③ **rhododendron** (n) : an evergreen shrub
- ③ **morbid** (adj) : unhealthy, diseased
- ③ **transcendental theory** : this theory considers the supernatural things, the ideas beyond human knowledge
- ③ **stubble** (adj) : fields with short rough growth of cut crop
- ③ **scour** (v) : to clean by hard rubbing
- ③ **renunciation** (n) : rejection, giving up
- ③ **frivolity** (n) : silly behaviour
- ③ **precinct** (n) : environs (pl), boundary

- ③ **bauble** (n) : a showy trifle
- ③ **chaf** (v) : to get angry, to make angry
- ③ **scribbler** (n) : one who scribbles, here a petty author
- ③ **apricot** (n) : a pale round orange-coloured fruit
- ③ **indomitable** (adj) : unyielding, invincible
- ③ **effusive** (adj) : too emotional
- ③ **insatiable** (adj) : very greedy

5.9 Key to check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/phrase/sentence

1. Mrs Clarissa Dalloway
2. member of parliament
3. Westminster (London)
4. the end of the World War I
5. June
6. London and Bourton
7. five
8. Evelyn
9. she looked like a girl of eighteen
10. Miss Doris Kilman
11. dismissed from the school as school-teacher
12. flowers
13. the florist
14. the saleswoman at the flower shop
15. the wife of Septimus
16. Lucy
17. kissed the hands of Clarissa

18. big pocket-knife
19. fifty-two
20. the major's wife in the Indian Army
21. the world of duty, military glory
22. making hats
23. a friend of Septimus killed in the war
24. Miss Isabel Pole
25. the trees are alive
26. in a larger house at Manchester
27. because once he tried to kiss her in the smoking room
28. at court
29. of making a world of her own
30. by the falling of a tree
31. good fortune
32. lecturer
33. Shakespeare
34. to find security
35. Dr Holmes
36. because she acted exactly as her husband wanted
37. he wanted to separate her from her Septimus
38. both Richard and Hugh
39. secretary of Lady Bruton
40. to help her draft a letter to the Times
41. because he had a second-class mind
42. to bring people together and make them happy
43. cloudy

44. Mrs Filmer's married daughter
45. throwing himself from a window
46. twenty-four
47. The Prime Minister
48. Lady Bradshaw
49. the problem of individuality related to time and death
50. cannot play piano, not a writer
51. Richard respected her soul, allowed her attic room and loneliness
52. seventy-five
53. Professor Briely
54. Sally Seton after her marriage
55. fifty-five
56. like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy

B) Choose the correct alternatives

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. 1925 | 2. fifty |
| 3. Lucy | 4. Peter |
| 5. Sally | 6. Elizabeth |
| 7. twenty-four | 8. Italy |
| 9. toffee | 10. old |
| 11. a green | 12. five |
| 13. beautiful | 14. Milan |
| 15. Septimus | 16. grey |
| 17. Sylvia | 18. hockey |
| 19. old woman | 20. twelve |
| 21. Harley Street | 22. a shopkeeper |
| 23. thirty | 24. politics |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 25. the Times | 26. Hugh |
| 27. Richard | 28. flowers |
| 29. 3.00 pm | 30. I love you |
| 31. seventeen | 32. history |
| 33. Elizabeth | 34. a doctor, a farmer |
| 35. a single day | 36. Mrs Walker |
| 37. Helen Peary | 38. Dr Bradshaw |
| 39. stream of consciousness | 40. Peter |
| 41. Miss Kilman | 42. Miss Kilman |
| 43. Miss Kilman | 44. Hugh |
| 45. industrialist | 46. Sally |
| 47. Clarissa | 48. pessimistic |
| 49. patients | 50. Miss Kilman |
| 51. watching tv | |

5.10 Exercises:

1. Discuss the salient features of Virginia Woolf as a writer of fiction with special reference to *Mrs. Dalloway*.
2. Discuss comic elements and irony in *Mrs. Dalloway*.
3. Comment on the structure of *Mrs. Dalloway*.
4. Write a note on symbols used in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.
5. Comment on the role of party in *Mrs. Dalloway*.
6. Bring out the contrast of women characters in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.
7. 'The method by which layer upon layer of Clarissa's character is revealed holds good for all the other figures in the novel'. Discuss.
8. Point out the theme/s of the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.
9. '*Mrs. Dalloway* is a totally different kind of novel as far as the stream of consciousness technique is concerned'. Illustrate

10. 'Mrs. Dalloway is a satirical commentary on contemporary civilization'. Do you agree? If yes, explain it with examples.
11. Write a note on Virginia Woolf's theory of the novel.

5.11 Further Reading

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3. Haule, J. (1982). Melymbrosia: An Early Version of "The Voyage out". *Contemporary Literature*, 23, 100–104.
4. Blamires, Harry (1983) *A Guide to twentieth century literature in English* Routledge p307.
5. Lyndall Gordon. *Virginia Woolf: A Writer's Life* New York: Norton, 1984; 1991.
6. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman. *The Invisible Presence: Virginia Woolf and the Mother-Daughter Relationship* Louisiana State University Press, 1986.

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Unit-6

The Caretaker : Harold Pinter's

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6.0 Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit, you will:

- ③ know about the life and works of Harold Pinter
- ③ know about the plot of the play
- ③ learn the characters in the play
- ③ learn the themes and other aspects in the play
- ③ be able to answer the question on the play

6.1 Introduction:

This unit begins with the discussion of the life and works of Harold Pinter. It also studies *The Caretaker* in terms of plot, characters, themes and other aspects of the play.

6.2 Life and works of Harold Pinter:

Harold Pinter was born on 10 October 1930, in Hackney, East London in a working class family. His father, Hyman (Jack) Pinter, was a ladies' tailor and mother, a housewife. Both of his parents were Jewish. Harold was the only child to this Jewish family. Harold's life may have been comfortable at home, but it was not easy for a Jewish boy in London during 1930s. The area was a racial melting pot; the Jewish community had to come to London to save themselves from persecution in European countries. 1930s was the time of economic depression, which led to political and racial unrest. The growing Fascist movement posed a threat to Jew community. The period witnessed the violence between Fascist and their enemies. The conflicts continued for many years which had started from the First World War. The brooding menaces, that we find in Pinter's many plays, may be the result of this conflict that Pinter has witnessed and experienced in his life.

As the war broke out between England and Germany; thousands of London children were evacuated to other places. Harold was also evacuated to a castle in Cornwell to avoid the fears of German bombing. At the age of 14, he returned to London. Pinter himself has said "The condition of being bombed has never left me". Pinter was educated at Hackney Downs Grammar School where he acted in school productions. Joseph Brealey, the English teacher, inspired him a lot and directed him in his school plays. Pinter managed to get admission in the ideal Royal Academy of

Dramatic Art (RADA) in London. However, he could not continue to study there for more than two terms. He was unhappy because the other students were too sophisticated. He felt depressed and left RADA. He kept his parents in darkness about what had happened. When he was eighteen years old, he was asked to join national service of armed forces. He was fined for denying joining the services. At school one of Pinter's main intellectual interests was English literature; particularly poetry. When he was just 12 years old, he published his poems in school magazine. He also read works of Franz Kafka and Ernest Hemingway. In 1950, Pinter started to publish poems in *Poetry* under the name Harold Pinta. He worked as a bit-part actor. In 1950, two incidents marked his life. One was that he published his two poems in *Poetry London* and the second; he undertook professional activity as an actor. In 1951, he joined academy of actors. Then he was selected to appear in season of classic plays. He strongly believed in friendship which became vital in his life. Family, love and sex, drinking, reading, writing were his other interests.

Pinter was offered to write a play for a friend. He wrote *The Room* and it was produced by the Drama Department of University of Bristol. He received good comments for the play that he had written. Then, he submitted his *The Dum Waiter* and *The Birthday Party*. The play *The Birthday Party* was badly criticized by critics except Harold Hobson. Hobson supported Pinter's play saying as absorbing, witty, and fascinating. The real breakthrough came in Pinter's life with *The Caretaker*. It was *The Caretaker* that established Pinter's reputation. The play was performed in Germany, France and the United States.

His life can be divided into two phases. The first phase is up to 1957; when he was a successful actor with the name of David Baron. Though, in the second phase he continued to act, his main interest was to work as a dramatist. He is recognized as one of the greatest playwrights of England.

Pinter married Vivien Merchant, the actress. For a time, they lived in Notting Hill Gate in a slum. Eventually, Pinter managed to borrow some money and changed the home. His wife Vivien frequently appeared in his plays. As his first marriage ended in 1980, Pinter remarried Lady Antonia Fraser, wife of MP Hugh Fraser. The divorce separated Pinter from his son Daniel. Vivien Merchant died in 1982.

His literary career can be divided in three parts. They are as follows:

1. Pre-Second World War

2. The Post- War
3. The mid 1960s onwards.

Pinter's work indirectly presents the influence of pre-war and post-war incidents. The countries like Britain were under the threat of bombing raids. Therefore in some of Pinter's plays the enemy is faceless. The sense of rootless, loneliness and isolation can be seen in the characters. In his early plays, the audience is made to laugh, but at the same time they are threatened by the violent presence that destroys central character; where as in later plays there is less violence and less obscurity. He talks of his characters and makes them naturalistic. Thus, Pinter is an author that will continue to be admired as great playwright.

Pinter was a playwright, director, actor, poet and political activist. He has written 31 plays and he is considered the most influential modern British dramatist. His language was named as Pinteresque. He was the fellow of Royal Society of Literature and an honorary fellow of Modern Language Association of America. He has received honorary degrees from fourteen universities. The awards like Shakespeare Prize, David Cohen Prize (1995) and Companion of Honour (2002) were given to him. He was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005. He died on 24 December 2008 at the age of 78 in London. His best known plays are *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*, *Betrayal*, *The Dumb Waiter*, etc.

His plays:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ▶ <u>The Room</u> (1957) | ▶ <u>Old Times</u> (1970) |
| ▶ <u>The Birthday Party</u> (1957) | ▶ <u>Monologue</u> (1972) |
| ▶ <u>The Dumb Waiter</u> (1957) | ▶ <u>No Man's Land</u> (1974) |
| ▶ <u>A Slight Ache</u> (1958) | ▶ <u>Betrayal</u> (1978) |
| ▶ <u>The Hothouse</u> (1958) | ▶ <u>Family Voices</u> (1980) |
| ▶ <u>The Caretaker</u> (1959) | ▶ <u>Other Places</u> (1982) |
| ▶ <u>A Night Out</u> (1959) | ▶ <u>A Kind of Alaska</u> (1982) |
| ▶ <u>Night School</u> (1960) | ▶ <u>Victoria Station</u> (1982) |
| ▶ <u>The Dwarfs</u> (1960) | ▶ <u>One For The Road</u> (1984) |

- ▶ The Collection (1961)
- ▶ The Lover (1962)
- ▶ Tea Party (1964)
- ▶ The Homecoming (1964)
- ▶ The Basement (1966)
- ▶ Landscape (1967)
- ▶ Silence (1968)
- ▶ Mountain Language (1988)
- ▶ The New World Order (1991)
- ▶ Party Time (1991)
- ▶ Moonlight (1993)
- ▶ Ashes to Ashes (1996)
- ▶ Celebration (1999)
- ▶ Remembrance of Things Past(2000)

6.2.1 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:

- 1) Harold Pinter's father was a _____.
a) goldsmith b) tailor c) cook d) none
- 2) _____ inspired and directed Pinter in his school plays.
a) Joseph Brealey b) Jack c) Hobson d) his mother
- 3) Pinter published his poems under the name _____.
a) Pinter b) Harold c) Jew d) Harold Pinta
- 4) Pinter married the actress _____.
a) Julia b) Vivien Merchant c) Maria d) Elizabeth
- 5) The real breakthrough came in Pinter's life with _____.
a) *The Birthday Party* b) *The Caretaker* c) *Betrayal* d) *The Room*

B) Fill in the blanks :

1. The war broke out between -----
2. Harold was evacuated to a castle in ----- to avoid the fears of German bombing.
3. RADA stands for-----.
4. Pinter was selected to appear in season of -----.
5. Pinter was awarded ----- Prize for literature in 2005.

C) Answer in a word/ phrase /sentence:

1. When did Pinter start to publish his poems in *Poetry*?
2. Where was Harold Pinter born?
3. Why was Pinter evacuated?
4. What are the three distinct periods of Pinter's literary career?
5. Why did Pinter leave RADA?

6.3 Summary of the play:

The Caretaker has three-acts. The play involves interactions among three persons – Aston, Davies and Mick. Aston is mentally weak. He has invited Davies, a homeless man, in his apartment. Davies unwillingly accepts all the offers. Davies tells to Aston that his real name is not Bernard Jenkins. It is his assumed name. His real name is Mac Davies. Davies mutters in sleep so Aston complains. Davies denies. As soon as Aston leaves the room, Davies searches something in Aston's stuff, but he is interrupted by Mick. Davies tells about himself to Mick. Mick also explains his work and declares that he is the real owner of the apartment. Though Aston is unable to speak fluently, he is very co-operative. He helps Davies by various ways. Davies accepts help as if it is his right. He is not happy with what he gets. He is offered the job of caretaker. When he knows that Mick is real owner of the apartment, he plans against Aston. He calls Aston mad. He tries to throw away Aston. But Mick takes the side of his brother and forces Davies to go out of the apartment.

6.3.1 Source of the play:

Harold Pinter wrote the sixth play *The Caretaker* for stage. It was published by Encoring Publishing and Eyre Methuen in 1960. It was significant commercial success. Pinter comments:

I went into a room and saw one person standing up and one person sitting down, and few weeks later I wrote *The Room*. I went into another room and saw two people sitting down, and a few years later I wrote *The Birthday Party*. I looked through a door into a third room and saw two people standing up and I wrote *The Caretaker*.

6.3.2 Characters in the play:

Mick: A man in his late twenties, the owner of the apartment / room and engaged in building trade

Aston: A man in his early thirties, Mick's brother, mentally retarded, but kind hearted person

Davies: the old tramp who lives in Aston's room

6.3.3 Act-wise summary of the play:

ACT – I

Scene I

Mick is alone in a room which is full of an old furniture and an assortment of odd items. When Aston and Davies come, he leaves silently without giving any hint of his presence in the room. Aston is living in his brother's apartment and is entrusted with the task of renovating it. Aston welcomes Davies and speaks a few words. Davies is a tramp who comes with Aston. Aston offers him tobacco which Davies accepts for his pipe. He begins to complain about the condition of the café where he was working. Davies denied taking a bucket of rubbish outside, so he was dismissed from the job. Aston, who was present in the café at the time, saved Davies from the fight and invites him to live with him in his room until he gets some settlement. As Davies enters into the room, he is offered certain things like pair of shoes. But Davies seems to reject the offers. He comments on the apartment as it was badly kept. When Davies comes to Aston, he says that he has forgotten his bag in the café. Then Davies tells about his wife. He tells that he left his wife because she was found washing her underclothes in a saucepan used for cooking vegetables.

Then, Aston talks about the apartment. Though Aston uses only one room, he is in charge of the whole apartment. Davies becomes upset knowing the fact that some of the rooms of the apartment are occupied by the foreigners (black people). Davies uses bad and harsh language for the black people, who live next to them. Davies continues to complain and says that he has no pair of shoes. Aston brings shoes and gives it to Davies. Davies tells a long story of begging a pair of shoes from a monastery where the monk told him to piss off. Then, Aston offers Davies a bed which Davies accepts, but seems unhappy with the condition of the bed. Aston and

Davies discuss about the place of sleeping and the bucket hanged to the ceiling to store dripping rain water from the leaky roof.

Aston tells about his dream of building a shed in the garden behind the apartment or house. Davies asks Aston about the statue of Lord Buddha which is kept on the shelf and begs some money from Aston. Davies then talks about how he must go to Sidcup to get his important papers. Sidcup is a place where Davies lived before and where he has kept all his documents. Davies tells that his name is Benard Jenkins. Through the conversations he makes clear that his real name is Mac Davies and not Bernard Jenkins. To prove that who he really is ; he needs the documents kept in Sidcup. He left these papers with someone before 15 years ago. Davies goes to bed and Aston is fiddling with a plug and a screwdriver.

Scene II

It is the next morning. Aston tells Davies that he was making noise or groaning in his sleep. Aston tells Davies that he could not sleep comfortably because of his muttering in the sleep. However, Davies denies that he made any noise. Davies does not accept the charge and blames the coloured people living and sleeping in the other rooms. Aston tells Davies that how a woman made a sexual appeal to him in a café.

Aston gets ready to go out for his business to buy a saw. He informs Davies that he trusts him and he can stay if he likes to stay. It was unexpected for Davies. But as soon as Aston leaves the room, Davies starts looking for something in Aston's stuff. At the same time Aston's brother, Mick enters the room and moves silently upstage, and then suddenly seizes Davies's arm and forces it up to his back. Davies screams because of pains. Mick wins the struggle between both of them. Here, act one ends with Mick's words "What's the game?"

Interpretation:

The play begins with mysterious and menacing atmosphere as Mick leaves silently when Aston and Davies enter the room. Mick's silent exit creates the interest, excitement, tension just after the play begins. Davies is quarrelsome. He always complains. Aston is monosyllabic. The future conflict is clear through Aston's charge against Davies and Davies's denial of it. Aston' leaving the key of room in Davies's hand, expresses Aston trustworthiness and good nature.

ACT – II

Scene I

Mick now interrogates Davies and tries to gather information about him. He tries to know why Davies has come in his room, as Mick is real owner of the room and apartment. Aston is his brother and he lives there. At one point Mick threatens Davies to take him to the police and surprisingly he gives Davies chance to buy the apartment.

Davies tells him that his name is Jenkins and he is born and bred in British Isles. Mick considers Davies as an old robber. Then, they discuss about the hanging bucket to the roof and the leaking roof and discuss how to stop the leaking roof. By the time, Aston enters with a new bag for Davies. They fight over the bag for the possession. This is the most comic scene in the play. Mick grabs it and threatens Davies; then Aston takes it; then Davies gets it. The bag passes through all the three. At last, Davies manages to take the bag and says that the bag belongs to him. Mick leaves the room and Davies considers him a joker.

Scene II

Aston tells Davies that Mick is his brother and engaged in building trade. Mick wishes to develop and improve the upper storey of the room, but he will do that only after Aston builds a shed in the garden. Davies comes to know that the bag, which Aston has brought does not belong to Davies. Aston tells Davies that it is the cheap bag. The bag contains two check shirts and a jacket. Davies rejects shirts but takes the jacket. Aston offers Davies the job of caretaker.

Scene III

Davies enters, closes the door and tries to switch the light on, off, on, off. The light has gone now. It is darkness in the room when Davies enters. He tries to light a match but drops down the match box. Somebody in darkness kicks the match box. Davies gets terrified, so he draws a knife. Then vacuum cleaner lights up and follows the terrified Davies across the room. The light goes on and it becomes clear that it was Mick in the darkness. It was Mick who has removed the bulb and scared Davies. Mick says that it was Mick's turn to clean the room. The only socket of the vacuum cleaner provided the light, so he was cleaning in the darkness.

Mick is friendly now towards Davies. He compliments and offers him a sandwich. He tells Davies that he is worried about Aston. According to Mick, Aston does not like to work. Davies supports what Mick says of Aston. Mick tells Davies that he was doing some spring cleaning and returned the bulb to its socket.

Mick suddenly changes his mood and becomes angry. He dislikes Davies. Again Mick surprisingly offers Davies the job of caretaker, which Davies accepts. Then they turn to absurd details of small financial agreement for his work of caretaking or looking after the place. A trip is likely to be made to Sidcup to get Davies' identity papers.

Mick asks Davies about his identity papers or proofs that Davies has kept in Sidcup. Davies asks Mick to provide him a pair of shoes, so that he will reach Sidcup to bring back the papers.

Scene IV

Aston wakes up Davies early. Davies had requested Aston last night to wake him up early as Davies wants to go to Sidcup to get the papers. So Aston wakes up Davies early. Davies gives the excuse of bad weather that morning. Davies immediately postpones his visit saying that the weather is not convincing.

That morning Davies complains about how badly he slept. For that he blames various aspects of the apartment. Davies complains about the drought from the window. Aston suggests some adjustment but Davies proves to be inflexible.

Then Aston tells his own story. Aston tells about café where he used to 'talk'. He also used to talk in the factory where he worked. But he had the problem of hallucination. People had started to speak about his problem. Against his wish, Aston was admitted to hospital and his mother signed the form. He tried to escape from there but failed to succeed. The doctors told that he needs a brain operation. Aston saw the doctors doing the operation of other patients, putting pincers connected to small machine round the patient's head. He was given shock therapy in a mental hospital. He was forced to get the operation or the electric shock treatment. That therapy did not succeed.

The shock therapy led him a permanent brain damaged. He lost thinking and talking ability. The operation changed him into a mentally retarded person. He says:

"I've often thought of going back and trying to find the man who did that to me. But I want to do something first. I want to build that shed out in the garden..."

This was Aston's monologue, the longest and climax of the play.

Interpretation:

Mick seems in love with words. Davies's entry is like an intruder in Mick's territory. So the fight between Mick and Davies is for rights over an area. Davies's identity depends on papers in Sidcup. Pinter continues the action from Act I to Act II. The possession of the bag scene is very funny. The vacuum cleaner scene chasing Davies is both comic and frightening. Though Davies is offered the job of the caretaker; it is Aston who serves as the caretaker for Davies. Davies's deceptive nature is exposed as he postpones his visit. Davies makes complete use of Aston's kindness. He accepts shoes as his right.

ACT – III

Scene I

Two days later, Davies is sitting in a chair with his jacket and talking to Mick, who is lying on the floor. Davies complains to Mick that Aston does not give him a knife to cut the bread and Aston ignores the dust in the room. Mick, without answering, talks of his dream of the house /apartment turning it into a well decorated palace. When Davies is eager to know who would live there, Mick tells him that "my brother and me would live there." Mick expects Davies to explain Mick's wish to Aston. But Davies denies saying that he cannot understand Aston. Davies continues to complain that he has no clock. Davies criticizes Aston and expects Mick to throw Aston off the apartment and handover complete responsibility to him. This leads Davies to point out Aston's inability to be social and every other aspect of Aston's behavior. Though he was a caretaker, Davies begins to disapprove. By the time Aston enters and offers another pair of shoes.

Davies indirectly suggests Mick to think of Davies as his partner. Therefore, Davies wants to know about Mick's living place. Mick says that Davies must come to the place and listen to some music.

Scene II

Mick leaves the room. Aston brings a pair of shoes to Davies. But, as usual Davies complains that the shoes do not fit him well. The shoes are black and Aston

offers brown laces. Davies accepts that grudgingly. Davies talks of his job and of his visit to Sidcup. Aston leaves quietly half-way through the speech of Davies. Davies becomes angry.

Scene III

It is night. Aston wakes Davies. Aston cannot sleep because of the noise that Davies makes in his sleep. Davies reacts angrily to this and abuses Aston. Davies calls Aston a mad person and draws a knife.

Aston says it is time for Davies to find somewhere else to live. Now Davies declares happily that Mick has promised him job of caretaker of this house and it is Aston who has to leave the house. Davies makes fun of Aston's dream of building a shed. Aston packs Davies's bag. Davies leaves complaining and threatening. He says that Mick will support him and kick Aston out.

Scene IV

Davies enters with Mick. He tells Mick about the clash between him and Aston. Mick seems to sympathize with Davies. However, when Mick listens Davies's bad and harsh comment about Aston's illness; Mick reacts strongly against Davies. When Davies says Aston is mad, Mick turns on Davies and says that Davies is a wild animal. He says he will not offer the job to Davies. He gives some money and asks Davies to leave the apartment. Mick declares that Aston can have the house and he can do whatever he wants to do with the apartment.

Eventually, Mick takes the side of Aston. Mick forces Davies to disclose his real name. He pays him half a dollar for his caretaking work. Aston comes back into the apartment and the brothers face each other. "They look at each other. Both are smiling, faintly."

Scene V

Aston enters. He and Mick smile at each other. After a few incoherent words Mick leaves. Davies explains that he came back for his pipe. Aston goes to the plug and does something with the screwdriver. Davies again expects Aston to take him back, but Aston refuses. Davies offers his help in building the shed, but is refused again by Aston. Davies turns to beg Aston to allow him to stay there, but Aston rejects his request. The play ends with long silence.

Interpretation:

The act opens with talk of Mick and Davies. Davies's deceptive nature is ridiculous. He tries to increase the gap between the brothers. He makes full use of Aston's kind nature. He calls Aston mad and tries to prove that he is superior. The scene reveals Davies's physical as well as verbal violence. Davies makes fun of Aston and taunts him as mad person with a knife in hand. The friendly arrival of Mick with Davies gives false impression. But it is the family tie that wins at the end. The smile between the brothers shows the understanding and family bond. Davies's pleading at the end is pathetic. His punishment is that he is banished from the paradise.

6.3.4 Terms to remember:

- ③ **assortment:** a collection of different things or of different types of the same thing
- ③ **saucepan:** a deep round metal pot with a lid and one long handle or two short handles, used for cooking things over heat
- ③ **monastery:** a building in which monks (members of a male religious community) live together
- ③ **piss off:** to urinate
- ③ **Sidcup:** a medium size town 14 miles south of London
- ③ **stuff:** a substance, material, group of objects
- ③ **hallucination:** something that is seen or heard when it is not really there
- ③ **penthouse:** an expensive and comfortable flat / apartment or set of rooms
- ③ **rhetoric:** the skill of using language in speech or writing in a special way that influences or entertains people
- ③ **invasion:** the act of an army entering another country by force in order to take control of it
- ③ **territory:** an area that one person, group, animal, etc. considers as their own and defends against others who try to enter it

6.3.5 Check Your Progress:

A. Choose the correct alternative:

1. ----- leaves the room silently.
a) Aston b) Mick c) Davies d) Harold
2. Aston invites Davies in his apartment after rescuing from -----.
a) bar fight. b) war c) an accident d) nothing
3. Act I ends with words -----
a) the caretaker b) electric shock c) silence d) "What's the game?"
4. -----tells that his name is Benard Jenkins.
a) Davies b) Aston c) Mick d) Pinter
5. Mick is engaged in -----.
a) banking b) medical service c) Betrayal d) building trade.

B. Fill in the blanks :

1. Davies wants to go to -----
2. Mick terrified Davies with sound of -----.
3. The bag, which Aston brings, contains-----.
4. Davies has ----- kept in Sidcup.
5. ----- had the problem of hallucination.

C. Answer in a word/ phrase /sentence:

1. How many acts are there in the play?
2. Who does moan and groan in sleep?
3. Where was Aston working?
4. Who does offer the job of caretaker to Davies?
5. Why did Mick ask Davies to leave the room?

6.4 Setting and Characterization in the play:

6.4.1 Setting:

In Pinter's plays, the setting is the room which presents the photographic realism. The characters try to dominate, take or keep possession of the room. Pinter has said:

“I have usually begun a play in quite a simple manner;
found a couple of characters in a particular context ,
thrown them together and listened to what they said ,
keeping my nose to the ground...”

The particular contest is a room. If the invited guest does not leave the room at suitable time, we get in trouble. The room represents human life, wishes, dreams and possession. Pinter's very first play is titled as *The Room*. The action is provoked by strangers intruding into a private place. Davies becomes an intruder and so threat to Aston and Mick. The play begins and ends in a room. Davies wants to be the master of the room. But fortunately enough, the brothers feel family tied together and force Davies to leave the room.

6.4.2 Characterization in the play:

Many critics have criticized Pinter for offering contradictory information about characters or no information at all. Pinter has explained that his writing process is one of the finding out about his characters. As an acute observer of human life, he knows that individual psyche is very complex and does not always operate according to reason. Past is a continuous mystery, as in the case of Davies. Personal insecurity is the essential part of Pinter's many play. His characters do not wish to be known and they offer less convincing explanation of themselves. So the individual identity is the central issue in his plays. Pinter gives details of characters' age and sex and nothing more. We do not know about Mick's business, Davies's past or Aston's mental problem. The Caretaker depends on logical action on the fact that Aston and Mick are brothers.

Aston :

Aston, a man in his early thirties, wears a shabby suit. He is brother of Mick. He is quite generous as he rescues Davies from fight and later brings the tramp into his

own house. Aston continues to care Davies by giving him tobacco, shoes and even the bag. Aston is calm, gentle and endures all the complaints of Davies.

Aston is in charge of the house owned by his brother, Mick. Major part of the house is rented to black people and all of it is in need of renovation. He talks of the past time. He used to visit a café regularly to talk people. He worked in a factory and enjoyed communication with other people. Everything was all right. But he was troubled by hallucination and he found himself in the hospital for shock treatment. Aston's continued existence appears only to prolong his suffering.

Aston is kind and honest. He offers Davies shelter, money and a key of the house. He is first anxious and then distressed by Davies's groaning and moaning in the sleep. He dreams of building a shed and talks about it to Davies. Davies makes fun of his dream and calls him a mad man.

His brother could not understand him. He is isolated but a man of good nature. He is unable to communicate. He has got the problem of brain damage as he was given the electric shock therapy. His dream of building a shed tells about accomplishment and structure in his life. It is his hope for the future life.

Davies:

Davies is old, unemployed, homeless, rootless and travelling under an assumed name. He avoids telling truth about himself. He depends on the paper documents that he has kept in the city called Sidcup fifteen years ago. He is unable to provide references for job application. He always feels insecure. Davies would get the job of caretaker if he provides the identity papers and insurance cards. The storm and uncomfortable shoes postpone his journey to Sidcup indefinitely. He does not produce the sentences in natural and logical way. To impress and influence people, he adjusts his story. He defines himself according to other people's suggestions. When Mick suggests that Davies might have been in the services and even in the colonies, he replies that he was one of the first over there.

Davies is unhappy with whatever he has. He complains about shoes given by Aston and expects new shoes. He was taken from street to apartment. But instead of being happy he tries to grab more. Knowing that Mick is real owner of the apartment, he tries to get closer to Mick and kick out Aston.

Davies blames blacks for his problems. This proves him as being extremely racist. Though he is offered the job of caretaker, he does not care others. He is a selfish man. He continues to be homeless. In the beginning of the play, he is offered the job of caretaker and at the end he is thrown away.

Mick:

Mick is in the building trade. He is violent, ambitious and ill-tempered. He has plans of renovating his apartment and convert into a high class penthouse. However his plans are left to his brother as he is unable to do so. In the opening of the play he distanced from his brother, Aston. He helps his brother to live in the apartment. Mick attacks Davies into Aston's abode considering him an intruder.

Mick uses language as a weapon. His conversation moves from a quick-fire questioning of Davies to extended passages of rhetoric. The range of reference, vocabulary and idiom, his knowledge of London's inner suburbs and bus routes, his pretention to middle class culture, all combine to give an impression of his personality.

The audience can never be sure of Mick's motives or the part he played in Aston's treatment. He is a man of silence and violence. He seems to a moderately successful businessman. He speaks little to his brother, but there seems to be some understanding between them. However, he offers his responsibility of his brother and apartment to Davies.

Davies should be the caretaker of both his brother and the apartment. Actually it was Mick's responsibility, but he shifts it to Davies. Mick's dreams and Davies' non-committal nature create much of the absurdity in the play. Though there is no communication between Mick and his brother, at the end there is exchange of a few words and smile.

6.5 Themes and other aspects in the play:

6.5.1 Themes:

1. Failure of communication:

Aston and Mick are brothers, but they fail to communicate properly with each other. This is evident as the two brothers do not talk in the course of the play. They need a kind of mediator and the mediator is Davies. In fact, both brothers talk to

Davies without any problem. They talk about each other to Davies. Davies comes to his responsibility as a mediator though he does not like it. When Davies knows that there is a failure of communication between the brothers, he tries to be benefited out of it. In the beginning, he was the best friend of Aston. But after knowing that Mick is real master of the apartment, he shifts his friendship to Mick. However, Mick recognizes Davies's plan, tells him that he does not need a caretaker. Then again Davies turns to Aston's gratitude, however, Aston denies helping him anymore. The problems in the life of two brothers actually arise because of failure of communication. However, at the end of the play there is hope of communication as two brothers smile and exchange a few words.

2. Dream:

Dream is another significant theme in the play, *The Caretaker*. Every character has his dream. Aston is living in his brother's apartment and he is given the task of renovating it. He wishes to build a shed in the garden. He hopes to be somebody in the society. His problem is that he has become a social outcast because of electric shock therapy given to him. He struggles hard to fulfill his dream, but fails.

Davies, on the other hand, dreams of going back to the city Sidcup to collect his documents and references. However, it is doubtful whether he has kept anything in Sidcup. He is a man; not to be believed. He tries to grab more from least work or no work at all. He says that the stormy weather and uncomfortable shoes stop him going to the place. He postpones the plan to go to Sidcup.

Mick's dream is to renovate the apartment into a penthouse or a palace. He could not do so. He entrusts the responsibility to his brother. Dreams remain dreams only.

3. Family Relationship:

Though Aston and Mick fail to communicate in the play freely and frankly, there is hope of good communication between the brothers in the future. John Arden writes: "Taken purely at its face value, this play is a study of the unexpected strength of family ties against an intruder". When Aston is in trouble at the hands of an intruder, Davies; Mick comes ahead for his brother's help. At the critical moments of life the family relations get stronger.

4. Deception:

No character can be trusted in true sense of the term. Everyone tries to deceive himself and others. Davies does not tell his true name. Deception occurs throughout the play. The strategy to deceive others gets clarity through the dialogues. Mick deceives himself saying that he fails to become successful man because of his responsibilities towards his brother, Aston. Davies tells both the brothers that his documents are kept in Sidcup.

5. The Theme of Isolation

The human being in modern life has become victim of frustration, loneliness, loss of communication and isolation. Harold Pinter, the British playwright reflects exactly this state of human being in his play *The Caretaker*. His well known plays are *The Room*, *The Homecoming*, *The Birthday Party*, etc. But his real breakthrough came with the publication of *The Caretaker*. Harold Pinter's works present directly or indirectly the influences of pre-war and post-war incidents. The sense of rootlessness, loneliness and isolation can be seen in his characters. The audiences are made to laugh but at the same time they are threatened by violent action that destroys the central character.

The Caretaker discusses the critical condition of characters in the play. All the three characters represent their isolation with more or less intensity. This play of Pinter opens the life in general and life in 1950s England in particular. The isolation is either forced on them or it is selected by them on their own. His characters do not allow themselves to form good relationship with others. From the very beginning of the play, the realistic details occur. Aston lives in a room of an apartment that is owned by his brother Mick. Though they are brothers, there is no proper communication between them. Aston lives the life of mentally retarded human being because of the electric shock treatment given to him. The very isolated condition of Aston suggests the critical existence of man in the modern world, who may live the life as mentally retarded person like Aston. Aston not only rescues Davies but helps him by providing tobacco, a pair of shoes, bed and above all allowing him to share a room with him. Aston's activities of helping Davies express Aston's need for companionship. He expects Davies to stay with him. Aston realizes his isolation and when he gets an opportunity to end it, he tries to cherish it. Davies is also badly in need of companionship. He says to Aston:

“You been a good friend to me. You took me in. You took me in, didn’t ask me no questions, you gave me a bed, you been mate to me.”

Davies is cut off from the society and he is outcast. He lives his life in dirt and nearly all dislike him. It is Aston who shows some kind of kindness to Davies. He is brought home by Aston and is offered everything that Aston could. Aston also offers him the job of caretaker. Davies fails to enjoy this situation. He accepts everything but with complaining nature.

Though Aston and Davies feel isolation and are in need of companionship, both are different to their nature. Aston is in his late twenties or early thirties. He is generous and co-operative. He tried to imitate some qualities of Lord Buddha, as the statue is placed in Aston’s room. Aston not only rescues him from cafe fight but also places him in sound position as needed for Davies. It seems that Aston was intelligent and gave harsh comments on some of the issues in the society. However, the society represented through the character of Mick, does allow him to express his comments. Therefore, Aston is unwillingly forced by his mother and brother to accept the electric shock therapy. The shock treatment leaves Aston mentally retarded person. He is forced to be isolated. However, he is good even after becoming mentally retarded. He does not take revenge of the society. He works for compromising with society. Unfortunately, he fails to get proper response from Davies. His dream to build a shed and develop communication with Davies result into frustration.

On the other hand, Davies is old tramp probably in his sixties. He is homeless and badly in need of companionship and a house. He gets an opportunity to stay in Aston’s room. Rather than cherishing the chance, Davies always complains about the inadequacy of things. He blames others for his own mistakes. He disturbs Aston but does not accept the charge. He seems to be racist, as he charges the black people without any fault of them. He is no doubt isolated. When he gets the chance to end it, he tries to dominate it. Davies takes the help as it is his right. He is offered a job of caretaker by Aston as well as Mick. But he does not like to work. He gives excuses of his documents and papers that he has kept in Sidcup. It was expected that he should decrease the gap between the two brothers, but on the other hand it is Davies who not only increases the gap, but also tries to separate them completely. Mick

comes to know Davies's intentions and decides to speak in favour of Aston. Davies's isolation, thus, continues.

Davies makes fun of Aston and taunts him as mad person with a knife in hand. The friendly arrival of Mick with Davies gives false impression. But it is the family tie that wins at the end.

Like Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* Harold Pinter uses limited characters and presents the absurdity of life. Pinter's play begins and ends in that isolated room in an apartment. Davies's isolation looks self imposed because of his greedy nature. He is aggressive and unstable. He disturbs others and is thoroughly unpleasant person. Though Davies is poor, he fails to receive sympathy from the audience. One might feel that Davies's isolation is inevitable for what he is. He seems deceptive as he postpones his visit to Sidcup where, he says, he lived before and where the documents are kept.

Aston's isolation is not as simple as that of Davies. Aston's isolation springs from different causes. Davies trusts no one and turns on them who help him. Aston believes even a person like Davies. Aston's fault is that he trusts people too much. He says :

“I thought...they understood what I said. I mean I used to talk to them. I talked too much. That was my mistake.
The same in the factory.”

Aston's reward for too much trust is that he is betrayed by not only an intruder like Davies but also by his mother and brother. And the result of this is the isolation.

The isolation in the play can be seen from very setting of the play. In many of Pinter's plays, the setting is an isolated place and the isolated place is “the room.” Actually this domestic setting provides a serviceable environment for the action. The room literally expresses limitation of characters. The characters stay within this limitation. However, they try to dominate one another in this limitation, win over each other and possess the place where they stay.

The particular context is the isolated room in which normally two or three characters could be found. These characters do not communicate properly with each other. As in the play, *The Caretaker* the two brothers fail to communicate and both of them lead isolated life, particularly Aston. The third character, Davies also lives

the life of outcast and isolation. His greediness of nature does not allow him to enhance the communication either with Aston or with Mick. Davies, then, continues to be the victim of isolation.

Harold Pinter's many plays present the intruder who disturbs the privacy of a character. The privacy of these characters is not accepted by themselves but it is forced on them. Therefore, they are not happy in their privacy. The character like Aston needs the company of someone. He feels that as Davies is outcast, isolated and helpless in his condition, Davies could be the best partner to end his isolation as well as that of Davies's isolation. Aston helps Davies, brings him home though Davies is not a good man. Davies complains as soon as he enters Aston's room. As Aston has failed to develop proper communication with his own brother; Aston turns to Davies for help. Aston does not want Davies to leave the room. He offers everything that he could offer to Davies. This illustrates Aston's strong wish for communication.

Pinter's character tries to identify himself within the limited space of the room. Sometimes the character seems to be happy with the place that he lives in. It seems that the character himself wants to lead the life in isolation. He tries to avoid the communication with the outer world. He does not give complete information about himself. Davies's identity depends on the papers that he has kept in Sidcup. He does not go to Sidcup or postpones his visit. Therefore, his identity is doubtful. This is one of the reasons that Davies leads the life of isolation. It is not clear in the beginning of the play where from Davies comes and it is not also evident where Davies goes at the end of the play. However, one thing is quite clear that Davies was isolated and is isolated. At the end Mick seems to be on good terms with his brother, as both Mick and Aston smile looking at each other. This is a sign of need for communication. However, Mick does not stay with his brother and leaving everything in charge of Aston, he goes. Though there is slight hope of collaboration between the brothers, they do not live together. The play ends where it begins. All the three characters are separated from each other and continue to live the life of isolation.

Aston was very talkative kind of person before he was given the electric shock therapy. He used to ask a number of questions about the certain things in society. He had certain doubts about such things in life. As it was dangerous to the society, his questioning ability was hampered by electric shock therapy. He is made mentally retarded. Then, Aston not only loses questioning ability but also fails even to communicate properly. It is his questioning nature and goodness that makes him a

mad person. Thus, he becomes the victim of isolation. It seems that Aston himself knows that his mental illness can be cured by developing communication with others. He tries his level best to establish communication with Davies, but unfortunately his fate does not allow it to happen. As Aston fails to improve communication with Davies and Mick, he continues to be mentally retarded person. The person like Aston faces the punishment of isolation without any fault of him. The so-called society does not allow him to be the part and parcel of society. Therefore, Aston is forced to lead isolated life and the character like him is given inferior treatment in the society.

Mick and Davies represent society. Mick does not like his questioning nature. He supports the electric shock therapy to be given to Aston. Mick probably knows that the therapy would hamper Aston's questioning ability. The therapy rather than curing Aston turns him into an abnormal human being. Aston continues to speak but illogically. Mick's non-communication with Aston increases Aston's problem. The fact is that mentally retarded person can be cured properly by emotional attachment along with medical treatment. It was Mick's responsibility to treat Aston with brotherly affection. Unfortunately Mick treats Aston as 'the other'. Mick indirectly forces isolation on Aston. Though Mick smiles at looking Aston at the end of the play, he does not stay or live with him. He also does not allow Aston to be part of society. However, his attitude towards Aston is not as harsh as of Davies. Mick gives the authority to do whatever he likes to do with the room and apartment. But Mick leaves the room at the end; Mick leaves Aston again in isolation.

Aston tries hard to be the part of society. He does help Davies who in one way represents society. He is an abnormal but behaves like a normal and very co-operative human being with Davies. On the contrary, Davies who is a normal human being, behaves abnormally. By helping Davies symbolically, he wants to be the part of society. However, the society in the form of Davies treats him as mad and abnormal human being. Davies declares Aston does not understand anything. One really feels extremely upset that Aston is rejected in the society and that he has to continue his life in isolation. Aston's helping nature results into nothing but in frustration.

The term isolation is different from solitude. The isolation is normally forced on human beings. It becomes a punishment for the isolated person. Solitude is something that is willingly accepted. The solitude can be creative. It can provide peace of mind. The isolation of human being may result into frustration. Harold

Pinter tries to say that the human beings are destined to be isolated and lonely. Therefore, his characters prefer to live in isolation. His characters fail to improve proper communication with others. Davies is completely isolated whereas Aston has a brother who gives his support at the end. Mick says:

“Aston can do it up, he can decorate it, he can do what he likes with it. I am not bothered. I thought I was doing a Favour, letting him live here. He’s got his own ideas. Let him have them. I am going to chuck it in”.

Pinter through *The Caretaker* suggests that the isolation is inevitable companion of life. Davies’s isolation is result of selfishness and lack of proper attitude. Aston’s isolation is the result of his too much trust on others in society. Aston’s isolation is not the fault of him but of the society.

6.5.2 Other aspects

1. Absurd drama:

Style and Language: Pinteresque

The style of the play looks like that of absurd drama. Therefore, it is often compared to Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* . The plot has realism with absurdity of life. The language of the character can only be understood when we focus on the meaning behind the text. The dialogues are with the interruptions or long speeches. Sometimes the language looks simple but there is a message behind the simplicity. Pinter uses the silence very effectively.

The term Pinteresque means a style of play-writing where the dialogue appears to use the patterns of everyday conversation to express darker sense of man’s insecurity, aggressiveness or hypocrisy. The names of an ordinary place becomes absurd.

2. Structure of the play:

Harold Pinter’s play *The Caretaker* is organized in three acts. It deals with over a period of more than two weeks; gradually increasing the tension. Each act contains scenes; some show entry or departure of characters or the falling of darkness. Mick’s silent presence and quick exit from the place serve as prologue to the play. It suggests the future conflict and also the complications in the mind of the audience.

Act I fulfils conventional exposition, three characters are introduced and relationship is explained as two brothers and a tramp. It explains the mood and style. The play contains many recurrent issues like identity, status, invasion and defense of territory, trust and betrayal.

A man wearing leather jacket is revealed sitting in a bed in a room which is filled with a number of objects—paints, boxes of nuts and screws, a step-ladder, a shopping trolley and a statue of Lord Buddha. He sits silently until he hears muffled voices of Aston and Davies, and then leaves quietly. Aston's cloths are shabby but neat. Davies wears a coat without a shirt as tramp. Aston invites Davies to live with him rescuing from the café fight until Davies manages to settle somewhere comfortably. Aston then, offers money and shoes which he accepts but with complaining tone. Aston is worried about Davies's bag that is left in the café. Aston brings a new bag. Davies plans his visit to Sidcup. He tells that his name is Jenkins of whom Davies has stolen insurance card. Davies climbs into the bed, but unhappily comments on the bucket hanging above to catch water leaking through roof. Aston is engaged in mending the plug. Then the light fades. It was Aston who wakes up first and then Davies. Davies denies the charge that he was growing and talking feverishly in his sleep. To Davies' much surprises, Aston leaves the keys of the room in Davies's hand. When Davies was looking for something, Mick attacks him. Act I ends with Mick asking 'What's the game?'

Act II continues the action from Act I. Mick interrogates Davies. Davies answers his name as Jenkins. Davies will go to Sidcup and tells Mick that he is not an intruder, but he is invited here by Aston. Mick's entry leads to further development of the plot. Mick declares that the bed and whole room belongs to him. Aston has surprised Davies by handing over the keys and Mick happily shocks him by offering the job of caretaker. Davies, who is an outsider, becomes the part of household in Act II. In the darkness, Mick terrifies Davies with the light on vacuum cleaner. Mick, in a friendly manner, offers him job of caretaker, if Davies provides his identity papers. The light dims; time passes.

It is morning. Aston is dressing. He wakes up Davies reminding him, his visit to Sidcup. Davies gets up complaining his bad sleep, and postpones his visit giving excuse of weather. The light dims and Aston reveals his crucial past experience. Aston expresses his dream of building a shed.

Act III has the balance part of exchanges between each of the brothers and the tramp. The quality of relationship changes- exploration and testing of the boundaries develop into more overt competition for space and status as Davies tries to conspire with one brother against the other, then to reverse alliances, as he struggles to hold a position in the house.

3. *The Caretaker* as a comedy of menace:

The plays of Harold Pinter are described as 'a comedies of menace'. It was used first to describe *The Birthday Party*. Menace means threat or fear. It is a constantly recurring element in Pinter's play. It is what is now known as one of the Pintersque features. Menace is also present in *The Caretaker*. But it is less dominating in this play.

A comedy of menace is a play in which the laughter of the audience is accompanied or followed by the fear of impending disaster. The audience feels uneasy while laughing because of its perception of some threat to the principal character. The menace is the feeling of insecure.

The play opens with a suggestion of menace. When the play opens, we see Mick alone in the room. But the moment he hears his brother's approach he silently and quickly leaves the room. Why should he leave the room so? This is the strange behavior. In the next scene, as we find Davies left alone in the room. He searches something in the room. At the same time, he is suddenly and violently attacked by Mick. The quiet atmosphere is suddenly changed by menace. The old tramp is frightened out of his wits by this sudden attack. Mick attacks Davies, pins him down to the floor and just asks one menacing question, what he was doing in the room. Such a sudden outbreak of violence is a typical Pinter effect. We have one more example of it. Davies returns to the room in darkness. He switches on the light but fails. He tries to light a match and the box falls down from his frightened hand. He then kicks it away unknowingly and then all of a sudden the vacuum cleaner lights up and chases the terrified Davies all over the room. When the lights are finally on we see Davies with a knife. All this is done by Mick. He can give correct explanation to what he did, but again the victim is Davies. The silent entries and exists of Mick are also examples of this menace.

Davies is constantly under the tension of some fear or threat or another. He is a tramp, a rootless man in search of some safety. He is a living under that the hostile

world will not let him free to live. To him the world outside is a hostile place, ready to pounce on him. Fear thus dominates him. It should be remembered that he was saved by Aston from violence not long ago. It was his own doing, no doubt. But the fear and menace lie even at the background level of the play.

Aston is also constantly under the tension of some fear. He was a talkative man and used to have hallucinations. He was given electric shocks. Since then he became a slow and dull. He lacks confidence. He remains away from the society. He is lonely and in search of a good companion that would sympathise with him.'

Even Mick has his own fear. His attack on Davies is of fear against his property. Thus, menace is present in the play. But in this play elements of menace are less.

6.5.3 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative:

1. Pinter's very first play is titled as -----.
a) *The Caretaker* b) *The Birthday Party* c) *The Room* d) *Betrayal*
2. Davies blames -----people.
a) white b) black c) yellow d) brown
3. ----- uses language as a weapon.
a) Davies b) Aston c) Mick d) None
4. The term Piinteresque means a style of -----.
a) play-writing b) speaking c) painting d) acting
5. *The Caretaker* is compared to Beckett's -----.
a) *Waiting for Godot* b) *Endgame* c) *Happy Days* d) *Not I*

B) Fill in the blanks :

1. There is a statue of ----- in Aston's room.
2. *The Caretaker* opens the life in general and life in ---- England in particular.
3. -----lives his life in dirt and nearly all dislike him.
4. Davies is old tramp probably in his-----.

5. In Pinter's style the silent atmosphere is disturbed by ----- attack.

C. Answer in a word/ phrase /sentence:

1. Which of the scene is very terrifying?
2. How is Davies's deceptive nature exposed?
3. Where does the play begin and end?
4. Who are bothers?
5. Who did help Mick in Aston shock therapy?

6.6 Summary

The four main sections of this unit enable students to about plot, character/s, theme/s, and structure of the play.

6.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.2.1

- A)**
1. b) tailor
 2. a) Joseph Brealey
 3. d) Harold Pinta
 4. b) Vivien Merchant
 5. b) *The Caretaker*
- B)**
1. England and Germany
 2. Cornwall
 3. Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
 4. classic plays
 5. Nobel
- C)**
1. In 1950
 2. in Hackney, East London
 3. to avoid the fears of German bombing
 1. Pre-Second World War Period

2. The Post- War Period
3. The Period from the mid 1960s onwards.
4. felt depressed

6.3.5

- A)**
1. b) Mick
 2. a) bar fight.
 3. “What’s the game?”
 4. a) Davies
 5. d) building trade.
- B)**
1. Sidcup
 2. vacuum cleaner
 3. two check shirts and a smoking jacket
 4. his identity papers or proofs
 5. Aston
- C)**
1. three
 2. Davies
 3. in a factory
 4. both Aston and Mick
 5. because Davies calls Aston mad

6.3.5

- A)**
1. c) *The Room*
 2. b) black
 3. c) Mick
 4. a) play-writing
 5. a) *Waiting for Godot*
- B)**
1. Lord Buddha

2. 1950s
 3. Davies
 4. sixties.
 4. violent
- C)
1. The vacuum cleaner scene
 2. As he postpones his visit
 3. in a room
 4. Aston and Mick
 5. Aston's mother

6.8 Exercises:

a) Long Answer Type Question:

- Does Pinter mean his audience to sympathise with Davies or condemn him?
- What role does violence play in *The Caretaker*?
- Discuss the theme of dream and illusion.
- Do you think that isolation is one of the strongest themes? Discuss.
- What are the main features of Pinter's use of language and style?
- Discuss the significance of room in *The Caretaker*.

b) Write Short Notes:

- The relationship between two brothers
- Davies as a tramp
- Characterization in the play

6.9 Further Readings:

1. Stephen, G.M. *Harold Pinter: The Caretaker*. London: Longman 1981.
2. Hern, Patricia. *Harold Pinter: The Caretaker*. London: Methuen London Ltd. 1982.
3. Pinter, Harold. *Various Voices: Prose, Poetry, Politics. 1948-1998*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. 1998.
4. Naismith, Bill. *Harold Pinter*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. 2000.

Reference :

1. *The caretaker*
2. Internet
3. Private notes

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Unit-7

Muriel Spark's The Driver's Seat

Contents

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Introduction to the Novel 'The Driver's Seat'
- 7.3 The characters in 'The Driver's Seat'
- 7.4 Themes in 'The Driver's Seat'
- 7.5 Check Your Progress
- 7.6 Answers to check your progress

7.1 Objectives:

After studying this unit, you will be able to know:

- ③ Muriel Spark as influencing novelist of experimental outlook.
- ③ Know about her remarkable contribution to British literature.
- ③ Point out her feministic approach.
- ③ Realize the themes of alienation, isolation and loss of spiritual values amidst of the trendy materialist society.
- ③ Know victimization of genuine spirituality of the protagonist in the course of trendy 'New Age' life style.
- ③ Trace the predicament of women.

7.2 Introduction:

Dame Muriel Spark was an award- winning Scottish novelist. 'The New York Times' took cognizance of her outstanding literary craftsmanship, by enlisting her in '50 Greatest British Writers'. She was born Muriel Sarah Cam berg in Edinburgh, on 1st Feb, 1918. Her mother Sarah Elizabeth Maud Presbyterian (belonging to a

protestant church) and Bernard Cam berg a Jewish engineer. In Sept. 1937 she married Sidney Oswald Spark and flew to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) . Realizing manic depression of her husband and disgusted of his violent outburst in 1944, Muriel returned to United Kingdom.

Particularly, after World War II, Muriel Spark took her writing career seriously. Initially, she tried her talent with poetry and literary criticism. After joining ‘Roman catholic church in 1954, on the insistence of her contemporary novelist, Penelope Fitzgerald; Muriel Spark started to write the novel. She expresses her gratitude towards Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh.

Her first novel ‘The Comforters’ was published in 1957, specifically, in the novel Spark deals with the theme of Catholicism and conversion to Catholicism, but on the backdrop of the theme of Catholicism, she, predominantly, pays her utmost attention towards predicament of women.

She prolifically contributed to literature by writing more than 20 novels and number of poems and essays. She was honored by the James Black Memorial Prize (1965) for *The Mandelbaum Gate* and the U.S.Ingersoll foundation T.S. Eliot award in 1997. Spark was shortlisted for the ‘Lost Man Booker’ prize,(1970)for *The Driver’s Seat*.

Some of her notable novels are :

- 1) The Comforters (1955)
- 2) Robinson (1958)
- 3) Memento Mori (1959)
- 4) The Bachelors (1960)
- 5) The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (1961)
- 6) The Public Image (1962)

7.3 Introduction to the Novel ‘The Driver’s Seat’:

The Driver’s Seat a short novel opens in a setting of a departmental store, where then protagonist, Lise has arrived to buy a dress. After a long time she has planned to go abroad(particularly to a south European city, probably Naples) to celebrate the vacation and to meet her illusory boyfriend. Her way of selection of the dress is quite

typical which makes us to realize the abnormality of her behavior and personality. For very minor reasons, she loses her temper. Her interaction with a salesgirl shows how does she love to dominate others even for unconvincing issues. And if someone surrenders to her aggressive nature, she enjoys it hysterically. In her cynical reactions one can sense her mood of revenge for her assumption of her ignored and neglected state.

Rejecting to choose the dress showed in earlier cloth stores, she moves to Resort Department and selects a very abnormal dress - a lemon-yellow top with a skirt paternal in bright 'V's of orange mauve and blue and a stripped summer coat which according to sales girl is a perfect mismatch. But Lise dominates the salesgirl and makes her to accept it as a perfect match. Moreover she criticizes that the people, in the North, are ignorant of colors and they are conservative and old fashioned.

After doing her shopping, she comes to her house which is described as a meticulously neat, one room flat shows austere taste of the designer, the adjustable furniture and floor are made up of pine wood. Lise, the modest bachelor, maintains her flat 'clean lined and clear to welcome her'. Before going to bed, she neatly packs luggage consisting of her air ticket, passport, her cosmetics, flat-keys etc. Taking a sigh of completion for departure she goes to bed. Next morning she calls to Margot informing that she is going to keep the car-keys with door keeper. Putting on a peculiar dress, she departs for her promising foreign tour.

In the second chapter of novella, Spark very minutely describes Lise's typical interactions with airport personals and a book seller. She has been a centre of typical look of the passengers on the airport. Her comments regarding selection and taste of books, her fake but polished manners, her accents of English are all typical things prove her peculiar at embarkation formalities. Observing her fellow passengers, Lise moves towards Gate 14 where her flight was board waiting for its passengers.

Murial Spark, at the beginning of the third chapter her novel, exposes the fact that Lise will be found tomorrow morning dead from multiple stab – wounds, her wrist bound with a silk scarf and ankles bound with a man's neck tie. This detached narrative of the author creates an atmosphere of doubt and insecurity and ultimate sympathy for Lise. Her encounters with strangers on the flight produce an air of suspense and horror in the minds of the readers. There remains nothing doubtful about the final destination of Lise. But how the matter of curiosity is then reason

behind her death. Probably this is why Murial Spark, describes the novel *The Driver's seat* as *whydunit*. In fact, the novel is an examination, not of what events take place but why they do so.

On the plane, Lise encounters a man called Bill who claims to be an Enlightenment Leader, a believer in benefits of Macrobiotic foods. He believes in his principle that, you become what you eat. 'Eat cow and you become cow'. For good health, he recommends that along with Macrobiotic food everybody should have one orgasm a day.

Bill and Lise share the taxi, dropping her to the hotel Tomson, Bill disappears. Lise after having wash and rest draws out the map of city. Coming down to the lobby of the hotel, she asks an attendant for a taxi. Mrs. Fiedke and old lady who is residing in the same hotel, too, wants to go out for some shopping. They both go by same taxi to a departmental store near the post office. Both of them purchase certain objects there. Lise, particularly buys scarf, neck tie and other thing. In the chatting Mrs. Fiedke informs her that she is here to meet her nephew Richard, and after her he is going to inherit all her property. Lise too informs her that she has arrived over here to meet her boyfriend.

After finishing their shopping, they came down on the road, Lise is leading to an old lady. Coincidentally they come across the demonstration of the students, police were trying to maintain there law and order by releasing the tear gas. In the chaos and confusion both of them get away from one another. Lise takes a shelter in one of garages on the road. Her clothes are stained. Mr. Carlo, the proprietor of the garage, extends her help. It was not possible to get the taxi or bus so Carlo takes her to the hotel. But Lise realizes ill- intention of Carlo. Somehow she escapes herself from him and rushes to the hotel.

She is fade up of the treatment she receives by the society. Her feminine pride is always hurt by the male dominant society. While escaping from Carlo, she even says that it would have been better if her parents have used contraceptive pills. It would have resisted her birth and her consequent suffering as a woman.

Bill has promised her to meet comes to see her at hotel. He takes her away with him. Already on the flight he has tried to flirt her and tried to convince her that he is man of her type. He very shamelessly says her he has missed his dose orgasm and he is feeling like indigestion, so he takes her to a park where he informs her that many

women are killed. He attempts her rape, she shouts and crowd is gathered. Some of them rush to inform police. Meanwhile, Lise escapes herself from the clutches of Bill and rushes to the hotel.

It is now long past mid night when Lise arrives at hotel. She enters in the waiting hall of the hotel, there is a well built dark-suited man already waiting for someone. In fact he is Richard- Mrs. Fiedke's nephew has come to see her aunt after having long medical treatment. Lise identifies him and takes him to the park where many women are killed. She forcibly insists her to follow her and her plan. Coming in the park near the famous pavilion, she brings out the paper knife and scarf and instructs him to tie her hands and legs and stab her to death. And Richard follows her accordingly.

Thus the protagonists, Lise, disgusted of her isolation; wherein she has realized all her genuine spirituality is lost amidst of the material and lusty society, concludes her life.

7.4 The characters in the novel :

1) Lise – The Protagonist.

Muriel Spark, as the novelist of feministic approach, has her main concern with the predicament of women, their feeling of alienation and insecurity, amidst of trendy new age life style. So obviously, Lise – the protagonist is at the centre of the novel. In her detached style of narration, Spark, very minutely, rather than external physical activities concentrate on the inward nature of her protagonist. More than her physical existence and appearance, mental state of Lise, her inward responses and reactions to the treatment she is receiving on the part of the society are of more importance.

The Driver's Seat is rightly described as the 'short and savage character study of a woman gradually losing control of herself and a woman intensely feeling unfit to live in the world , where there is an absolute loss of genuine spirituality.

In the second chapter of the novel, Lise is described as, 'Lise is thin. Her height is about five –foot –six. Her hair is pale, brown, probably tinted, a very light streaked lock sweeping from the middle of hair- line to the top of her crown; her hair is cut short at the sides and back. She might be as young as twenty- nine or as old as thirty six, but hardly young, hardly older ... Lise's eyes are widely spaced, blue-gray

and dull. Her lips are a straight line. Her nose is short and wider than it will look in the likeness constructed partly by the method of *identikit*'

Lise is a spinster, working in an accountancy firm, somewhere in North Europe, probably Denmark (the location is not explicitly specified). It is her experience of 'sixteen years and some months' to work with the said firm. Her colleagues are quite careful and cautious while interacting with her. They know, at any moment, Lise can lose her temper and control.

Her interaction at the cloth store and her typical selection of the outfits focus on her peculiarity of nature. Lise's strangeness and her isolation is mirrored quite precisely in her behavior. She feels hysteric satisfaction by making others to surrender. Though she claims that she is going to South European country to meet her illusory ideal lover, she, in fact is in search of ideal death. She herself is in the 'Driver's seat' leading her life towards the death.

Muriel Spark shows her experimental outlook towards treatment and the structure of the novel. There is consistent vein of cruelty is running through the short novella consisting of some hundred pages. The protagonist, Lise disgusted of isolation and alienation plans her own life and death also. Her life and death raise a series of thought provoking, disturbing questions about the nature of female victimization and empowerment and debasement of social and spiritual values in the modern society. More than a physical shock, her death is a mental psychological shock. So the novel is appropriately advertised as 'a metaphysical shocker and 'psychological thriller'.

2) Bill- An Enlightenment Leader

Bill is one of the co-passenger of Lise boarding on a same flight. He is an expert in macrobiotic food. He claims that it is his responsibility to generate awareness and enlighten people regarding their diet.

He believes in the fact that 'You become what you eat. Eat cow and you become cow'. He also recommends that for good health one should have one orgasm a day. In the concluding part of the novel, after completing his enlightenment session, Bill comes to meet Lise at her hotel. He takes her away and expects physical satisfaction from her. But Lise escapes herself from Bill.

3) Mrs. Fiedke –

An old widow residing in a same hotel come to meet her nephew Richard.

4) Richard-

Young nephew of Mrs. Fiedke of the age 28, arrived at the hotel to meet her Aunt after receiving prolonged medical treatment. Richard is an unfortunate character to whom Lise forces to stab herself.

7.5 The Leading Themes of the Novel:

Muriel Spark having natural inclination for an issue of Catholicism and women suffering, her literary endeavors are predominantly marked with the themes of the victimization of women, lose of spiritual values, alienation and isolation undue importance to trendy new age life style and predicament of women.

The Driver's seat, the novella was itself advertised as the 'metaphysical shocker' and 'psychological thriller.' The protagonists in the novel suffer than the physical suffering of the protagonist. To the novelist the mental and physical suffering is of more concern. The mental and psychological wounds are more fatal than the physical wounds.

The following are the leading themes.

- 1) The theme of alienation and isolation.
- 2) The theme of women victimization and isolation.
- 3) The Driver's Seat as a 'metaphysical Shocker'.
- 4) The Driver's Seat as a psychological thinker.

7.6 Check Your Progress

a) Answer the following questions in one word /phrase/sentence each.

- 1) Who is the protagonist of the novel?
- 2) To whom the novel is dedicated?
- 3) What is an occupation of Lise?
- 4) Give the description of Lise's dress?
- 5) Why does Lise want to go to abroad?

- 6) What does Bill claims to be?
- 7) What is the name of the hotel?
- 8) What is the name of the proprietor of the garage?
- 9) Who is the nephew of Mrs. Fiedke?
- 10) Who does stab Lise?

7.7 Answers of self-Assessment questions:

- 1) Lise
- 2) The novel is dedicated to Dario Ambrosiani.
- 3) Lise works in an accountancy firm.
- 4) A lemon-yellow top with a skirt paternal in bright 'V's of orange mauve and blue and a stripped summer coat.
- 5) Lise wants to go to abroad to meet her illusory ideal lover.
- 6) Bill claims to be an Enlightenment leader.
- 7) Hotel Tomson
- 8) Carlo
- 9) Richard
- 10) Richard

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Unit-8

Possession: A Romance : A. S. Byatt

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8.0 Objective

After completing the study of this unit you will:

- ③ know about the life and works of A. S. Byatt
- ③ know about the detailed summary of 'Possession : A Romance'
- ③ learn the characters in the Nove.

8.1 Introduction :

This unit discusses the life and the works of internationally renowned novelist, A.S. Byatt. This unit also offers the chapter-wise- detailed summary of “Possession : A Romance”. It is Byatt’s a complex multifaceted novel. This unit will help you to understand the plot and the story of the novel.

8.2 A. S. Byatt : Life and Works

A S Byatt is renowned internationally for her novels and short stories. Her novels include the Booker Prize-winning *Possession*, *The Biographer’s Tale* and the quartet, *The Virgin in the Garden*, *Still Life*, *Babel Tower* and *A Whistling Woman*. Her most recent novel, *The Children’s Book* was published in 2009. Her highly acclaimed collections of short stories include *Sugar and Other Stories*, *The Matisse Stories*, *The Djinn in the Nightingale’s Eye*, *Elementals* and *Little Black Book of Stories*. A distinguished critic as well as a writer of fiction, A S Byatt was appointed CBE in 1990 and DBE in 1999.

Biography:

BYATT, Dame Antonia (Susan), (Dame Antonia Duffy), DBE 1999 (CBE 1990); FRSL 1983;

Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), 2003 , writer; born 24 Aug. 1936;

Daughter of His Honour John Frederick Drabble, QC and late Kathleen Marie Bloor.

Marriage Life:

First, 1959, Ian Charles Rayner Byatt (Sir I. C. R. Byatt) marriage dissolved. 1969; one daughter (one son deceased) Second, 1969, Peter John Duffy; two daughters.

Education:

Sheffield High School; The Mount School, York; Newnham College, Cambridge (BA Hons; Hon. Fellow 1999); Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia, USA; Somerville College, Oxford.

Extra-Mural Lecturer, University of London, 1962-71; Lecturer in Literature, Central School of Art and Design, 1965-69; Lecturer in English, 1972-81, Senior Lecturer, 1981-83, University College London.

Prizes:

She has received many prizes. They are as follows

The PEN/Macmillan Silver Pen Of Fiction prize, 1986 for STILL LIFE

The Booker Prize, 1990, for POSSESSION

Irish Times/Aer Lingus International Fiction Prize, 1990 for POSSESSION

The Eurasian section of Best Book in Commonwealth Prize, 1991 for POSSESSION

Premio Malaparte, Capri, 1995;

Mythopoeic Fantasy Award for Adult Literature, California, 1998 for THE DJINN IN THE NIGHTINGALE'S EYE;

Shakespeare Prize, Toepfer Foundation, Hamburg, 2002;

Blue Metropolis International Literary Grand Prix, Canada, 2009

Publications:

The Shadow of the Sun, 1964;

Degrees of Freedom, 1965 (reprinted as Degrees of Freedom: the early novels of Iris Murdoch, 1994);

The Game, 1967;

Wordsworth and Coleridge in their Time, 1970 (reprinted as Unruly Times:

Wordsworth and Coleridge in their Time, 1989);

Iris Murdoch 1976

The Virgin in the Garden, 1978;

GEORGE ELIOT Selected Essays, Poems and Other Writings , 1979 (editor);

Still Life, 1985

Sugar and Other Stories, 1987;

George Eliot: selected essays, 1989 (editor)

Possession: a romance, 1990

Robert Browning's Dramatic Monologues, 1990 (editor);

Passions of the Mind, (essays), 1991;

Angels and Insects (novellae), 1992

The Matisse Stories (short stories), 1993;

The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye: five fairy stories, 1994
Imagining Characters, 1995 (joint editor);
New Writing 4, 1995 (joint editor);
Babel Tower, 1996;
New Writing 6, 1997 (joint editor);
The Oxford Book of English Short Stories, 1998 (editor);
Elementals: Stories of fire and ice (short stories), 1998;
The Biographer's Tale, 2000;
On Histories and Stories (essays), 2000;
Portraits in Fiction, 2001;
The Bird Hand Book, 2001 (Photographs by Victor Schrager Text By AS
Byatt);
A Whistling Woman, 2002
Little Black Book of Stories, 2003
The Children's Book, 2009
(Acknowledgement: This work has been summarized using the Modern Library
2000 edition. Quotations are taken from that work).

Overall Impression:

A S. Byatt's *Possession* is a complex and multifaceted novel, with entertaining and often very funny or touching characterizations. The depiction of the links between life experiences and the writing of poetry is well done. It is often very wordy and excessively obscure--particularly in its attempts to recreate the "ponderous obfuscation" of the 19th Century poetry of the protagonists. It could be improved with some good editing, but then again I am the type of American who could not be expected to fully understand this type of thing.

In her own introduction, A. S. Byatt ((Antonia Susan Byatt née Drabble) discusses how she wanted to write about *Possession*, the "relations between living and dead minds" (i.e., does the literary scholar possess the author who is the object of her research or vice versa), and "a parody of every possible form, popular and 'high culture' ". The following summary makes no attempt to incorporate every literary reference, interconnection, and plot element.

8.3 Summary of the Novel

8.3.1 Part-I (Chapter 1 to 14)

Chapter 1

September 1986: Roland Michell (Roland) is a 29 y/o literary researcher, a Ph.D. in literature from Prince Albert College in 1978. He is researching Randolph Henry Ash (RHA), a noteworthy though fictitious Victorian poet, at the London Library. Ash was the subject of his dissertation. He works part-time for the noted Ash scholar James Blackadder (JB) in JB's "Ash Factory" at the British Museum. JB, who is a Scot, has been editing the poet's *Complete Works* since 1951. Roland is looking for sources to Ash's poem *Garden of Prosperpina* [Persephone].

Reading RHA's copy of Giambattista Vico's *Principj di Scienza Nuova* ["New Science", author lived 1668-1744], he comes across drafts of two previously unknown letters in RHA's handwriting addressed to an unnamed woman. RHA refers to how she impressed him at the breakfast held at Crabb Robinson's [1777-1867], and how they seemed to understand each other and various current literary topics such as Hugo's play *Inez de Castro* and the essayist Richard Steele's tale of the Robinson Crusoe-like figure, Alexander Selkirk. Roland infers the letters date after 1856, when RHA published *Gods, Men and Heroes*. He decides to steal the letters and not mention them to JB for the time being.

Chapter 2

Opens with a quotation from RHA's 1840 Icelandic-Nordic epic poem, *Ragnarök*. Mortimer P. Cropper (MPC) is Trustee of the Stant Collection at Robert Dale Owen University in Harmony City, New Mexico, the curator of a large collection of RHA correspondence and memorabilia. He is trying to possess all of RHA that he can.

Roland ponders the disappointments he has met in life, his meager existence and sense of failure. He lives with Val, who calls him Mole. They live frugally in a dumpy basement room, decorated with photos of paintings of RHA and reeking of cat urine from the landlady Mrs. Irving's flat above. Val once wrote an essay on RHA, which led to an unjust charge that Roland had helped her. Val earns most of the income and Roland is essentially living off her. Val and Roland have a rather unhappy relationship--she is bitter about the menial work she performs. He thinks of

his more successful departmental rival, Fergus Wolff, and wonders who RHA was writing to.

Chapter 3

Roland goes to Bloomsbury, photocopies the letters. He consults Crabb Robinson's diary--Crabb was a man who had known all the major literary figures of the day--at Dr. William's library. He learns that in June 1858, RHA had met "Miss LaMotte" and "Miss Glover" for the first time at his breakfast party. Miss LaMotte is the daughter of the writer of *Mythologies*, Isidore LaMotte.

Back at the British Museum, JB, 54 y/o, works with his assistant Paola. JB was asked to edit the *Complete Poems and Plays* of RHA in c. 1959, with support from Lord Ash, RHA's heir. Roland tells him about the Vico, though not specifically about the letters he has stolen. JB tells him about Isidore LaMotte, the author of *Mythologies*, an 1832 book about the legends of Bretagne (French, in English=Brittany). Miss LaMotte was the author of *Last Things*, various children's stories, and *Tales Told in November*. He mentions Ellen Best Ash (EBA or Ellen), RHA's wife, who wrote a personal journal, and a single book called *Helpmeets* (about wives of great men such as Tennyson).

He encounters Fergus, who when asked tells him Isidore's daughter was named Christabel [Madeleine] LaMotte (CLM). She also wrote the strange epic poem *The Fairy Melusina* in the 1860's, published it in the 1870's. He describes its plot (p. 40), an old and oft-told tale about a woman who is half-human and half-snake. Melusina married Raimondin, bears his children, but despite her warning he spies on her one day in her bath and discovers that she has the form of a serpent below the waist.. Fergus mentions that Dr. Maud Bailey, with whom he has had an affair, is an expert on CLM. She runs a Women's Resource Centre in Lincoln [Lincolnshire is on the west coast, north of London]. The other expert is Prof. Leonora Stern from Tallahassee.

Chapter 4

Opens with a quote from *The Fairy Melusina*. Roland has already read some books about CLM. CLM's grandparents Jean-Baptiste and Emilie LaMotte had fled the Terror of 1793 in France and escaped to England. Emilie's brother Raoul de Kercoz stayed behind to maintain the family manor Kernemet, in Brittany, France. Isidore was born in 1801, married Arabel Gumpert 1823. Their daughters were

Sophie (born 1830, married Sir George Bailey of Seal Close in Lincolnshire) and Christabel (CLM, born 1825). CLM had a small inheritance and lived with Blanche Glover (BG), who was also artistically inclined and who committed suicide by drowning in 1861. After BG died, CLM went to live with her sister Sophie and wrote no more poetry, dying in 1890 at the age of 65. [There is much discussion throughout the novel exploring attitudes of feminists to the various women depicted including CLM and Ellen. Blanche and CLM were assumed to be lesbians.]

Roland goes to visit Maud Bailey in Lincoln, at Lincoln University. She is tall, cold, at times seeming hostile. CLM had bequeathed her papers to her niece May Bailey (Maia Thomasine Bailey). May married her first cousin and was Maud's GG GM, thus Maud is CLM's GGG niece (but see Chap 28). She knows of no journal of CLM and of only a few letters, kept by Sir George Bailey at Seal Court, but he is hostile to literary research.

Roland mentions the letters he has stolen to Maud. She has found only one reference to RHA in CLM's letters, an 1869 note to William Rossetti referring somewhat hostilely to RHA's poem *The Incarcerated Sorceress* [is she CLM?]. They visit the Resource Centre.

Roland reads from BG's journal about her homelife with CLM ("The Princess") starting in 1858, the breakfast at Crabb Robinson's with RHA, etc. BG painted "Christabel before Sir Leoline", a title referring to the Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem *Christabel*, after which CLM is presumably named. CLM had become exercised over a letter she received from RHA (one of those for which Roland has the draft). CLM is finishing the poem *The Glass Coffin* (a fairy tale also told by the Grimm brothers). BG describes a prowler (RHA?), and later CLM seems to be hiding something from her.

Roland shows Maud the 2 stolen letters, and she is intrigued to learn the possible connection with RHA--it would change Ash scholarship. She puts up Roland for the night, gives him *Tales for Innocents* to read. He reads tales about a Queen, and a shoemaker, and notes illustrations by BG. The tales are derived from the Grimm brothers and from Ludwig Tieck. A woman gives birth to a boy who is half-hedgehog. Maud feels CLM dislikes children.

Maud is a Norfolk Bailey, whereas Sophie LaMotte had married a Lincolnshire Bailey, two family groups which do not get along. Maud recalls a poem which she

knew by CLM about the Cumaean Sibyl. Maud had written a paper on "Marginal Beings and Liminal Poetry" [Liminal means at the limits of perception], and Roland notes a connection between RHA's incarcerated sorceress and CLM's *In-Pace*. They discuss how they came to their current literary interests, their educations. Maud offers to take him to the environs of Seal Court, where CLM lived out her last years.

Maud muses about her affair with Fergus. Only in the privacy of the bathroom does she unwrap and let fall her lovely yellow hair--Fergus had challenged her to let it be seen uncovered.

Roland reads *The Glass Coffin* from *Tales for Innocents*. A tailor rescues a girl with long golden hair, trapped in a glass coffin...

Chapter 5

Maud and Roland visit the wolds (upland open country) of Lincolnshire. They see Seal Court in the distance, the village Croysant le Wold, and the St. Etheldreda's church in whose yard CLM is buried. He reads the tombstone for CLM, born 1825, died 1890. The neglected gravesite was tended by Leonora the previous summer.

Walking up the hill, Roland rescues an elderly lady, Joan Bailey, whose wheelchair has become stuck in the mud. She is wife of Sir George Bailey, who arrives soon after. He is gruff and inhospitable, but Joan invites Maud and Roland into Seal Court and George acquiesces. It is a decaying manor house, much of which is closed off, poorly heated and in poor repair, no longer provided with servants to help the elderly couple. He is interested in horses and mentions Tommy Bailey, Maud's great-uncle, who rode the horse Copenhagen. George's GG GF (also Sir George) planted the woodlands. They try to make conversation, and Maud and Roland mention their interest in CLM. Sir George disparages her and praises RHA. Maud mentions CLM's description of the Seal Court winter garden. George also disparages Leonora, who he ran off at gunpoint. Joan offers to show the two CLM's former room.

In CLM's room, Maud notices the dolls and recalls a CLM poem about "Dolly keeps a secret". She deduces this may have been a clue and finds in dolly's cot packets of letters from RHA and CLM. George takes the letters, and they return downstairs. The foursome debates what to do next. George wants to let dead bones lie still. Joan reads the first letter, the final version of RHA's 1858 first introductory letter to CLM. In addition to his letter to her, there is a packet of her responses to his

letters. CLM is not inclined to receive his visit... They read the final letters. CLM asks for her letters back, which RHA agrees to, though asking her not to destroy them. George fears a scandal. Maud and Roland work to convince George to let the letters be studied, but he is reluctant and wants advice.

Later, Maud and Roland worry that MPC will try to acquire these letters. They agree to keep their existence secret for now.

Chapter 6

Humorous description of MPC's visit to an elderly lady, Mrs. Daisy Wapshott, who has a letter. It is from RHA to Daisy's husband Rodney's mother Sophia, a "godchild" to RHA [apparently not CLM's sister], and it mentions ducks and drakes. MPC surreptitiously photographs it. This is one of the few instances when RHA displayed any patience toward a child. MPC offers to buy the letter for a handsome price. He is flamboyant and drives a large black Mercedes.

MPC contemplates the autobiography he may write. His G GM Priscilla Penn Cropper received a rebuffing letter from RHA regarding her interest in the occult and spirit communications, etc. He muses on the writings of RHA, including *Ragnarök* and the love poem sequence *Ask to Embla*. MPC has written *The Great Ventriloquist*, RHA's biography. He recalls RHA's visit to France with his new bride Ellen in 1848, to the Fontaine de Vaucluse and the source of the Sorgue (a site Petrarch is said to have lived at after the death of Laura [de Sade, in 1348], the lovely married woman with golden hair described in his sonnets).

Like Petrarch's Laura and Dante's Beatrice, MPC believes Embla represents a real woman in RHA's life. He ponders Ellen's reluctance to marry RHA and her father's doubts about him--she was 36 when she married him. He recalls how Victorian men turned to the underworld of prostitutes to satisfy their urges--did the prim Ellen satisfy the sensual RHA reflected in this poem, or did she hide a more passionate nature, or did RHA simply sublimate his desires?

MPC calls to set up a meeting with Miss Beatrice Nest Ph.D.

Chapter 7

Miss Beatrice Nest is like a large-breasted Fafnir, guarding her hoard of Ellen Best Ash's papers, which she has been charged with editing on the advice of her mentor, Professor Bengtsson. Ellen wrote a journal, and Roland arrives ahead of

MPC to view it. Beatrice reluctantly allows him to. Ellen had read *The Fairy Melusina* in 1872 and made an entry to this effect. Beatrice mentions to MPC what Roland is researching, and MPC recalls a pale photo of CLM in the Stant collection.

Roland reads on, finds Ellen admiringly describing *The Fairy Melusina* as truly original, etc., an unexpected attitude regarding a woman who may have been RHA's mistress. Ellen believes she has at least not prevented her husband's genius, even if she has not facilitated it.

Back home, Roland finds a letter from Joan Bailey permitting Maud and him to review the letters they hold. Val arrives in a Porsche driven by Euan MacIntyre, a solicitor who has provided her work and is taking a fancy to her.

Chapter 8

Roland and Maud go over the letters in Sir George Bailey's cold library. He is annoyed at Maud's terms--she will read CLM's letters and he will read RHA's. RHA seems to have read Christabel's insect poems. He seems to have been under stress.

The individual letters are quoted. CLM is concerned about their letters being seen by others. RHA speaks of her intelligence, the nature of poetry versus novels, her work *The Drowned City* (on the drowned City of Is/Ys, which Queen Dahud, the sorceress, ruled). Maud explains this was a Breton legend like *The Standing Stones*.

Back at her flat, Maud learns by letter that Leonora Stern is coming. CLM's riddle about an Egg and her need for solitude is quoted. Fergus has also written Maud, saying Roland is not in her class, wants to consult her archives about a "siege-paper" he wishes to write, asks if she has read Lacan [Jacques Lacan, a French Freudian psychoanalyst 1901-1981]. Leonora's letter refers to her interest in female imagery and CLM's lesbian sexuality in *Melusina* and *Drowned City*, of water, milk and amniotic fluid, etc. She wants Maud to present a paper to the Sapphic society.

Next day at Seal Court, she visits the winter garden which CLM had loved, sees no fish in the pond described by CLM. It is snowing. Maud and Roland are unable to return to town, and are invited to stay the night. Joan speaks of Maud's beauty, but Roland mentions Val as his girlfriend. They go upstairs, Maud is wary of Roland, undresses in the bathroom, he tries to look through the keyhole to see if it is occupied, she is startled by him--she has let down her hair (thus now undisguised, as in *Melusina*).

Chapter 9

CLM's story *The Threshold* is quoted. The Childe [youth of gentle birth] encounters three bone cracking white ladies. He chooses the 3rd, which has only a lead casket, and he will go with her. The standing stones in the moor lead to a descending track...

Chapter 10

More of the letters between RHA and CLM are read by Roland and Maud.

RHA sends her a poem. Comments on her metaphor of entrapment. He wants to write a poem on insect life and the life of Jan Swammerdam [1637-1680, Dutch naturalist and microscopist, author of *Historia Generalis Insectorum* on the natural history and metamorphosis of insects, said in this novel to be the inventor of the microscope]. He speaks of her Fairy project.

CLM demurs, says she lives quietly, neither calls nor receives calls, has read all his poems. His poem *Ragnarök* was the cause of a crisis in her simple religious faith, in making Holy Scripture like any other Wonder Tale. She wants to write an epic poem. She encloses 2 poems, "Metamorphosis" (about a butterfly) and "Psyche" (ants).

RHA speaks of his religious views as reflected in *Ragnarök*, of Odin as the Wanderer, etc. He is not an atheist. He encourages her to write her epic.

CLM is full of doubt, again asks him about Christianity, cites his Lazarus poem *Déjà-vu or the Second Sight*, speaks of séances at Mrs. Lees, ...

RHA is only sure of the life of the Imagination (like Keats).

CLM speaks again of Jesus, the poetry of the King James Bible, a lecture she attended on Spiritual Manifestations... She wants him to leave her alone with her simple faith, or she will be a Lost Soul, her autonomy is threatened. She ponders whether to ask him not to write again.

RHA is relieved she has not actually asked him not to write. He asks about her Melusine epic.

CLM says that she has been sick, as has Blanche, and mentions her Dog Tray... She tells how the Melusina project began, how her father told her the tale of Mélusine. He had hoped to be a French Grimm. The Druids, Menhirs, Dolmens,

Dames Blanches (white ladies). Sophie had no interest in these things. CLM had learned French, Latin, Greek, Breton, and German. The nature of the fairy Melusine, her progeny...

RHA has nearly finished *Swammerdam*. He wants to know why her father named her Christabel, was it after Coleridge's unfinished poem *Christabel*? He wanted to hear from Coleridge how it ended (though he is now dead). He praises her Melusina concept.

CLM met Coleridge only as an infant. Coleridge said her name was beautiful, rested his hand on her golden curls, hoped her name would not be an ill omen, implying the heroine was destined for tribulation. More about Melusina and *Tales Told in November*...

RHA has been to Richmond Park and imagines CLM's home and hopes to see it...

CLM is worried about what the world and his wife will say and wants to end their conversation.

RHA argues they can correspond as poets rather than as man and woman.

CLM wants her freedom even from him. *Bethany* is her cottage. She and her companion BG have a pact to live the life of the Mind, renounce the outside world. He is a threat to her quiet world.

RHA is distressed that he has not heard from her, though he sent *Swammerdam* to her.

CLM says his letter and poem did not reach her, it was taken by Blanche. She wants to walk with him in Richmond Park to make it up to him.

RHA recalls meeting her in the park. They are now corresponding via an alternate address, a type of subterfuge.

CLM again speaks about Mrs. Lees' séances.

RHA describes to her how magnets are naturally attracted. He professes his love for her.

CLM cannot let him burn her up. She wants her solitude, not a limited combustion with him.

RHA follows up on the metaphor of combustion.

CLM has met with him again, will meet with him, is in love.

RHA has been to her house, loves his wife and also her, and recognizes he is betraying his wife.

... [More professions of love by both.]

RHA speaks of a journey originally planned with his naturalist friend Francis Tugwell, but Tugwell has backed out and now RHA invites her to come.

CLM has decided to join him.

Chapter 11

RHA's poem *Swammerdam* is quoted.

Chapter 12

Begins with a furtive poem by CLM.

Maud and Roland have come to Bethany in Richmond, CLM's former house, now restored. Maud suspects CLM accompanied RHA to North Yorkshire in June 1859 on his natural history expedition. RHA was gone for a month, ostensibly traveling alone, after Tugwell backed out. RHA's writing then was influenced by Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published 1859.

Letters from RHA to Ellen during his trip are quoted. He tells her of his steady love. He speaks of the Development Theory (of Darwin), and Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. His letter mentions "This genial Hob cures the whooping cough". Roland notes MPC has traced this trip in detail, but was unaware he had a companion.

Blanche died in June 1860, drowning herself. She left a note saying she could not pay her debts and was now superfluous. Roland and Maud do not know what happened to CLM during the year leading up to Blanche's death, but one of her notes mentions a Hob who cures whooping cough. They decide to review Ellen's journal to see if they can find an indication of CLM's presence with RHA on his trip.

Maud tries to contact Roland, gets Val. Val resents this, thinks she Val is superfluous.

Roland and Maud meet with Beatrice to review Ellen's journal for June 1859: Ellen senses something seems amiss with her servant Bertha. Patience, her sister,

arrives with her children. Bertha is increasingly sullen...something ails her. She has sinned, is pregnant, and must be let go. She will not name the father [we never learn who the father is]. Ellen ponders with ironic reflection the freedom in chess of the Queen compared to the King. She receives a jet brooch and a poem from RHA. She receives a letter from a stranger woman [BG] asking for an interview, then another. Finally Ellen and BG meet, Ellen writes "that matter is now I hope quite at an end and wholly cleared up." RHA is not a divine being. Bertha slips out in the night, who has she gone to? Laying in bed all day, Ellen resolves to be quick and lively when RHA returns.

They find a letter to Ellen from Blanche Glover, the woman who insisted on meeting with her regarding "a matter of life and death". In another letter, Ellen has kept BG's "Evidence". Was this *Swammerdam*?

Fergus comes upon Maud at Blackadder's, pries into what she has been up to, warns her that he will find out on his own.

Roland and Maud meet, discuss the coincidences in the Yorkshire setting and what RHA and CLM have written during June 1859 regarding City of Is, the Hob, water and stones, waterfalls, fountains, etc. They note an identical line in *Melusina* and *Ask to Embla*. The search for proof that the lovers were in Yorkshire is starting to possess Maud.

Chapter 13

Begins with excerpt from *Ragnarök*.

Maud and Roland have come to the Yorkshire seaside. Roland reads Leonora's description of CLM's landscape, watery beings, Dahud and the Fairy Melusina, sexual imagery, etc., while Maud reads Cropper's account of RHA's Yorkshire trip. Cropper suggests that RHA was having a mid-life crisis, seeing decay and decline, etc. Maud ponders the moon...

They note passages about gloves in RHA and CLM...

A letter from RHA on Whitby, his visit to stores selling carved jet (lignite). He has sent her a piece of jet jewelry and a poem. Bracelets with hair... The shopkeeper notes Maud's jet hair brooch, says it is by a noted artist Isaac Greenberg, and predates 1861. Maud lets her bundled golden hair fall when she hands over the brooch She has apparently inherited this brooch from CLM.

Chapter 14

Another letter from RHA to Ellen. Roland and Maud explore the creeks and pools of the area. They go to Boggle Hole. Roland and Maud discuss returning, his failed relationship with Val. Roland suggests she let her hair out from its constant covering, and she complies.

8.3.1.1 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/Phrase/sentence.

- 1) Which country does A.S.Byatt belong?
- 2) Which prize has A.S.Byatt got for possession?
- 3) When did A.S.Byatt get Booker prize for 'Possession'?
- 4) How old is Roland Michell ?
- 5) What is the research topic of Roland?
- 6) Who does decide to steal the letters and not mention them to JB for the time being?
- 7) Where does Roland work?
- 8) What is the name of father of Miss LaMotte'?
- 9) Who is the author of 'Last things', Various children stories, and Tales told in November.
- 10) What is the name of RHA's wife?
- 11) Which Grange epic poem has been written by Christ able (Modeleine) Lamotte [CLM] in 1860, published it in the 1870's?
- 12) Who had fled the terror of 1793 in France and escaped to England?
- 13) Who had written a paper on "Marginal Beings and luminal poetry".?
- 14) Where is Charitable [Madeleine] LaMotte] buried?
- 15) Why do Maua and Roland worry?
- 16) What does (MPC) Mortimer. P. Cropper believes about RHA'S life?
- 17) Who does want to write a poem on insect life and the life of Jan Swammerdam (1637- 1680).

- 10) Roland and Maud go over the letters in -----'s cold Library.
 a) RHA b) CIM c) JB d) Sir George Bailey.
- 11) ----- died in June 1860 drowning herself .
 a) CIM b) Maud Bailey c) Sophie d) Blanche Glover
- 12) Roland and Maud meet with ----- to review falen's Journal for June 1859.
 a) Blanche Glover b) Val c) Beatrice d) Loura.
- 13) Roland and Maud discuss returning, his failed relationship with-----
 a) Val b) Beatrice c) Bailey d) Ellen .
- 14) CIM Speaks again of Jesus, the poetry a lecture she attended on spiritual Manifestations.
 a) Keats b) Coleridge c) King James' Bible. d) Petrarch.
- 15) CLM met----- only as an infant.
 a) Keats b) Coleridge c) words worth d) Fancy son.

8.3.1.2 Glossary and Notes.

- ③ **dummy:** (adj): short and stout.
- ③ **menial** (adj): requiring little skill and locking starts.
- ③ **liminal** (aj): at the limits of perception.
- ③ **incarcerate** : (v) imprison.
- ③ **Sorcet** (n) (fem. Sorceress). A person believed to practice magic
- ③ **gruff:** (adj): (of a voice) rough and low in pitch
- ③ **acquiesce** (v): accept something without protest.
- ③ **Manor:** (n): a large country house with lands.
- ③ **disparage** (v) speak of (someone or something) as being of little worth, belittle; demean; depreciate, insult etc.
- ③ **deduce** (v) arrive at (on opinion) by reasoning/ draw a conclusion.
- ③ **reluctant** (adj) unwilling and hesitant.

- ③ **surreptitiously** (adv): done secretly.
- ③ **flamboyant** (aj): confident or lively in a noticeable way.
- ③ **Metamorphosis** : (n) : the transformation of an insect or amphibian from an immature form or larva to an adult form. (2) a change form or nature.
- ③ **demur** : (adj) : reserved, modest, and shy.
- ③ **Subterfuge** : (n) : a trick or deception used in order to achieve one's goal.
- ③ **Combustion** (n) : the process of burning
- ③ **furtive** (adj) : trying to avoid being noticed in secretive or guilty way.
- ③ **furtive** (adj) : trying to avoid being noticed in a secretive or guilty way.
- ③ **ostensibly** (adv) : apparently true, but not necessarily so.
- ③ **superfluous** : (adj) : unnecessary because more than is needed.
- ③ **Whooping cough** (n) : a contagious disease chiefly affecting children, caused by bacteria and characterized by coughs. Followed by a rasping indrawn breath.
- ③ **brooch** : (n) an ornament fastened to clothing with a hinged pin and catch.
- ③ **Coincidence** (n) a remarkable occurrence of events or circumstances at the same time but without apparent connection .
- ③ **ponder** (v) : to think, to consider carefully.
- ③ **Lignite** (n) : soft brownish coal.
- ③ **Creek** (n) : an inlet in a shoreline./ a stream or small river.

8.3.2 Part II Chapter (15-28)

Chapter 15

Description of the railway trip of RHA and CLM to Yorkshire. They are travelling together, she agrees she should behave as if his wife. He gives her a ring. They check into lodgings. They walk by the sea, and she asks if they have seals and selkies there. At the lodge, she is calm. They go upstairs, and he takes her in his arms in bed, she opens herself to him. Her passion and adeptness in love making surprises him and he wonders at her past experiences. But there are telltale signs she

was a virgin. She knows she is not safe being there with him. They go to Boggle Hole, view the ammonites.

Chapter 16

Quotes the Poem to *The Fairy Melusine* [spelling of this name is inconsistent].

Chapter 17

JB works on RHA's *Mummy Possesst*, of 1863, about séances. Fergus is looking for Maud and Roland, mentions to JB Roland's new discovery having to do with CLM. He next visits Val looking for Roland.

MPC is with Hildebrand Ash, son of Baron Ash. Fergus meets MPC--Fergus wants to know what Roland has discovered and tweaks MPC's curiosity.

Chapter 18

Poem of gloves by CLM.

Maud reads Blanche's suicide note: Blanche gives away her jet Friendship brooch from CLM. She has little good to say about CLM.

Roland and Maud wonder what happened between June 1859 and summer 1860, about which there are few clues.

Leonora Stern arrives to stay and sweeps up Maud in her arms... She has received a letter from a young French scholar, Dr. Ariane Le Minier, about CLM. It describes a letter from Sabine de Kercoz in the 1860's to a cousin about her relation, CLM.

Sabine's letter tells of the arrival of CLM on a stormy night.

Maud phones Roland.

MPC nearly runs down Maud and Leonora in the street. He goes to Seal Court, persuades Sir George to put down his gun, and entices him with the prospects of big money for his letters.

George accosts Maud, accuses her of not mentioning the potential value of the letters. Leonora is tactless with him.

Solicitor Toby Byng call JB, wants to know the value of certain letters.

Paola calls for Roland to warn him that JB is searching for him about the letters...

Maud and Roland decide to flee to Brittany.

Chapter 19

Opens with a quote of *City of Is*.

Maud and Roland are aboard a ship to France. They muse on the sea phosphorescent with herring semen, which Michelet has likened to a sea of milk.

Ashore, they meet with Dr. Ariane Le Minier in order to view Sabine de Kercoz's papers. They discuss Finistère (the western end of Brittany/Bretagne), the Bay of the Dead (under which Is is said to lie), etc.

They read Sabine's journal: It begins in October 1859. CLM is taken in by Sabine's father Raoul, Baron de Kercoz. Their manor is named Kernemet. Sabine's mother is dead. She is 20 years old. CLM arrived in a storm with dog Tray (named from King Lear), half-fainting, asking for Sanctuary. Her hair is silvery-fair in color, her face white. The house servant/nurse Gode predicts that she will get stronger. Sabine has written down the story of Is or Ys, asks CLM to read it...They discuss poetic things... CLM writes no letters, hears from no one. On Nov. 1 (Toussaint), Sabine's father tells the story of Merlin and Vivien... The next night, Gode tells a ghostly tale of the Baie des Trépassés, of the love between a sailor and the miller's daughter, how he marries the smith's daughter instead, how a tiny naked child dancing leads the miller's daughter over a cliff, etc. CLM turns pale from this story. Sabine begins to dislike her. By Christmas, it is becoming apparent CLM is pregnant. CLM never mentions it though, seems a little mad. Even Sabine's father cannot get CLM to speak of it. On April 30, CLM goes missing for 2 days. Sabine and her father inquire at the Convent of St. Anne, but she is not there according to the Mother Superior. On May 8, CLM returns, no longer pregnant. She will not speak of the child, and Raoul and Sabine wonder intensely about this. Has she killed it? A note arrives from Michelet (a friend of RHA) to CLM--RHA is looking for her--but she does not read his letter. The journal ends. Ariane's note to Leonora tells of how Sabine died.

Poems left behind by CLM at Kernemet tell of a Lady bearing Pain, seems to imply the death of a child, spilt milk.

Chapter 20

A poem from CLM seems to speak of death.

MPC is trying to persuade George Bailey to give him the letters, giving a lecture. The letter from CLM to Mrs. Priscilla Penn Cropper regarding séances, etc., appears to show a derangement. MPC recalls how RHA had a "Gaza exploit" at a séance at Mrs. Lees. MPC wonders if CLM was also present at that séance. JB reads Mrs. Lees' book on séances, *The Shadowy Portal*. Mrs. Lees' and Miss Judge's description of RHA's "Gaza Exploit". Miss LaMotte was present at this séance, and during it we hear voices say "There is no child", "Remember the stones". RHA cries out "You shall not escape me", rushes to CLM, seizes her and demands "Where is the child Tell me what they have done with the child?" CLM faints and is unconscious for 2 days.

JB is trying to insure that the Ash-LaMotte papers will be kept in England, contrary to Market Forces. He appears on a television interview to make this appeal, along with Leonora Stern. Leonora tells him she believes she knows where Maud and Roland have gone, and they go to have a drink to talk this over.

Chapter 21

A quotation from RHA's *Mummy Possesst*, containing references to a drowned world, Actinia (a genus of sea anemone), "I held your fainting form against my breast", the Countess of Claregrove who has lost her child...

Chapter 22

Val is at the horse races in Newmarket with her new boyfriend Euan MacIntyre. Euan has a syndicate connection with the winning horse Reverberator. Toby Byng joins them, and mentions his legal involvement in the wrangling over the Ash-LaMotte correspondence. They discuss legal copyright and ownership issues.

Chapter 23

Roland and Maud are in the 3rd week of the Brittainy trip, at the Baie des Trépassés, holding hands, viewing the Ile de Sein, discussing its meanings, pondering CLM's Queen of the Drowned City, Dahud. They spot Leonora and JB and flee, aware that they must have talked to Ariane. They are confused about their apparently growing love relationship, and cannot verbalize it--their actions are driven in part by the fate of the dead poets, on whom they are focusing their discussion.

They discuss the images of spilt milk and apparently dead child (p. 454), wonder if CLM killed her child. CLM had stayed with friends in London in the early 1860's. Maud and Roland distrust romantic love, sleep side by side, but avoid sexual contact or any direct discussion about where this might be going.

JB and Leonora arrive at their hotel, she aggressively runs into MPC's Mercedes, damaging its bumper. MPC tells them that Maud and Roland have checked out. MPC dines with JB and Leonora--he says he intends to learn what happened to the child, while JB wishes RHA and CLM to rest in peace. Leonora invites JB up to her room, but he declines. The next day, they compare MPC to the Ankou [in Brittainy legend, the personification of death who comes to collect the souls of passed-over humans].

Chapter 24

October. Maud is back in Lincoln, and Roland is nearby. He has not returned to JB, feels awkward about his presence with her. Euan MacIntyre calls him up, and the three meet with Val and Toby Byng. Val plans to marry Euan and appears very happy. They discuss copyright and ownership issues. They recall that after CLM died, Sophie sent a packet of CLM's papers and poems to Sophie's daughter May. May married her first cousin in 1878, a marriage disapproved of by Sir George Bailey. Euan shows them a letter from CLM to Sophia Bailey, May 1890. In it CLM says all her books and copyrights are to go to Maia Thomasine Bailey--CLM hopes that May will someday take an interest in these things. The letters in dispute therefore belong to Maud. They want Toby to surreptitiously assist in dealing with George Bailey, who is his client.

Roland feels marginal to Maud's success and family. Beatrice Nest calls Maud--she is worried about MPC that he has been reading about the funeral of RHA, and is conspiring with Hildebrand Ash to dig up a box buried with RHA in his grave at Hodershall. In the past Lord Ash has blocked this, and such an action would require a Faculty member from the Bishop and approval of the vicar, Mr. Drax, etc. Maud plans to meet with Euan to plan a course of action to catch MPC in the act. Roland declines to stay with her for the time being.

Chapter 25

Excerpt from Ellen's journal, Nov. 25, 1889 is quoted. RHA is dying, asks her to burn what the public should not see of his letters, does not wish to have his things

picked over by vultures. She recalls their "foolish years of separation." [Was this after the affair?]

Excerpt from MPC's book: Mentions that the burial site of RHA contains a box laid in by Ellen of "our letters and mementoes", "too dear to burn, too precious ever to expose to the public view". She was buried in the same site 4 years later. MPC mentions Rosetti's decision to disinter poems he had written to his wife and buried with her.

A flashback to Ellen as RHA lies dead in their house. She says of her marriage it was "forty-one years with no anger", but also "It was all a question of silence." She views his watch, his books and collections, an airtight specimen box. She gathers up a bracelet of hair she had worked out of his and her hair, his watch, an unfinished letter from him [to CLM], a letter to Ellen from CLM, and letter in a sealed envelope to RHA from CLM. She reads the letter to her from CLM. CLM knows RHA is gravely ill, writes to ask her for absolution and forgiveness, says she meant no harm, hopes Ellen will give the sealed letter to RHA.

She considers writing back to CLM, muses that she has always known about the affair, but she cannot bring herself to give RHA the letter from CLM, and she ends up not replying to CLM. In a moment of wandering thought, RHA says "summer fields...I saw her [this seems like CLM, but proves to be May]. I should have--looked after her. How could I?". He tells Ellen he has placed "her [May's] hair" in his watch. Ellen has the very pale gold hair before her from the watch.

Ellen recalls that in autumn 1859, RHA had confessed to her that he had been in love with another woman at Yorkshire that summer that he was with her there. Ellen told him she already knew from Blanche's visit--Blanche had brought the first copy of *Swammerdam* as evidence. A flashback to when Blanche visited Ellen, told of her former happiness with CLM. RHA says to Ellen that he expects he will not be seeing CLM again, and that anyway she has vanished. Ellen does not wish to hear more, "it is not between us."

During the last month of RHA's life, Ellen had found the unfinished letter from RHA to CLM. Dated c. Nov.1 but without year. In it, he asks forgiveness for his going to Kernemet (the manor in Brittany, where he met with Sabine) and for surprising her at the séance. She has been punishing him, and he feels cruelly treated, protests that he acted out of love, wishes she had not closed herself off to

him. He wants to know what became of the child. He recalls that at the séance someone said "You have made a murderess of me" and believes CLM directed this to him about the child.

Ellen decides to burn this letter, ponders that her life is built round a lie, that Randolph had been complicit in the charade, etc. She recalls her own honeymoon, the painful failed attempts at sex, his abstinence with her, her becoming a slave to him as a result of her inability to have sex. She has lied to her own sisters about her reasons for not having children. At least CLM had been like a wife to RHA, and was mother of his child.

She places in the box the unopened letter from CLM, the hair bracelet along with the blonde plait of hair from his watch (it is placed inside the bracelet, and no envelope is mentioned), and the bundle of RHA-EBA love letters. She should not have had to wait to marry until she was 36 y/o. In one of the letters, RHA develops the metaphor of anticipating that the white roses she has given him have a promise of richness and will eventually open--they cannot be pried open before they are ready. Ellen muses that perhaps someday justice will be done to CLM as a result of the letters being discovered.

Chapter 26

Excerpt from RHA *Garden of Proserpina*.

Roland is back at his room. His landlady has been taken away ill with a stroke. He learns that he has received job offers from Hong Kong, Amsterdam, and Barcelona. A generous letter of concern has arrived from JB. He muses... The 15 cats are hungry. He visits the garden, previously forbidden to him. Life is suddenly looking up for him.

Chapter 27

Excerpt from an RHA poem.

Beatrice has called a conference regarding the threat from MPC, with Roland, Maud, Euan, Val, JB, & Leonora attending. More discussion of ownership and copyrights of letters. Roland confesses how he came upon the original 2 letters, describes the quest, and receives the admiration and praise of JB. They wish to intercept the planned grave robbery by MPC. Roland apologizes to JB, says he felt possessed by the quest. JB offers him a full-time research fellowship.

Chapter 28

A chapter is on grave robbery by MPC and Hildebrand Ash. They go at 1 AM during an ever-increasing storm and open the grave. His Mercedes is crushed by a falling tree, and he is caught in the act by Roland, Maud, Leonora, JB, and Beatrice Nest. Back at the inn, they discuss ownership issues, etc. Maud wants to learn the end of the story, wants the box opened. Inside are found the hair bracelet, a blue envelope containing the plaited pale hair [of May], a package of letters, and the sealed letter.

In this never before seen letter from CLM to RHA, they find a photograph of a woman in bridal dress (Maia/May, whom Maud recognizes as her GG GM). CLM writes RHA to say they have a daughter, born in the Brittainy convent, cared for by Sophie as if her own daughter, married to a Squire, now a mother of a beautiful boy Walter. RHA had injured CLM at the séance. It was Blanche to whom she referred as herself having murdered--but she was willing to let RHA misinterpret that she meant the child. She asks his forgiveness and blessing. She had hidden the child from him, so he would not be able to take her away from her. She has lived like Melusina at her sister's home (at Seal Court). The child May did not love CLM or appreciate her poetry, and Sophie had required that May never learn who her true mother was. CLM has been punished for keeping the child from RHA. Maia laughed and played like Coleridge's limber elf, singing and dancing to itself (at the end of *Christabel*), did not like her name and preferred May. Quoting Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, CLM compares RHA to a dragon, a flaming presence which caused her to catch fire, and wonders if they will rise again like Milton's Phoenix--she is glad he was her dragon. Walter, RHA's grandson, has a poetic nature.

They discuss the implications of the letter, wonder why Ellen placed it in the box, or why she placed Christabel's blonde hair there? The woman in the photo resembles Christabel, and RHA. Beatrice is sad to think that RHA never knew of this letter.

Roland wonders with Maud what will happen to their relationship. He has good job offers now, and his male pride. They each profess their love. He knows they can think of a way to make it work, and they consummate their relationship at last.

8.3.2.1 Check Your Progress:

(A) Answer in a word/Phrase/Sentence.

- 1) What is the name of son of Baron Ash?
- 2) Who has written suicide note?
- 3) Why do Roland and Maud wonder?
- 4) Why does Paola call to Roland?
- 5) Where do Maud and Roland decide to flee?
- 6) When does Sabine's journal begin?
- 7) Who has written down the story of "Is or Ys"?
- 8) When had CIM stayed with friends in London?
- 9) What is the plan of Val about marriage?
- 10) What did Sophie send to her daughter?
- 11) What does Euan show them?
- 12) What does CIM say in that letter?
- 13) Where is the grave of RHA?
- 14) When had Ellen found the unfinished letter from RHA to CIM, Dated c. Nov 1. but unstated year?
- 15) From where has Roland received job offers?

(B) Fill in the blanks.

- 1) ----- arrives to stay and sweeps up Maud in her arms.
a) RHA b) JB c) Roland d) Leonora Stern.
- 2) ----- Toby Byng call JB, wants to know the value of certain letters.
a) Farmer b) Solicitor c) teacher d) policeman.
- 3) On April 30, CLM goes missing for ----- days.
a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 15
- 4) On May----- CLM returns, no longer pregnant.
a) 8th b) 9th c) 15th d) 16th

- 5) MPC is trying to persuade ----- to give him the letters giving a lecture.
a) Val b) George Bailey c) Maud d) Roland.
- 6) Val is at the horse races in New market with her new ----- Evan Macintyre.
a) Husband b) boyfriend c) Shopkeeper d) brother.
- 7) May married her first cousin is ----- a marriage disapproved of by Sir George Bailey.
a) 1890 b) 1878 c) 1850 d) 1880.
- 8) Ellen has lied to her own----- about her reasons for not having children.
a) Friends b) Husband c) Sisters d) brothers.
- 9) ----- Offers Roland a full time research fellowship.
a) RHA b) MPC c) CLM d) JB.
- 10) MPC and Hildebrand Ash go at ----- during an ever increasing storm and open the grove.
a) 1 PM b) 2 PM c) 1 AM d) 2 AM

8.3.2.2 Glossary and Notes.

- ③ **Séance** (n) : meeting at which people attempt to make contact with the dead.
- ③ **Virgin** (n) : a person who is inexperienced in a particular activity.
- ③ **ammonite** (n) : an extinct sea creature with a spiral shell, found as a fossil.
- ③ **accost** (v) : approach and speak to boldly or abrasively.
- ③ **Phosphorescence** (n) light that is given out by a substance without burring or heat.
- ③ **absolution:** (n) : formal forgiveness of person's sins.
- ③ **Complicity** (n) an involvement with others in an unlawful activity. Complicit (adj).
- ③ **Charade** (n) : an absurd pretence.
- ③ **abstinence** (n): the avoidance of something enjoyable, such as food or alcohol.

- 3) They don't have any clue about what happened between June 1859 and Summer 1860.
- 4) To warn him (Roland) that JB is searching for him about the letters.
- 5) Brittany. 6) In October 1859 . 7) Sabine
- 8) In the early, 1860's
- 9) Val plans to marry Élan and appears very happy. 10) A packet of CLM's papers and poems.
- 11) A letter from CIM to Sophie Bailey, May 1890.
- 12) All her books and copy rights are to go to Maia Tomas Bailey.
- 13) At Hoder shall 14) During the last month of RHA's life .
- 15) Hong Kong, Amsterdams, and Barcelona.

B)

- | | | | |
|------|-------|------|------|
| 1) d | 6) b | 2) b | 7) b |
| 3) a | 8) b | 4) a | 9) d |
| 5) b | 10) c | | |

8.5 Exercises:

A) Long Answer Type Questions:

- 1) Bring out the outline story of 'Possession'.
- 2) Comment Critically on 'Possession'
- 3) Write a brief summary of the novel

B) Write Short Notes.

- 1) Character Sketch:
 - (a) Randolph Henry ASH (RHN) (b) Chris table [Madeleine] LaMotte.
 - (c) Roland Michel. (d) Maud Bailey. (d) James Blackadder (JB)
- 2) Relationship between: (a) RHA and CLM (b) Roland and Maud.
- 3) Theme of the novel. 4) Significance of the title 'Possession'.

8.6 Further Readings:

Text Prescribed:

- A.S. Byatt: *Possession: A Romance*

Reference Books:

- Bradbury, Malcolm: *The Novel Today, Glasgow, F.C. Paperbook, 1978,1982.*
- Lubbock, Percy: *The Craft of Fiction*, London: Jonathan Cape,1965.
- Matz, Jesse: *The Modern Novel: A Short Introduction*, Oxford,Blackwell, 2004.

Websites: www.novel.com

www.studyguide.com

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Unit-9

Man and Superman : G. B. Shaw

Contents:

- 9.0 Objective
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Introduction to the Works of George Bernard Shaw
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 - 9.3.1 Check Your Progress
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- 9.5 Summary
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- 9.8 Exercises
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9.0 Objective:

After completing the study of this unit you will:

- know about the life and works of Bernard Shaw
- know about the outline and plot of the play
- learn the structure and act-wise summery of the play
- be able to answer the questions on this unit.

9.1 Introduction:

This unit discusses the life and works of the famous novelist George Bernard Shaw who was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary, the greatest and most diverse personalities of modern times. In addition to his life and works, this unit also presents the outline and plot of the drama. Besides, it also offers the structure and act-wise summary of the play. The reading of this unit will assist you and to read the original play of the Shaw.

9.2 Introduction to the Works of George Bernard Shaw:

It is with good reason that Archibald Henderson, official biographer of his subject, entitled his work *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*. Well before his death at the age of ninety-four, this famous dramatist and critic had become an institution. Bernard Shaw, the greatest of the many Irishmen who have written fine plays in the English language, was born on Saturday, July 26, 1856. His father, George Carr Shaw, the youngest son in a family of thirteen children, became a minor official in the Dublin law courts, but after a few years he retired on a small pension and went into business unsuccessfully as a corn merchant. He married the daughter of a country gentleman of Carlow, who soon found that her husband was drunkard and incapable of earning enough money to provide for her and the three children who were born to them, George Bernard Shaw and his two sisters. Mrs. Lucinda Gurley Shaw had a remarkable good singing voice. A gifted singer and music teacher, she led her son to develop a passion for music, particularly operatic. When Bernard Shaw was sixteen his mother and sisters left Dublin and went to live permanently in London, where Mrs. Shaw supported herself and her daughters by giving music lessons and singing at concerts.

Shaw's school career was undistinguished; he mentioned that he could learn only things in which he was interested, and little at school did interest him. Shaw, who was to insist that all art is didactic and viewed himself as a kind of teacher, had little respect for schoolmasters and formal education. First, his uncle, the Reverend George Carroll, tutored him. At the age of ten, he became a pupil at Wesleyan Connexional School in Dublin and later attended two other schools for short periods of time. He hated them all and declared that he learnt absolutely nothing. During early years of his education, his teachers also spoke of him disparagingly as 'a source of idleness in others, distracting them from their studies by

interminable comic stories.’ However, in spite of this prejudice and criticism of the teachers, Shaw as a young boy was better read than any of his classmates, and even many of his teachers. Shaw possessed certain qualities which are not always developed in the classroom: an acquisitive mind and the capacity for independent study.

A depleted family exchequer led Shaw to accept employment as a clerk in a Land Agency when he was sixteen. He proved to be an efficient, dependable employee and was properly rewarded at intervals. But he was never satisfied with such an occupation. Though he received little mother-love from Mrs. Shaw, the love of music that he gained from her soon proved itself useful in London, where one of his first positions when he took up journalism was as music critic on the *Star*, a London evening newspaper. Both as a critic of music, and a few years later, as a critic of plays for the *Saturday Review*, a weekly periodical, he wrote essays of very high quality which are still read and praised, more than half a century after they were first printed. Determined to become a professional writer, he resigned after five years of service and joined his mother, who was then teaching music in London. The year was 1876. During the next three years, he cheerfully permitted his mother to support him and concentrated largely on trying to support himself as an author. No less than five novels came from his pen between the years 1879 and 1883. The first, *Immaturity*, remained unpublished for some fifty years; four later ones finally did make their way into print. Best known is *Cashel Byron's Profession*, the story of a prize fighter. It was quite apparent that Shaw's genius was not that of the novelist. When Shaw himself turned to the writing of plays, he heard with the inner ear of a musician the words that he set down to be spoken by the actors, and his sentences consequently run with a rhythmical ease that makes them easy and pleasant to speak and hear. It is for this reason that the many very long speeches in Shaw's plays are able to hold our attention, whereas speeches of a similar length by other modern playwrights are often tedious, even though the subjects they deal with may be as important as Shaw's. The finest example of the influence of opera on his dramatic work is Act III of *Man and Superman*.

After settling in London, Bernard Shaw found it very difficult to live by writing, and for the first ten years he had to rely mainly upon his mother for food and lodging. Yet during those years he was laying the foundations of his career, joining political societies and addressing public meetings, sometimes at street corners. One

day in September 1884 he went to a hall in the City of London to hear a lecture by the American economist Henry George, the author of a well-known book entitled *Progress and Poverty*, who advocated that national revenue should be raised by a single tax on land values, instead of by numerous taxes on a variety of things. Henry George's lecture converted Shaw to Socialism, and almost at once he joined the newly founded Fabian Society. The Fabians wanted to bring about a gradual evolutionary one, from capitalism to socialism, and they had a powerful influence on British political life during the next forty or fifty years. Shaw credits the American with having roused his interest in economics and social theory; therefore, he had concerned himself chiefly with the conflict between science and religion. Told that no one could do justice to George's theories without being familiar with those of Karl Marx, Shaw promptly read a French translation of *Das Capital*, no English translation being then available. The reading of Marx also converted Shaw into socialism. Shaw's views on socialism and economic policy are largely based on Marxian principles.

In his early years as a socialist, Bernard Shaw believed that if the condition of civilized societies was to be improved, it must be done by legislation aiming at equality, reducing in various ways the fortunes of the rich in order to help and uplift the poor. Though he continued to preach equality for the remainder of his long life, as he grew older he trusted less in the power of Acts of Parliament to increase human welfare and happiness. He came round to the position that the first thing required in the making of a Good Society is not so much good laws as good men and women who are righteous in spirit and not merely well-intentioned and kind-hearted. Good people will make good laws, but good laws passed by a few do not necessarily make a good society.

When he was still a boy, Bernard Shaw had abandoned the Christian religion as it was practiced by the churches, which he believed had strayed far from the teachings of Christ. But though he would no call himself a Christian, many of his strongest convictions and most of his personal conduct were those of a religious man. He believed in sacredness of life. He became a vegetarian when he was twenty-five. His reading of the works of the English poet Shelley had some influence in leading him to refrain from eating meat, but stronger motive was his deep feeling that 'animals are our fellow creatures', not to be slain for human food.

In the next stage of his career, Shaw emerged as a literary, music and art critic. He was also influenced by William Archer, a distinguished dramatic critic now best remembered as the editor and translator of Ibsen. Politics and journalism occupied Bernard Shaw until 1898, when he reached the age of forty –two. Having failed as novelist, Shaw entered the world of theatre. He started writing plays in collaboration with William Archer. This was the beginning of his dramatic career in which, gradually, he acquired fame and reputation unsurpassed by any other dramatist of the world including Shakespeare. Shaw had a very long career as a dramatist. He began the illustrious career with *Widowers' Houses* in 1892. Structurally, it represents no departure from the tradition of the well-made play; that is, the action is plotted so that the key situation is exposed in the second act, and the third act is devoted to its resolution. But thematically, the play was revolutionary in England. The play dealt with the evils of London slums, in which at that time many filthy and decaying houses were owned by landlords who lived at ease elsewhere on the rents squeezed from poor and wretched tenants. A play on such a subject was something entirely new in the English theatres. It had no success, and when in the following years Shaw went on to write other plays about real human problems, such as prostitution (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*), war (*Arms and the Man*), religious intolerance (*The Devil's Disciple*), revenge (*Captain Brassbound's Conversion*) and so on. He was extremely unpopular with many people, and years were to pass before his plays brought him enough money to live on. For a gradually increasing number of people, however, he became a leader in new ways of thought and a champion of intellectual freedom.

Until Bernard Shaw began to write for the theatre, there had been no modern British dramatist who took current social, political, and religious problems as subjects for plays. As a dramatist, orator and social reformer, Shaw acquired immense popularity all the world over. He started out with the conviction that the emotional tangles of men and women had received far too much attention on the stage, and made up his mind to do in English what Henrik Ibsen had been doing in Norwegian since about 1875; namely, to write plays discussing public affairs which touched the lives of very large numbers of people.

Not until a season of intellectual drama was started at the Court Theatre in London in 1904 were Bernard Shaw's plays brought to the notice of a large audience. The experiment was so successful that it continued until 1907, by which time there

had been 711 performances of eleven of Shaw's plays there. *John Bull's Other Island* (a comedy about Irish politics) was the first play by Shaw that became popular. It was at the same theatre that *Man and Superman* was produced on 23rd May, 1905. In the character of Henry Straker, the chauffeur, it introduced a new type of working man who understood and delighted in modern machinery, and was destined to be more important in the technological age then approaching than the landed aristocracy who had for centuries been the ruling class. *Man and Superman*, called by Bernard Shaw 'Comedy and a Philosophy', is full of ideas which were then new and startling, but we can only here at Act III, which is a kind of dream happening to some of the characters who appear in the first two acts. Act III introduces three persons from the old Spanish legend of Don Juan—Juan himself; Donna Anna, one of the many women he betrayed; and the ghost of Anna's father, whom Don Juan had killed in a duel. They meet and converse with the Devil in Hell. Mozart, the great eighteenth-century Austrian composer, wrote opera (*Don Giovanni*) based on the Don Juan legend, and the sounds of Mozart's music were in Bernard Shaw's ears while he was writing the many extremely long speeches for this scene in Hell, which begins where Mozart's opera ends. The opinions expressed by the four characters during their argument, which lasts for about ninety minutes in performance on the stage, were invented wholly by Shaw. It is often said that the characters in his plays are merely mouthpieces for Shaw's personal opinions, but this cannot be true, because in each of his plays the various characters put forward opinions which conflict with each other, and Shaw leaves the reader or the spectator in the theatre to decide which is right. In the *Don Juan in Hell* scene the Devil tries to convince the others that human beings are so stupid and bad that nothing can save them from destruction. Don Juan claims that, on the contrary, there is in Man a spirit which inspires him to struggle upward towards the evolution of the Superman, who will be far wiser and better than Man is now. That spirit is named *The Life Force* in Bernard Shaw's plays. Shaw was always deeply interested in the *sound* of words as well as in their sense and meaning. As a young man he learned shorthand and always wrote his plays in it for his secretary to type out in England. This choice of shorthand as a working language was due both to its time-saving advantages and to its being based on phonetics, which always uses the same symbol for the same spoken sound. Shaw spent a good deal of time trying to persuade English people to adopt an enlarged alphabet. He wrote one of his most popular plays, *Pygmalion*, on the subject of correct pronunciation, and he directed that after he died a considerable

part of the large fortune he left should be used to finance any genuine scheme for bringing into common use his enlarged alphabet and reformed spelling. But the British have so far shown no inclination to adopt Bernard Shaw's system.

From 1905, when *Man and Superman*, his first great play, was performed, Shaw was the world's most famous living playwright, though he long remained unpopular with those who disliked his advanced views and his wish to reform society. Nevertheless it was at length widely recognized that he stood second only to Shakespeare among all the British playwrights and his writings were known and valued in all countries long before he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. Glimpses of the religious side of Shaw's nature appear in the majority of his plays, and very clearly in *Saint Joan*.

Shaw had an amazingly large number of love-affairs, enchantments and timely awakenings from them. While working with the Fabians, Shaw met the personable Charlotte Payne-Townshend, an Irish heiress deeply concerned with the problem of social justice. He was immediately attracted to her. After she had helped him through a long illness, the two were married in 1898. She became his modest but capable critic and assistant throughout the years of their marriage. A unique feature of Shaw's marriage was that his wife never allowed sexual consummation with him, so they had no children. Shaw believed that his playwriting must find its inspiration in serious political and social themes.

As a dramatist, orator and social reformer, Shaw acquired immense popularity all the world over. He came to be recognized and honoured as one of the greatest intellects of the modern age. He was even dreaded for his intellectual vigour and sharp satire. Both as a student of Ibsen and as a socialist, he discussed current social problems in his plays. Though Shaw did not enjoy foreign travel and went abroad very little—until his friends, especially his wife, persuaded him to visit Soviet Russia in 1931 and to go in 1932-33 on the voyage round the world, during which he visited Bombay. Shaw was in the widest sense an internationalist. In exile from his own land and living in England for whose people he had mixed feelings of affection, respect and derision. He was without racial prejudices and looked on all nations with a cool and impartial eye. He did not care particularly for any one nation as a political unit, but he was benevolent to all humanity as a matter of principle. In his eyes most political leaders were blunderers, insufficiently educated in the art of ruling, which he regarded as the highest art of all. In spite of his intense interest in political affairs,

however, Shaw will almost certainly be remembered in the future much more by his plays than by his ideas on government and public affairs. He wrote fifty plays. Best known among these are *Major Barbara* (1905), *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Heartbreak House* (1916), *Back to Methuselah* (1921), and *Saint Joan* (1923). On his 93rd birthday he told a reporter: “Death, now knocking at my door, is not an unwelcome guest.” A few weeks after his birthday, he fell while working in his garden and fractured his thigh. This proved fatal. Shaw passed off peacefully in 1950, at the age of ninety five, having produced his last important last play, *The Apple Cart*, some twenty years before, in 1929. The height of his fame was reached with *Saint Joan* in 1923, and it is most probable that this and several other of his plays will always be more highly thought of than *Back to Methuselah* (1922), which he himself regarded as his masterpiece.

Back to Methuselah, an enormously long work in five parts, fails as a play for more reasons than can be discussed within the limits of this introduction. Its importance among Shaw’s works comes from the clear statement of his *gospel* in the Preface, and its working-out in the dialogue of the five parts of the play. His gospel of Creative Evolution and his belief in the Life Force were opposed to Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by Natural Selection. In Darwin’s theory, the Survival of the Fittest comes about through the displacing of the weak by the strong, but the idea of Shaw’s Creative Evolution is that the fittest are those who survive by superior intelligence and by the exercise of will power. Shaw held that if we desire with passionate strength of will to be better and finer and to live longer, in fact to be changed into Superman, and if that strength of will is passed on to our descendants, what we desire will ultimately be brought about. The nations would then be ruled in wisdom and virtue, and war and all other evils would vanish from the earth.

Bernard Shaw was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary, the greatest and most diverse personalities of modern times. He has been called “the father of the theatre of ideas in England.” He is “more preacher and moralist than an artist.” He is chiefly interested in the problems of the day. He had his original thoughts on contemporary problems as well as problems affecting humanity at large. He believed that unless society is reformed, no man can reform himself except in the most insignificant small ways. His aim has been not to tell story but to convey ideas. To convey his ideas, he makes his characters his spokesman. Shaw’s convictions

generate his ideas. He is a socialist, a Fabian, a Pacifist, a vegetarian, a teetotaler and many other things.

Like Ben Jonson, Shaw was essentially a satirist. He did not write for the sake of art but for the sake of society. He wanted to reform and correct society; he wanted to convert people to his ideas; he wanted people to look at the weakness of social customs, conventions and institutions and correct them. All this could be done through propaganda and satire. Shaw was a rebel. He did not follow convention. He does not build or construct a plot. In fact, his plots are not well planned. The plots of him are loose, and the dramatist introduces scenes in his plays which do not seem to have any vital link with the main thread of the story. His plots are realistic. They are based on realistic contemporary social problems. He discovers the essential reality behind prostitution, romance, war, religion, respectability, justice, personal righteousness and idealism, immorality and heresy, the womanly woman and the manly man, happy and peaceful home and score of other things.

The success of a dramatist largely depends upon his art and power of characterization. Shaw was a great character creator and delineator though his art of characterization was conditioned by his zeal for social reformation. His characters are representatives of his views and ideas on the various problems of life. His principal characters are 'allegorical personifications' or 'personified ideas'. His minor characters are largely comic characters have certain common characteristics. Most of women are unpleasant and unsexed women. His portrayal of women is masterly. He invented the modern women before he discovered himself.

Realism is the keynote of Shaw's dramatic art. He paints life as he sees it, not as he wants to see it. He sees and presents the essential reality underlying all social institutions, conventions and beliefs. For him, the most serious and exciting thing in life is the reality of life, past, present and future. His real interest lies in exposing the hard reality behind the veil, the misleading shows. He exposes and uses reality with a purpose, to explain his view of life, how life works, and how it ought to work. His realism is essentially different from the realism of other authors in the sense that it has a constructive plan and a reformatory zeal behind it. Shaw is not only a realist but also a caricaturist, and he is a caricaturist because he is an iconoclast, a breaker of idols. He specializes in depicting the naked reality behind all social and religious phenomena. In many of his plays, he has given more accurate facts than are known to his readers. Shaw claims to be one of those realists who have the courage to face

the truth, to declare that institutions are neither natural nor holy and that they are only human inventions which should not be allowed to outcast their earthly utility. Shaw had a well-defined purpose behind his realistic portrayal of men and manners.

Basically, Shaw wanted to expose the follies and vices, outworn customs and manners, beliefs and behaviour of men in their personal and social life, so that they may be reformed. His purpose was reformatory and ameliorative. He criticized man and his social behaviour, because he loved him and wanted to set him on a right track. Apart from socialism, his leading doctrine was his belief in the 'Life Force'- which the progress of humanity depends in every generation on the evolution of geniuses, who constitute the spearhead of advance but inevitably arouse the hostility of their contemporaries. He was the first dramatist to realize that the reading public for plays was now larger than the theatre-going public. In nutshell, Bernard Shaw was a man of tremendous energy, which he ascribed to his way of life, and intellectual provocation. It is his great zest and vitality that mark all his work and achievement.

9.2.1 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase / sentence.

1. When did G. B. Shaw born?
2. What is the name of Shaw's parents?
3. Who was the tutor of Bernard Shaw?
4. What was the unique feature of Shaw's marriage?
5. What is the keynote of Shaw's dramatic art?

B) Choose the correct alternatives.

1. Shaw's mother was the daughter-----
a. a shepherd b. a farmer c. a singer
d. a country gentle man of Carlow
2. Shaw's views are based on -----
a. Marxian principles b. Moral principles
c. music principles d. personal principles
3. Bernard Shaw was greatly influenced by-----

- a. William Archer
 - b. Shakespeare
 - c. His uncle
 - d. Henry George
4. Bernard Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in -----
- a. 1925
 - b. 1924
 - c. 1825
 - d. 1926

9.3 Outline and Plot of the play: *Man and Superman*

The comedy *Man and Superman* depicts a microcosm of English convention in the early 20th century. It is an adaptation of the Don Juan epic touching on the philosophy of Nietzsche's ubermensch. The play's social commentary is strongly influenced by these topics, but it contains undertones that speak to a more specific topic on the implementation of social revolution. Framed in this way, the play is a platform for concepts embodied in the socialist rhetoric of the Fabian Society. During the late 19th Century and Early 20th century, George Bernard Shaw was an active member often using his dramatic works as a vessel by which he could communicate his political views. In the setting of *Man and Superman*, Shaw uses the metamorphosis of the protagonist as a metaphor for the type of social revolution sought by the Fabian Society.

George Bernard Shaw's most profound play, *Man and Superman* blends social satire with a fascinating philosophy. Today, the comedy continues to make readers and audiences laugh and think – sometimes simultaneously. *Man and Superman* tells the story of two rivals: John Tanner (a wealthy, politically-minded intellectual who values his freedom) and Ann Whitefield (a charming, scheming hypocritical young woman who wants Tanner as a husband). Ann Whitefield's father has made a will naming as her guardian, at her own request, John Tanner, a young revolutionist. As a confirmed bachelor he preaches free love and constantly decries the institution of marriage. Most notably he is the author of *The Revolutionist's Handbook*. This book details opinions on many controversial topics from the overthrowing of governments to the role of women in the daily life. The type of person that he represents is not readily accepted among his peers. Ann, who is a pretty English girl, is in love with Tanner and wants to marry him. Extremely determined, Ann usually gets her own way but manages to hide her obstinacy. Tanner, however, is not fooled, and is furious when he hears that he is her guardian. He has a bachelor's fear of marriage.

When he realizes that Miss Whitefield is hunting for a spouse (and that he is the only target), he decides to fly to Spain.

In the eyes of Roebuck Ramsden, John Tanner is initially viewed in a negative light. Ramsden describes Tanner's book as "the most infamous, the most scandalous, the most mischievous, the most black guardly book that ever escaped burning at the hands of the common hangman" (337). Ramsden's views are significant. He is an older gentleman that holds an important position in society. He is introduced as, "more than a highly respectable man: he is marked out as a president of highly respectable men" (333). It is therefore not unreasonable to think that the views of Ramsden might also be the views held by other important gentlemen in society.

Ramsden's views are shared by like-minded characters in the play. After defending Violet for the circumstances in which she is having a child, Tanner finds himself apologizing to her. Violet says, "I hope you will be more careful in the future about the things you say. Of course one does not take them seriously; but they are very disagreeable, and rather in bad taste" (376). Regardless of her own motivations at that time, she wanted nothing to do with Tanner's support. This is in stark contrast to the reception one typically gets as a lone defender.

These reactions to Tanner are generated from the way in which Tanner views himself. He says to Ann, "I have become a reformer, and like all reformers, an iconoclast. I no longer break cucumber frames and burn gorse bushes: I shatter creeds and demolish idols" (367). This is an extreme stance from which to approach life. It is understandable then that people might be offended, or even threatened, by what he represents. Tanner is unrealistic in his ideas on how to change society. In order to affect these changes in a direct manner, one would truly have to be a superman.

For *Man and Superman*, Shaw has taken his idea of the Superman from Nietzsche and has made use of the character of Don Juan, but has made him a revolutionist in love and a moral. While Tanner decides to fly to Spain, he has a dream in which he becomes Don Juan. In the third act, Tanner dreams he is Don Juan, choosing whether he belongs in heaven or hell. In hell he meets Donia Ana of Mozart's opera, who resembles Ann, and the Statue. Of course, this is the Shaw version of Heaven and hell rather than the traditional version in which the Devil punishes the wicked. Don Juan describes Heaven as a place in which "you live and

work instead of playing and pretending. You face things as they are; you escape nothing but glamour; and your steadfastness and your peril are your glory” (436). If hell is a place in which you don’t face reality, then that has a clear connection to the state John Tanner finds himself in at the beginning of the third act. He is shirking responsibility in his personal life as well as avoiding the feelings he has for Ann.

In choosing to go to heaven at the end of the third act, John Tanner subconsciously chooses the life he has been avoiding. This is the life that accepts Ann. This is also the life that does not avoid convention, but embraces it. Heaven is a place where one contemplates the true nature of the universe. In this case, John chooses to contemplate the true nature of his world rather than live an existence only concerned with self-gratification.

In *Man and Superman*, Bernard Shaw portrays conventional courtship turned on its head. Traditionally, the woman is hunted and submits to the man. In this play, man is hunted by a relentless woman. Shaw believed that normally women like Ann Whitefield pursue their intended husbands with such persistence and subtlety that they lead the men to think themselves as the pursuers.

The plot of the play really consists of two storylines. The first is the courtship of John Tanner and Ann Whitefield. Tanner is a progressive thinker; he is opposed to all things associated with tradition or convention. At the start of the action, he has been appointed co-guardian of Ann Whitefield, a duty he shares with an older man, Roebuck Ramsden. Mr. Ramsden is a complete opposite of Tanner, for he is established and conventional to the core, even though he calls himself progressive. Both Tanner and Ramsden appeal to their charge to select one of them to fulfill her father’s wishes, but she will not make a choice. With the pretense of respecting her father’s last wishes, she humbly says she would like both to remain in their joint capacity as guardian. In reality, she is simply setting her trap for Mr. Tanner.

Secondary to this developing plot is the story of Violet Robinson and Hector Malone. Violet is the sister of Octavius, a poet who is hopelessly in love with Ann. She announces that she is pregnant; then she announces that she is married, but she refuses to name her husband. Later, it becomes evident (only to the audience) that Violet’s husband is a wealthy American named Hector Malone, whose father wishes him to marry a titled girl. Violet has persuaded Hector to keep their marriage secret so that he will not lose his wealth.

In Act II, John Tanner's car is broken down. Ann manipulates the situation so that she can ride with him. He tells his chauffeur he feels sorry for Octavius, saying Ann is playing with him in her ruthless pursuit. His chauffeur tells him it is he, not Octavius, who is the true goal of Miss Whitefield.

In Act III, John Tanner flees his predicament (Ann's pursuit of him) by traveling to Europe. There, he is kidnapped by a group of marauding pirates. He falls asleep and has an extensive dream in which he becomes Don Juan, sent to hell. In the underworld, Don Juan has a discussion with his beloved Dona Ana de Ulloa (Ann Whitefield), a Statue (Roebuck Ramsden), and the Devil; they talk about the universal questions relating to men, women, love, and marriage. Through the dream, the playwright airs his views on existence and evolution, using such ideas as that of a Life Force and the Nietzschean vision of Superman. In this theory, women are the chief instruments of nature, and men are used by women to fulfill their own destinies. The Life Force that sustains existence would cease were it not for this cycle. "Superman" is the concept of man continually improving himself in each successive generation.

Don Juan finally leaves hell, since he believes he has work to do in the world. The Devil tells Ana that Superman does not exist. She leaves in pursuit of a father to help her give birth to Superman. At the end of the act, Tanner wakes to find that Ann has found and rescued him.

In the final act, Violet and Hector reveal their secret marriage and Violet manipulates Hector's father into continued financial support. John Tanner gives in to the inevitability of marriage and agrees to wed Ann.

9.3.1 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence

1. Who is the protagonist of the play?
2. How does Mr. Ramsden describe Tanner's book?
3. Who is the author of 'The Revolutionist's Handbook'?
4. Why does Tanner decide to fly to Spain?
5. Who is a complete opposite of Tanner?
6. Who is the sister of Octavius?
7. With whom did violet marry?

9.4. Structure and Act-wise summary of the play:

9.4.1 Act I

The act opens in Roebuck Ramsden's study in Portland Place, London and this sets the background of the play. The characters are not aristocratic; but they are wealthy and upper middle –class. They have money, education and leisure. Ideas, opinions, and attitudes are important to them; they range from the conventional through the liberal to the revolutionary; but they are expressed with the confidence that comes from an assured financial and social position in life. They have the leisure to give time to the development of social life and relationship. Although the play opens in an atmosphere of mourning, there is no genuine feeling of grief. This is a world of comedy where it is important to be witty and where the conflict of different personalities will be exploited in humorous not in serious or tragic terms. Fundamentally, it is a bright well-meaning world. It is said that *Man and Superman* is not a play but an extended discussion. Onstage is Roebuck Ramsden, a rather elderly man of affluence and affairs. Octavius Robinson, a young poet, is announced by the maid. He appears dressed in an elegant suit of mourning. As Ramsden consoles him, the audience learns that Octavius' benefactor and friend, Mr. Whitefield, is dead. Ramsden is confident that he will be the one who will serve as guardian of Whitefield's daughters, Ann and Rhoda, and he expresses his hope that Ann and Octavius will marry. Octavius can think of nothing which would make him happier. As they discuss this matter, Ramsden warns the young poet against the latter's friend, John Tanner, author of the notorious *Revolutionist's Handbook*. Ramsden prides himself on being an advanced thinker and liberal but regards Tanner as an immoral person. If Ramsden indeed is to be the guardian of the lovely Ann, he will see to it that Tanner is kept away from her.

At this point, the object of Ramsden's disapproval appears. John Tanner, an attractive and obviously superior young man, is in a state of near-panic. The hero, John Tanner, describes himself as a member of the Idle Rich Class. As he excitedly informs Ramsden, both he and the latter have been appointed by Whitefield's will to act as Ann's guardians. Ironically, Tanner, to whom Ramsden is hopelessly old-fashioned, was responsible for his own appointment, one which he dreads. He had advised Mr. Whitefield to team Ramsden up with a younger man, not dreaming that

he would be White-field's choice. He pleads with Ramsden to get him out of this predicament, arguing that Ann is anything but the weak, dutiful young woman. He sees her as willful and hypocritical and declares that she will "commit every crime a respectable woman can." Ramsden himself states emphatically that he will refuse to act as guardian with Tanner. But the younger man prophesies that neither one of them will escape the obligations which have been forced upon them. Octavius is as appalled at Tanner's unflattering description of Ann as an unscrupulous siren as Ramsden is at Tanner's political views. To him she is not a goddess, nor can anything that Tanner says convince him that she is not divine. For the naive Octavius, she is the "reality of romance." The confrontation between Ramsden and Tanner is fully exploited in a dialogue that is witty, sparking and intellectually stimulation.

Their discussion is interrupted by the entry of the ladies. Ann makes her appearance. Shaw describes her as "perfectly ladylike, graceful, and comely, with ensnaring eyes and hair." What sets her apart from other beautiful women is her abundant vitality. With her is Mrs. Whitefield, her mother, a little woman certainly devoid of such vitality, one who wears an expression of "muddled shrewdness." Playing her role of the dutiful and helpless daughter, Ann listens to Ramsden, who tells her that Tanner and he have been named as joint guardians and trustees of the late Mr. Whitefield's two daughters. Tanner's prophesy is soon justified. Ann will not violate her father's will; both Ramsden, whom she calls "Granny," and John must serve.

Ramsden, who had left the stage while Octavius and John express their markedly contrasting views of Ann, returns with "terrible news." Octavius' sister Violet is about to become an unmarried mother. All but Tanner is greatly shocked. Tanner applauds her courage. He declares that the girl should be congratulated on "the fulfillment of her highest purpose and greatest function — to increase, multiply, and replenish the earth." It is Ramsden especially who expresses the conventional attitude: Violet is the victim of "a rascal . . . a libertine, a villain worse than a murderer" who is in their very midst! When he expresses his suspicions of Tanner, whom he describes as "a man of notoriously loose principles," Tanner adroitly points out that suspicion clings to Ramsden as well.

For the first time alone together on the stage, Ann and John converse. Tanner condemns her lack of confidence and honesty. They discuss their

childhood relationship which already showed the pattern of the conflict between man and woman. The audience learns that the two had known each other since childhood and that John had once declared his love for her. She does admit that once, when he had pretended to be in love with another girl, she had violated John's confidence; she had told the girl that John had informed her of the attachment. Tanner states that, as a result of his experience, he has come to believe moral passion to be the only real passion; no romance for him now. The entire episode is replete with interesting Shavian ideas which will be discussed later.

Tanner is saved by the entry of Ramsden. Ramsden and Octavius come back with Miss Ramsden, a hard-headed spinster who is determined that Violet must leave the house at once since she apparently wished to meet her betrayer again. Violet herself enters. She has been obstinate and unrepentant to Miss Ramsden's dismay and indignation. She is quite self-possessed and obviously impenitent. When Tanner eloquently voices his approval of her, she turns upon him and vehemently repudiates his compliments. In so doing, Violet is forced to reveal the fact that she has been secretly married and is not a fallen woman at all. A cab arrives for Violet who with coolness condemns not only Miss Ramsden but also Tanner for the assumption that she had no right to wear a wedding ring. Tanner abjectly apologizes to Violet who tells him that no one takes his ideas seriously, but even so they are in bad taste. Violet is triumphant in her indignation; the rest is crushed. The act closes on their discomfiture.

9.4.2 ACT II

The setting is the carriage drive in the park of the house near Richmond. John Tanner, dressed in the contemporary costume for motoring, is watching his chauffeur, Henry Straker, who is repairing the automobile. The conversation between the two reveals that Enry (as he is usually called) is one of the new types of servants, one who is quite aware of his superiority in the world of machines. Henry Straker is introduced as the New Man, the engineer and fast driver. John Tanner is undoubtedly right when he wryly observes that the master has become the slave to the car and the chauffeur. Tanner tells Enry that one Mr. Malone, an American gentleman, is driving Octavius down in a new American steam car. Enry expresses his disappointment that he could not have had a race

with them but is consoled by the news that both cars will be used for transporting the entire group, which will include Octavius, Violet, Ann, Rhoda, and John himself. He is incredulous, however, when he is told that Ann will not ride in Jack's car.

Octavius returns and an amusing colloquy follows when Tanner explains Enry's status as the New Man, a member of the class-conscious engineers. Not disrespectful, the chauffeur is anything but differential. He is aware that he does know more about machines — and women — than does his master. Octavius does not share Tanner's intellectual excitement in the idea of the New Man; he is more concerned with the failure of his proposals of marriage to Ann. Left alone with Tanner, Octavius solicits his sympathy. He had proposed to and been rejected by Ann. John insists that he has not been rejected at all and that Ann merely is not through playing with him. She is the pursuer, he argues, and Octavius is her marked-out victim. But poor lovesick Octavius rejects this counsel as only another sample of John's "eternal shallow cynicism." When Tanner learns that Ann had reproached his friend for not getting his permission to approach her, he pronounces blessings on the two and wishes them happiness. But he adds that Ann is really as free to choose as is Octavius. There follows a disputation on the subject of love as viewed by Tanner and Octavius respectively. When Straker reappears, the conversation shifts to Enry's preoccupation with motor racing.

Octavius gives John a note from Rhoda Whitefield, who has written that her elder sister Ann had forbidden her to go on the motor trip with Tanner and even to be in his company at any time on the grounds that he is "not a fit person for a young girl." Octavius sides with Ann, arguing that John's views are certainly not proper for the development of a young girl's mind and character. Ann appears with the news that poor Rhoda cannot join the motoring party because she has one of her headaches. John is vastly amused; he has trapped Ann in a lie from which he is sure she cannot extricate herself. But Ann succeeds in doing just that. After sending Octavius to look after his American friend, she explains that she had been only the dutiful daughter carrying out her mother's instructions — another lie, of course. This provides Tanner with the cue for delivering a tirade on the tyranny of mothers and to challenge Ann to show her independence by joining him on a continental motor trip. To his chagrin, she promptly agrees to do so.

After all, she explains, no impropriety would be involved, for John is her guardian and stands in her father's place.

Mrs. Whitefield arrives accompanied by Hector Malone, the young American, and followed by Ramsden and Octavius. It is John's hope that Mrs. Whitefield will absolutely forbid Ann to go to the Continent with him. He is told that she has not the slightest objection — why should she object? Indeed, Mrs. Whitefield says that she had intended to ask John to take Rhoda out for a ride occasionally. So he learns that Ann had lied again. "Abyss beneath abyss of perfidy!" he exclaims. Ann hastily introduces Hector to John in order to divert attention from this outburst. In conversation with Tanner and Octavius, Hector reveals his devotion to Violet and is warned that she is a married woman, the identity of her husband unknown. Hector, the soul of chivalry, says that he will respect the lady's wishes but cannot understand why a husband should forbid his wife to reveal his identity. All this leads to a discussion of womanhood and marriage, Tanner as usual voicing unorthodox opinions. Hector suggests that he and Violet should join Tanner and Ann on the journey. They are all, except Tanner, embarrassed at the mention of Violet. When Hector has a private word with her, we discover that he is the unknown husband, this in spite of his previous expression of strong moral disapproval of Violet's husband. Their uncertainty about Hector's father's attitude to the marriage is the reason for their secrecy. His money, as far as Violet is concerned is concerned, is essential to their lives together. When Straker enlightens Tanner about the real direction of Ann's interest, Tanner decides to flee---to Biskra in haste and without companions. Straker is to have his opportunity for a long and fast drive.

This is a straightforward scene in which the forwarding of the plot and the expression of ideas are well balanced. It contains very effective and amusing situations such as Ann's being found out in her lies—not once but twice, Hector's impossible position as the unknown husband, and Tanner's final realization and plight. There is no question of the scene being only a conversation piece, although, as always, Tanner has a great deal to say on a variety of subjects. The characters have been sufficiently well established for some of them to be re-created in a different setting in the next act.

9.4.3 Act III

This act represents one of the most unusual and striking approaches to dramatic construction to be found in any play. In this act, the hero is taken to Spain, where the playwright poetically describes a scene of rolling slopes of brown olive trees surrounding a magnificent Spanish mountain in the Sierra Nevadas. In the middle of this act, the setting dissolves into a dream that takes place in hell. The act begins conventionally enough. It is evening, and the setting is that of a natural amphitheater in the Spanish Sierras where the audience is introduced to a group of brigands who are taking part in a noisy and ill-disciplined formal debate. These are an international band of brigands dedicated to stopping motor cars and robbing the occupants in order "to secure a more equitable distribution of the wealth." Shaw is satirizing the formality of debate by placing it in this setting. Their leader, a man with a fine voice and ready wit, is Mendoza.

The brigands' leader, Mendoza, has something of Tanner's fluency of speech and ideas. While waiting for victims, the brigands resume their evening debates on Anarchists and Social-Democrats. Present are one Anarchist and three Social-Democrats, making possible a lively discussion. But the others describe themselves as gentlemen and Christians. Mendoza presides with wit and skill, controlling the various speakers when they become too intense and excited. The debate on social and political economy is interrupted by the sound of an approaching motor car. The brigands have made the necessary preparations: Nails have been strewn on the road to puncture tires; one brigand stands ready to use his rifle if the nails should fail. They do not. The car is forced to stop, and its occupants, John Tanner and his chauffeur, are brought in as prisoners. Tanner accepts his capture good-naturedly. When Mendoza introduces himself as President of the League of the Sierra and states that he lives by robbing the rich, John identifies himself as a gentleman who lives by robbing the poor. Thus a common bond is established between the two. Tanner is well fitted to take his place in this company, and this he does with considerable aplomb. Straker is less comfortable. In view of the exchange between Enry Straker and the brigands, it is quite understandable that the chauffeur wonders whether he and his master are enjoying a trip in the mountains or attending a Socialist meeting.

Mendoza and Tanner enter into a discussion on brigandage. The brigand leader first talks of Socialism and then tells his life story. He, the president, had once been a successful waiter and had been driven to become a brigand by disappointment in love. No, the lady was not an earl's daughter; she was far more attractive than the daughters of the English peerage. Moreover, if she had not been "a woman of the people," he would have scorned her. Alas, she had rejected him because he was a Jew. She had been employed by a Jewish family and had become convinced that Jews considered Gentiles, especially English Gentiles, to be dirty in their habits. When Straker recalls that his sister had once been a cook in a Jewish family, the dramatic coincidence, as Tanner calls it, is revealed. Mendoza's beloved is Louisa, sister of Straker. Mendoza had heard a great deal about Enry, who was Louisa's favorite brother. But Straker is anything but pleased to hear a brigand tell of his love for the girl. At one point, Tanner has to intervene to prevent an attempt at physical violence. Things quiet down and Enry joins the other brigands in sleep. Mendoza and John continue their discussion. Finally, Mendoza sends Tanner to sleep to the accompaniment of his reading aloud to Louisa his very band and sentimental poems.

The darkness deepens. The scene dissolves into an omnipresent nothing, and then somewhere there is the beginning of pallor. The music of Mendoza carries the audience to hell and the appearance of a Spanish nobleman dressed in the costume of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. He is like, yet not, Tanner. There is none of Tanner's innocence and enthusiasm or the vulgarity in Tanner, which springs from his possession of riches. His name is Don Juan. The play *Man and Superman* is on the Don Juan theme which lies in this act. The theme has been widely and frequently treated in literature. Don Juan has been the hero of over two hundred works. He first appeared in a Spanish play published in 1630. According to the legend, Don Juan was the son of one of the leading families of 14th century Seville. He becomes notorious for the number and variety of his sexual conquests. To put an end to these, the Franciscan monks invited him to their monastery where they murdered him. They explained his disappearance by telling how he had been carried off to hell by the statue of a commander whom Juan had killed when he was seducing the commander's daughter. The statue of the commander stood in the grounds of the monastery.

The three most famous works inspired by the story are: Moliere's *Don Juan ou Le Festin de Pierre* produced in 1665; Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* with words by Du Ponte, produced in 1757; and Byron's epic satire *Don Juan*, published 1819-24. They all treat the legend very differently. Moliere's hero is an impious insolent libertine, who regrets nothing. The play was suppressed within a month of its first performance.

Shaw was clearly moved and influenced by Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. 'Here you have', he writes, 'freedom in love and in morality mocking exquisitely at slavery to them, and interesting you, attracting you, tempting you, inexplicably forcing you to range the hero with his enemy on a transcendent plane, leaving the prudish daughter and her priggish lover on a crockery wheel below to live piously ever after'. This is close to the spirit of the third act, although not to the Ann and Octavius of the modern play. In *Don Giovanni* Octavius is betrothed to Donna Anna, and act three explains the consequences of this. Leporello, the witty and amusing servant of Don Juan, plays an important part in the opera as his master's counterpart. Straker is an amusing although debased comment on him.

Shaw dismissed Byron's hero as 'a vagabond libertine' and the poem is of little account philosophically. Byron's story does show the liberties that can be taken with the Don Juan legend. His hero falls among pirates—an idea which may have suggested the brigands to Shaw—joins the Russian army and attracts the favour of the Empress Catherine. The hero does little more than give unity to a rambling and incomplete poem that is a vehicle for the display of Byron's wit and his satire on contemporary figures and English social conditions. Shaw considered that the Don Juan legend had been absorbed by Goethe into the Faust theme which offered greater scope for philosophical exploration and ultimate reconciliation. In the hands of Tolstoy and Ibsen, Don Juan had changed the sex; it was now woman not man who was rebelling against the constraints of contemporary moral attitudes. Shaw's Don Juan like Faust attains redemption if his translation into a Shavian heaven can be graced with such a description.

What Shaw has done in this interlude is to thrust into a 'perfectly modern three-act play a totally extraneous act in which (his) hero, enchanted by the air of the Sierra, has a dream in which his Mozartian ancestor appears and

philosophizes at great length in a Shavian-Socratic dialogue with the lady, the statue, and the devil.’ Shaw has made no attempt to introduce into this part the conflict of character and dramatic incident which gives vitality to the rest of the play. It is fundamentally a dialogue. The characters are subsidiary to the ideas. What they are is less important than what they say.

There is a large measure of allegory in the act. Hell is a representation of a place where men and women live out their lives. It is a ‘Palace of Lies’. Hell is unreal, with its devotion to love, beauty, honour, duty, justice and all the other so-called virtues of the conventional world. Hell is a place of unending leisure and amusement, the home of seekers after happiness. Heaven is the place for those who accept the doctrine of The Life Force and are prepared to throw themselves wholeheartedly into its truth. Heaven is for those who can understand and grasp reality, who want to live and work, who believe that perfection is more important than freedom. There is no physical separation between the two. It is purely a matter of choice and temperament.

The first person Ana meets in hell after her death is Don Juan. She is lonely and indignant when he tells she is in hell. She is already different from Ann, who is too much of a realist for the easy display of indignation. Her pettiness and insincerity are quickly revealed. Her goodness has been dictated by prudence and profit not by natural inclination. For Shaw, that is a great sin. She is shocked by Juan’s description of himself as a murderer and by his references to the Devil, ‘the leader of the best society’.

Juan is bored in hell, but he assures Ana that she will be happy there. They are unaware at this stage of each other’s identity. When Ana recognizes Juan, she still speaks of his pursuing her. Their difference of attitudes is exemplified as they talk about Ana’s father. Juan points out that her father will be annoyed if she refers to Juan as his murderer, as it impugns his swordsmanship. He and her father are now the best of friends.

The Statue enters, an old man, noble, yet joyous, dignified yet confident. His voice is like that of Roebuck Ramsden and, apart from the moustache, their appearances are similar. He objects to his having failed to kill Juan in the duel as it led to the building of a statue to his memory and a reputation for goodness that he had to maintain. It was his hypocrisy that sent him to heaven, a source of

regret to him. The Statue reveals that it is vanity that leads him to appear thus; he tells Ana to look upon him as a fellow creature not as a father.

The Devil appears. There is a certain resemblance to Mendoza. He is clever, lazy and punctiliously polite. The Statue tells him he has finally resolved to leave heaven which he has found intolerably dull. He warns Ana about being too eager to go to heaven. For Juan the beauty of being dead is the release from the body and its incessant demands. In all he says about love and the flesh Shaw's Don Juan is completely different from the legendary figure. The sinner has been transmuted into a saint even though in Shavian rather than in conventional terms, and the gospel that he follows is The Life Force on which he expatiates fulsomely and ecstatically while the Devil urges the claims of Death as man's motivating force. Don Juan comes close to Tanner in his description of woman's part in fulfilling nature's purpose, but he goes beyond him in his visionary exposition of the future possibilities of The Life Force in man's reaching towards perfection. Don Juan's experiences with women merely emphasized that he was their destined prey. He always ran away. But while his reason thought clearly, nature made him give in to her. He realized it was impossible to resist nature. The Statue while admiring Juan's intellect regards his metaphysical flights as too much for his understanding. He would prefer amusing stories about his relations with women. Ana chooses the odd word, the occasional idea to gloss with her rigidly conversational ideas of virtue and chastity, even though as Juan points out, she has had twelve children by her husband Octavio. This is a point of difference between legend and play, and between the play and the third act. Octavio has succeeded where Octavius will fail, if success and failure are the right words.

Juan condemns marriage as a prison. If it were not, there would be no need for laws to keep people in it. Yet it is a contrivance to fulfill the demands of The Life Force. The Statue tends to agree with Juan in his estimate of marriage, much to Ana's disgust. The Statue admits that he always swore to be eternally faithful to whatever woman he happened to be in love with at the time, including the declaration that, when he was eighty, one with hair of the woman he loved would mean more to him than the thickest gold tress from the most beautiful woman. The declaration that brought him most success with women was that he could not bear the thought of anyone else as the mother of his children. The first

statement directly relates to Octavius, a reference to the unreality and superficiality of the poetic adoration of woman. The Statue's reminiscences also point forward to Ramsden's appearance at the Savoy Hotel with different women. However, unlike Ramsden, The Statue has no pretensions to being a social reformer; he is content to be a gentleman.

The interlude ends with Juan's going to heaven, a journey which he takes alone without Ann. She is Ann in her longing to be the mother of Superman. This emphasizes a significant difference between the interlude and the rest of the play; in hell it is Don Juan who dominates; in the world it is Ann who finally conquers.

A cry of automobile ends the dream and wakens the sleepers. Before the newcomers appear Mendoza reduces Straker to silence by threatening him with family exposure. Tanner willingly agrees to make no change against Mendoza. Ann enters, accompanied by Violet, Hector and Ramsden. Ann goes straight to Tanner who recognizes that he is caught. Mendoza recognizes them from his days at the Savoy Hotel, and mentions how Violet and Hector used to lunch together and angers Ramsden by referring to his suppers with various ladies. There is some play on social distinctions between a waiter and the others. The act closes as Tanner keeps his promise to protect Mendoza and the brigands. We are back in the world of the everyday and to the development of the plot after the tremendous *tour de force* in hell.

9.4.4 ACT IV

The scene is still Spain. The setting is in an expensive and pretentious villa in Granada. Enry Straker enters with an elderly Irishman. The chauffeur had been asked to deliver a note to Hector at the latter's hotel. He was still is confused by the fact that this stranger had been identified as Hector Malone but had complied with the request to bring him along to the villa when told that "it's all right." Now he learns that the Irishman does not even know Violet Robinson's name. Violet enters, and the Irishman identifies himself as Hector Malone, Sr. (hereafter referred to as Malone to distinguish him from his son, Hector, Jr.).

Malone who has opened one of Hector's letters is fully aware of the situation between Violet and his son. In their discussion Violet is beginning to

get the upper hand when Hector arrives. His impassioned denunciation of his father opening his letters adds to the complexity of the situation. Tanner enters at this stage, soon followed by Ann and Octavius. Tanner is shocked when he discovers that Hector is Violet's missing husband. Ramsden feels they have all been deliberately deceived by Hector---as indeed they have. Hector has failed to see the irony of the discrepancy between his own deceit and his indignation at the opening of one of his letters. He is clearly a less accomplished liar than Ann and all he can do is face the thing out. Tanner generously offers to support him financially. However, he is determined to be independent of father and friend, and, to Violet's horror, to work for his living. Malone's jealousy has been stirred by Tanner's offer. The incident ends with Malone abjectly pleading with his son and Violet to accept his money. Violet is triumphant over him. Malone is in Spain to make enquiries into the nature of the business of Mendoza Limited in which he has bought shares. Octavius remains behind to plead his case with Ann. She refuses to marry him in order to preserve his worship of her. She declares her desire to marry John to fulfill her late father's wishes and to please her mother, a lie that is quickly exposed by Mrs. Whitefield when she enters. In mother's subsequent conversation with Tanner, they are both very open with each other about Ann's failings. She feels Tanner is the right man for Ann. Tanner emphatically replies that he has no intention of marrying Ann. Mrs. Whitefield expresses her hope that the two will marry, for she would like to see her daughter meet her match. John knows Ann for what she is, and John demonstrates his knowledge by describing Ann as an unscrupulous liar, a coquette, one who bullies women, and a hypocrite. He could stand everything except her "confounded hypocrisy." Mrs. Whitefield readily agrees with him and explains that she does not wish to see him suffer, whereas John would take care of himself very well. She adds that he must not think that she does not love Ann, her own flesh and blood, merely because she sees her daughter's faults.

Both Ann and Violet enter the former saying that she had heard the entire conversation. Violet has come to say her farewells. She tells Jack that the sooner he gets married too, the better. Aware that the trap is closing in on him, he restively remarks that he will probably end up a married man before the day is over. Mrs. Whitefield, in tears at the thought of Violet's departure, accompanies the bride offstage.

Ann is now alone with Tanner once more. John bewails the fact that everyone, even Ramsden, now treats him as if his marriage to Ann were a settled matter. Ann placidly remarks that she had not proposed to him and that he need not be married if he did not want to be. But John sees himself as a condemned man who has no control over his fate. He explosively denounces marriage as an "apostasy, profanation of my soul, shameful surrender, ignominious capitulation, acceptance of defeat." The sparring match between the two continues in lively fashion as Ann woos the reluctant Tanner, now without dissimulation. From their childhood, she argues, the Life Force had prepared a trap for them. Still John protests that he will not marry her. "Oh, you will, you will," she replies. At last he seizes her in his arms, declaring that he does love her and the Life Force enchants him. When he makes one last effort to escape her embrace, she swoons.

Most of the other characters return to the stage — Violet, Octavius, Mrs. Whitefield, Malone, Ramsden, Mendoza, and Straker. All are concerned for the well-being of Ann, who revives sufficiently to announce that John has promised to marry her. When Tavy bravely congratulates his friend, John tells him that he had not proposed but had been trapped. Ann is relieved when Violet tells her that John had said nothing. She appears to faint again but recovers to say that she is now quite happy. Malone is quite impressed with John, whom he sees as "a rough wooer," the best sort. All congratulate John on his happiness. But in his last speech of any length, he describes his status. He is not a happy man. Both he and Ann have knowingly renounced happiness, freedom, tranquility, and especially "the romantic possibilities of an unknown future." The wedding will be the simplest possible. It will take place three days after their return to England, and it will be in the office of the district superintendent registrar. Violet calls John a brute, but Ann looks at him with fond pride and caresses his arm. "Go on talking," she says. "Talking!" exclaims John, and universal laughter bursts forth as the play ends.

The ending is sheer comedy with its general atmosphere of good will and the humour of Ann's stratagem in tricking Tanner into marriage. Tanner's final acceptance is that of the eccentric husband not that whose hand and mind are against society. The ideas on marriage which Tanner has developed during his course of the play ought to lead to an ending similar to that in a play by the Swedish dramatist Strindberg where the conflict between man and woman is

terrible, irreconcilable and fought to an ultimate conclusion. Here there is nothing of horror and darkness, only light, zest, optimism and reconciliation. It is a fitting ending to a play, while its purpose and intellectual content have been very serious and demanding, has been humorous and light-hearted in its approach to relationship

9.4.5 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. Where does the Act-I open?
2. Who are the daughters of Mrs. Whitefields?
3. Who are the joint guardians and trustees of the late Mr. Whitefields' two daughters?
4. Who is about to become an unmarried mother?
5. How does Ramsden describe Tanner?
6. On which topics do the brigands debate?
7. Who is Mendoza's beloved?
8. What is the setting of the Act- IV?

B) Choose the correct alternatives:

1. _____ is the chauffeur of Tanner.
a. Henry Straker b. Octavius c. Hector Malone, Jr. d. Ramsden
2. _____ is introduced as the New Man.
a. Octavius b. Henry Straker c. Hector Malone, Jr. d. Ramsden
3. Who is the leader of the band of brigands?
a. Henry Straker b. Octavius c. Hector Malone, Jr. d. Mendoza
4. Mendoza once had been a successful_____.
a. waiter b. singer c. driver d. player
5. The Statue's voice is like that of _____.
a. Roebuck Ramsden b. Tanner c. Ocavius d. Henry Straker

6. Don Juan condemns marriage as a _____.
- a. prison b. hell c. heaven d. a cave

C) State whether following statements are True or False

1. It is said that *Man and Superman* is not only a play but an extended discussion. _____
2. Mr. Whitefield is alive in the play. _____
3. Tanner describes himself as a member of the Idle Rich class. _____
4. For Ramsden, Violet is the victim of a good man. _____
5. Shaw was clearly moved and influenced by Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. _____

9.5 Summary:

In this unit you have read about the life and works of the famous dramatist Bernard Shaw. Now after reading this unit, you know the outline and the plot of the play *Man and Superman*. This will no doubt, help you to read the play *Man and Superman* with great interest. The next unit will deal with the characters analysis, writing play, themes and style of Bernard Shaw used in the play. Your study of all these topics will enable you to understand the play *Man and Superman* in all respects.

9.6 Terms to Remember:

- **remorseful:** expressing regret
- **acquisitive:** eager to get down
- **depleted:** empty
- **tumult:** violent noisy disturbance
- **derision:** irony
- **delineate:** sketch , draw
- **iconoclast:** breaker of idols
- **ubermensch:** superman

- **metamorphosis:** change in form
- **dissimulation:** hide one's feelings
- **stratagem:** a scheme to deceive
- **unscrupulous:** unprincipled
- **prophecy:** foretell
- **adroitly:** cleverly, skillfully
- **repudiates:** disown
- **reproached:** expressing shame
- **chagrin:** a feeling of disappointment
- **abyss:** a very deep pit
- **brigandage:** robbery
- **apostasy:** giving up of one's religion
- **profanation:** disrespectful to sacred things
- **ignominious :** shameful

9.7 Answer to check your Progress:

9.2.2

- A) 1. July 26, 1856
 2. George Carr Shaw and Lucinda Gurley Shaw
 3. Reverend George Carroll, his uncle
 4. His wife never allowed sexual consummation with him.
 5. Realism

- B) 1. d 2.a 3. a 4. a

9.3.1

- A) 1. John Tanner

2. as ‘the most infamous, the most scandalous, the most mischievous, the most black guardly book that ever escaped burning at the hands of the common hangman.
3. John Tanner
4. because Tanner wants to escape from the Ann who wants to marry him.
5. Mr. Ramsden
6. Violet
7. Violet married with Hector Malone Jr., a wealthy American.

9.4.1

- A)**
1. Roebuck Ramsden’s study in Portland Place, London.
 2. Ann and Rhoda
 3. Mr. Ramsden and Tanner
 4. Violet
 5. as “a man of notoriously loose principles”.
 6. on Anarchists and social- Democrates
 7. Louisa, sister of Henry Straker
 8. It is an expensive and pretentious villa in Granada.

- B)** 1. a 2.b 3. d 4. a 5. a 6. a

- C)** 1. True 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. True

9.8 Exercises:

1. Write in brief outline of the play *Man and Superman*.
2. Write about the plot of the play *Man and Superman*.
3. Write note on the end of the play.
4. What does the *Don Juan in Hell* episode add to the play?

9.9 Reference for Further Study:

1. Pearson, Hesketh. (1961), *Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality*, London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.
2. Crompton, Louis. (1971) *Shaw the Dramatist: A Study of the Intellectual Background of the Major Plays*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
3. Chesterton, G.K. (1990) *George Bernard Shaw*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.

Unit – 9
Man and Superman : G. B. Shaw
Part-II

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9.0 Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit you will

- know about the characters in Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*.
- learn about The Life Force as a theme.
- know about the writing and production of *Man and Superman*
- know about Shaw's style of writing
- be able to answer the questions on this unit.

9.1 Introduction:

This unit discusses the major and the minor characters in *Man and Superman* such as John Tanner, Ann Whitefield, Roebuck Ramsden, Octavius Robinson, Henry Straker, Violet Robinson, Mrs. Whitefield, Hector Malone, Jr., Hector Malone, Sr., Mendoza, Don Juan Tenorio, Dona Ana de Ulloa, The Devil and The Statue etc. It also discusses the theme The Life Force, the writing and production of the play, and the writer's style of writing.

9.2 Character Analysis:

9.2.1 John Tanner

John Tanner—the name is the English version of Don Juan—is to *Man and Superman* as the Prince of Denmark is to *Hamlet*. Shaw describes Tanner as a big man with a beard, a young man of "Olympian majesty more like Jupiter than Apollo." The whole play revolves around him. The protagonist and hero of the play, Tanner is described as a slim, well-built young man with hazel-coloured hair and a beard. Although extremely excitable by nature, Tanner is sensitive and earnest; he is also prone to exaggeration. He defies authority and hates obsolete ideas. He also writes a book called *Revolutionist's Handbook*.

Tanner is a member of the idle rich class. His education at public school and university has been that of a gentleman. He maintains himself that he is a gentleman that is he lives by robbing the poor. He is 'bit of a Socialist', as most rich men are, Straker drily observes. His views may be eccentric; he may proclaim himself to Ramsden not to be a man of honour where women are concerned, but there is no evidence in the play to show that his actions as

opposed to his words are not polite and that his relations with women are not impeccably moral. His resemblance to the traditional Don Juan, satiated with sexual experience, is humorously slight. Tanner is fundamentally chaste and virginal. It is only at the very end that he acknowledges Ann's sexual attractiveness for him and then it is in terms of jumping off the end of a precipice not into bed. Tanner's passions go almost wholly into his ideas rather than into his actions.

Tanner is reputedly based on H. M. Hyndmann, who had been converted to socialism by Marx himself although Marx later disowned him because he published a pamphlet in which he used Marx's ideas without mentioning his name. Some critics state that Tanner is Shaw speaking and that little attempt is made by the dramatist to create a convincing independent character. Shaw would hardly create in his own image someone as foolishly valuable at times as Tanner could be. There is almost an element of the clown about him; he arouses more humour through his character and the situations in which he finds himself than any other character. We love him for it, but it is extremely doubtful that Shaw saw himself in that light. Tanner is Shaw's mouthpiece, especially as Don Juan, in the expression of ideas on *The Life Force*. Shaw uses Tanner to purify the intellectual air.

In spite of his scorn of morality, Tanner is fundamentally moral. Destructive he may be, but this is dedicated by 'moral passion' and directed to 'moral ends'. He is frequently accused of being cynical. He is not. There is too much innocent enthusiasm about him for cynicism to enter into his ideas; he believes too passionately and too sincerely. He is generally logical in his thinking. He has independence of thought. 'The first duty of manhood and womanhood', he proclaims, is 'a Declaration of Independence.' He professes that he will not allow his independence to be limited by consideration for other people, and in this he is close to Shaw.

John Tanner, by means of his own testimony, is identified as High Priest of Vitalism and Life Force. Nevertheless he does nothing but talk. Before Ann's relentless attack, John retreats almost in panic — and finally concedes her the victory. But to do justice to him, one must remember that he scintillates, whether he is bewailing his fate as Ann's co-guardian, amusingly discussing his chauffeur as the New Man, exchanging courtesies with the brigand leader who has made

him captive, comically denouncing Ann as a boa constrictor and a tigress, or voicing his utter terror at the thought of marriage. It is significant that Jack holds the friendship of the idealistic Octavius and that not even Ramsden protests when his engagement to Ann is announced.

9.2.2 Ann Whitefield

A beautiful woman described as nearly perfect in appearance. Ann is graceful and lovely in every sense; but she is also aggressively determined to get what she wants. Her father has recently died and left her under the supervision of Mr. Tanner and Mr. Ramsden. She is determined to marry Mr. Tanner. Ann is the central to both the plot and the themes of the play. She is a heroine of the play. She is the incarnation of The Life Force; her actions also illustrate the subsidiary theme that it is woman who hunts the man, not the woman; what plot exists in *Man and Superman* revolves round her pursuit of Tanner which is much more important than the somewhat melodramatic sub-plot based on the relationship between Hector and Violet. She is the strongest character in the play.

Ann is good looking and well formed. She has not the extravagant perfection of beauty that Octavius in his polite poetic fancy gives her. The outstanding quality about her is vitality, and from this springs her virtues and her defects. Determination she has in abundance, but it springs from an energetic delight in getting her own way not from the cold calculating mind of a Violet. There is a willful, an almost humorous quality, about her determination that is part of her charm. The audience, like Ramsden and to some extent like Octavius, is under her spell.

She is intelligent enough to be able to manipulate other people for her own ends, whether through a sentimental appeal to Ramsden; or through consummate acting as when she finally succeeds in getting Tanner to marry her; or through the exercise of her female charms when she persuades Octavius to help her to marry Tanner. She can lie without conscience and without shame. Her lies are like those of Falstaff, 'gross as a mountain, open, palpable'. Her mother and Tanner both recognize her for the great liar she is. She has little shame in being found out. Ann is the archetype of the Vital Woman. If John preaches vitality, it is Ann who practices it. Unlike Violet, she has no need to seek out a rich husband; she is already well-to-do. The great mission in her life is to find the right father for her children. Driven by instinct, she knows herself to be the instrument towards creating the superior race of the future.

She is utterly Machiavellian in her unconscious belief that her end will justify her means. Lies, hypocrisy, cleverness --- all are sanctioned in the pursuit of an end dictated by The Life Force.

There is no morality for Ann. She has money, no conscience and public approval of her wishes. She is essential woman, in the full passion of her creative role. Nothing counts besides that. 'Destruction can only destroy', she asserts, and in this self-evident platitude is all the consciousness of her creative force. Tanner understands all the things that she does not, but he is a 'perfect baby' in the things that Ann understands. The implication is that it is the things that she understands which are important. She is clever in her understanding of human motives, especially those of Tanner. She wonders whether Tanner is really a clever man. Her sense of priorities is wonderfully and humorously shown in her comment on Tanner's impassioned sociological outpourings.

Ann is a realist. She enjoys the flattery of Octavius but she is not deceived by it. Marriage to Octavius would be a disaster; she knows it and acts upon it. Tanner's low expectations of marriage are likely to be realized. They move on different planes. They both are clever and understanding but not in the same things. Their moralities, minds and sympathies will rarely match. Tanner will be more frustrated than Ann for he will be able to satisfy her procreative function more easily than she will be able to understand his real personality, his spiritual yearnings and intellectual needs. Together they will perhaps go some little way towards producing the Superman.

9.2.3 Roebuck Ramsden

A proper man, who is the picture of respectability, prides himself on his authority. He considers himself an advanced thinker and a fearless, outspoken reformer; in reality, he is bound by convention and dated ideas. He dislikes Tanner, probably because the young man is all the things he would like to think he is. Shaw describes Roebuck Ramsden as a man of means living in ease and comfort, and tells us that Ramsden is "more than a respectable man: he is marked out as a president of highly respectable men." His active civil life has given him "his broad air of importance." He is a foil to Tanner in age, temperament and ideas. Shaw is too clever to make them complete opposites.

Ramsden is a man of substantial means, with a well furnished house in Portland Place. His early progressive ideas have now been overlaid by a massive respectability. His clothes express his respectability and his position. His polished bald head and his iron grey hair indicate his age, which over sixty. For Tanner, Ramsden is an old man with 'obsolete ideas', not an idea in his mind 'later than eighteen sixty'. He was indeed, as he tells Tanner, 'an advanced man' before Tanner was born, and he and his ideas have remained static for many years. He is determined that he will not be influenced by any new ideas. He refuses to read *The Revolutionist's Handbook*, being content to condemn it on its title and the reviews he has read of it.

He treats Octavius generously and sympathetically; his words of condolence are conventional, although his quoting Mr. Whitefield's words commending Octavius shows a degree of tact and consideration. His relationship to Ann is an affectionate one, and he is not too pompous or humourless to be called Granny by her. Although he prides himself on his 'progressive' position, he is the complete conformist. John Tanner has little difficulty in forcing him to forego his "duty" and abnegate his "principles" relating to the English home. Playing up to him as the prototype of the Victorian Womanly Woman, Ann Whitefield knows just how to handle Ramsden. His shocked outbursts in response to Tanner's sweeping generalizations provide much of the fun in the first two acts of the play.

9.2.4 Octavius Robinson

Shaw writes that Octavius comes straight from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He is, to be sure, the faithful and ardent lover of Ann Whitefield, although not engaged to her. He is further identified as the "artist man"-as a poet, to be specific. But he possesses none of the qualities which John Tanner enumerates when he lectures Octavius on the subject. He never could be unscrupulous or half vivisector, half vampire to women; and surely he could never be "a child-robber, a blood-sucker, a hypocrite, and a cheat whose justification for his being is that he shows us ourselves as we really are." John's tirade only bewilders this young romanticist.

Octavius is "really an uncommonly nice looking young fellow," and everything in his appearance announces "the man who will love and suffer later

on." Ann calls him Ricky-Ticky-Tavy, half affectionately, half contemptuously. Octavius is generous and liked by everybody. Ann always finds him kind, helpful and very easy to handle. Hector describes him as 'a good fellow.' Mrs. Whitefield loves him as a son. His ideas are conventional and often unrealistic. He is sometimes sententious in his conventionality. In his ideas he stands at the opposite end of the spectrum from Tanner. He believes in the dignity of labour, in the world as 'a Moral Gymnasium', and in the conventions of love and marriage. He thinks the best of every body, cares little for money, and covers reality with a sentimental haze. He is in love with love rather than Ann. Like Ramsden, Octavius is completely taken in by Ann, whom he adores. And he readily believes her when she tells him that her parents wished her to marry John Tanner and that she must honor their wishes. His romanticism extends beyond his worship for Ann. When Hector quixotically announces that he will work for a living and no longer depend upon his rich father, Octavius is affected almost to tears. The perspicacious Ann Whitefield is exactly right: Octavius is far different from his down-to-earth, practical sister, Violet. He always has been a "really good boy," and he will always be nice to women. But as Ann predicts, he will remain the sentimental bachelor holding fast to his illusions. He provides an amusing contrast to his friend, the iconoclastic John Tanner.

9.2.5 Henry Straker

Henry Straker is the characteristic phenomenon of the New Age; he is the efficient mechanic, the product of the new technological education which ultimately will eliminate the ordinary working man. He is the New Man for Tanner. He is more proud of his education. He is young, skeptical, and even cynical in his attitude to life. He is honest to the point of bluntness. He can tell Tanner home truths about Ann's attitude and the reason he has a chauffeur; in his cockney pride, he regards places like Ireland and America as provincial and the people who come from them, no matter how rich and important they are, as his inferiors. He may be independent with Tanner; he is downright insolent with Malone.

Straker is cunning with a dry wit. Most rich men, he observes, are socialists. Although his education has fitted him to be an engineer, he has picked up no culture on the way. He reads the halfpenny papers. His independence of

manner is not backed by a similar independence of thought. He is far more class-conscious than Tanner and is revolted at the ideas of any connection between Mendoza and his sister Louisa.

Finally, Enry is something of a realist. When Octavius virtuously states that he believes in the dignity of labor, the chauffeur dryly replies: "that's because you've never done any, Mr. Robinson." Again in reply to Tanner's statement that he is "a bit of a Socialist" himself, Enry remarks: "Most rich men are, I notice." And, of course, he knows more about women than does his master. It is he who first alerts John Tanner to the fact that Tanner is Ann's intended victim. Shaw does not push the logic of Straker's character to any conclusion. He remains in the end only an embryonic New Man, a strange but amusing blend of new attitudes and old prejudices. He is a twentieth-century adaptation of the servant of Restoration Comedy.

9.2.6 Violet Robinson

No modest violet, Octavius' attractive sister is womanly enough, but in the sense made clear by Ann Whitefield. In reply to Ann's statement that Violet is "hard as nails," Octavius insists that she is "thoroughly womanly at heart." Violet is a foil to Ann. She is less likeable and less womanly. If Ann stands for the emotional female strength of *The Life Force* in woman, Violet represents the cool calculating hard approach to life. She is more masculine, more rational and perhaps more intelligent than Ann who works intuitively.

She is elegant, self-possessed, crisp in speech, and has a well bred air of authority in her manner. Even in the most embarrassing of situations she can act with complete composure. Miss Ramsden may hold all the cards, but it is Violet who wins the game. Moral superiority is no match for the calculated spite with which Violet announces that she has left in the housekeeper's room the birthday present Miss Ramsden has given to her. Violet is no romantic heroine. Money means a lot to her. She is prepared to allow Hector to be romantic about love, but not about money.

Malone's compound of Irish sentimentality and business acumen is no match for Violet's determination and ruthless intelligence. She is utterly overwhelms him, quickly establishing her superiority over him. Both father and son are treated as children over whom she holds undisputed authority. When

there is to be serious discussion with his father, she dismisses Hector peremptorily, although on this occasion not successfully. Malone abjectly promises to do nothing without consulting her. Tanner, whom she regards as 'eccentric', she roundly advises to get married, more in command than as advice. She has a shrewd understanding of men and women; she is like a professional diplomatist busy assessing the strength and weaknesses of the people with whom she has to deal.

9.2.7 Mrs. Whitefield

Mrs. Whitefield plays a very small part in the play. She is a little woman, and has never quite happily accepted the position of unimportance which she has been assigned. The utmost of consideration that she can expect is Octavius's chivalrous good manners. She has a shrewd judgement of people, not least her own daughter, who she knows uses of her mother's supposed opinions and wishes to get her own way. She is realistic enough to know what her own children think about her and how they will use her but she is too conventional to be drawn by Tanner into agreement with his views of family relationships. Fundamentally weak herself she sympathizes with weakness in others; she is concerned to protect Octavius even at Tanner's expense. Mrs. Whitefield is timid and she is conventional. Mrs. Whitefield is the prototype of the Victorian mother and Womanly Woman.

9.2.8 Hector Malone, Jr.

In the words of Mr. Arthur H. Nethercot (*Men and Supermen*, 1954), Hector is Shaw's Manly Man. And Shaw has no more respect for him than he has for the Womanly Woman; he is an object of satire. On the credit side, Shaw tells us that he has an "engaging freshness of . . . personality," that he is chivalrous to women, and that his "vein of easy humour" is "rather amusing when it ceases to puzzle" his audience. But he is the ultra-romantic, and it is this quality which makes him so attractive and admirable to Octavius. He is almost oppressively moral and noble; his standards are those of the strict Puritan.

Hector is an American and proud of it. He is young and energetic, very willing to please socially. His ideas are not only conventional; they are also old-fashioned. His statements on marriage and women represent a sore trial for Tanner. He is an idealist, and neither realistic nor practical in his assessment of where his idealism will lead him. Violet knows him immeasurably better than he

knows himself. He needs managing as Violet will undoubtedly manage him in their marriage.

There is a flaw in his sense of honour. His idealism and his manner of speech add to the comedy of play. Yet when he is indignant, he is very much a man. He ignores Violet's order and overwhelms his father with his indignation. He denounces his father and, mouthing high sounding terms, declares that he will not take a penny more from him. He lacks depth; he is moved by emotion and the force of circumstance. Tanner condemns him as a moral impostor; he is not; he seems to be because his ideas, his manners, and his reactions are superficial. He has not thought about life intelligently or purposefully.

9.2.9 Hector Malone, Sr.

Malone is even more of a caricature than his son, depicted as he is as a robber-baron in the capitalistic world. Malone is described in anything but complimentary terms. He is a man who is "vulgar in his finery"; a "bullet cheeked man with a red complexion, stubby hair, smallish eyes, a hard mouth that folds down at the corners, and a dogged chin"; "he has the self-confidence of one who has made money, and something of the truculence of one who has made it in a brutalizing struggle." In the play, his materialism is specifically shown by his insistence that his son's marriage must "show social profit somewhere." He is the largest shareholder in Mendoza, Ltd., the brigand's enterprise.

Malone is elderly, dressed in a black frock coat and a tall silk hat even in the hot Spanish sunshine. He is a self-made, Irish in origin, and very rich; yet he is the good beginner in the business of social relationships. He can handle money better than people. His originality of thought centres on class; an aristocratic wife would be essential for his son not because of snobbery but because a middle-class wife would change nothing. He wants a high-class girl, but he would accept a low. He is clay in Violet's hands. Even his son's moral indignation overwhelms him. There is something in him to be feared, but it operates only in his business transactions. He stands uneasily between the Irish turf-fire of his origins and the conventions of English middle-class society.

9.2.10 Mendoza

The brigand-poetaster is depicted as a rather attractive man in his way. He is tall and strong, and has a fine speaking voice and a ready wit. His manners, one may reasonably assume, he learned as a waiter. "Hence my cosmopolitanism," he explained in reference to his former occupation. Inevitably he became the organizer and leader of his group, and he presides with dignity and skill at the evening meetings of the Socialist debating society high in the Spanish Sierra

Mendoza greets Tanner in the correct manner; he is the soul of decorum. He brushes aside thoughts of discussing the ransom immediately: Business can wait while he plays the solicitous host. He is, to be sure, a romanticist. Unrequited love for Louisa Straker, cook in a private home, had driven him to banditry. Consistent with his romanticism, he is an unrestrained writer and reciter of love poetry. He is unsuccessful in his love affair. He has proved his capabilities by getting Malone to invest in his enterprise although the American millionaire knew none of the details concerning it at the time of his investment.

9.2.11 Don Juan Tenorio

John Tanner's aristocratic ancestor does indeed resemble Tanner but is not to be confused with his still earth-bound descendant. Shaw describes him as having "a more critical, fastidious, handsome face, paler and colder, without Tanner's impetuous credulity and enthusiasm, and without a touch of his plutocratic vulgarity." His manners are impeccable. He is the archetype of the philosophic man whom he honors in his long autobiographical speech. He tells in detail how he had developed intellectually. From the Artist, romantic man, he had learned to worship woman; from her he learned the truth about the relationship between the sexes and the roles of the male and the female in the larger scheme of nature. Thus he was led to the higher truth relating to man's destiny.

It is Don Juan who explains to Dona Ana that all wicked people are comfortable in Hell and that Hell is "the home of the unreal and of the seekers of happiness," as well as the "home of honor, duty, justice, and the rest of the seven deadly virtues," in whose name all the evil in the world is done. He himself long since has rejected comfort and happiness as the goal in life. Moreover, he had "repudiated all duty, trampled honor underfoot, and laughed at justice." In a word, he is not one of the wicked, and he does not feel comfortable in Hell; the place bores him insufferably.

The Devil describes him as a "cold, selfish egotist." But Don Juan is not disturbed by this satanic estimate of his character. He is nauseated by the Devil's sentimentality and smugness, and especially by the Devil's smooth rationalization of his beliefs and activities.

Don Juan is the accomplished platform lecturer. Along with *The Revolutionist's Handbook*, his speeches embody the dominant ideas in the play. Chief among these is the mystical creed of Life Force. It is Don Juan who first introduces this term. His ambition is to spend the rest of his days in profound contemplation which will lead to the ultimate emergence of Philosophical Man — Superman of the future. Inevitably, then, he renounces Hell, the abode of self-deceivers, and leaves for Heaven, the abode of the true Realists.

9.2.12 Dona Ana de Ulloa

This is Ann Whitefield some 300 years earlier and before the emergence of the pursuing woman. A faithful Catholic who had never failed to go to confession, she is appalled to find herself in Hell. She is no less shocked to learn that her father, who had been translated to Heaven, is on the best of terms with the Devil. The fact of the matter is, as Don Juan explains, that she is still one of the "unreal and of the seekers of happiness." When the earthly Don Juan had proclaimed his love for her, she had screamed as a matter of duty, and the fatal duel had ensued. Thus motivated by one of the seven deadly virtues, she was really responsible for evil

Dona Ana particularly resents Don Juan's concept of a woman's mind and his conviction that marriage is "the most licentious of human institutions" and "a mantrap baited with simulated accomplishments and delusive idealizations." All this is to her "cynical and disgusting materialism," and she vies with Don Juan himself in vehemence as she defends the institution of marriage as viewed by the proper, conventional young lady.

Changed from an old crone into a lady of twenty-seven, Dona Ana has all the grace and attractiveness of Ann Whitefield. She is not convinced by the arguments made by the Devil and supported by the Statue. At the last, she is deeply moved by Don Juan's idealism and eloquence, and by his determination to leave Hell and spend his days in Heaven, "the home of the masters of reality."

Once she grasps the idea of Life Force and of the Superman, she is not swerved by the Devil's remark that Superman does not yet exist and probably never will.

9.2.13 The Devil

There is certain resemblance of the Devil to Mendoza. He is clever, laze and punctiliously polite. He introduces the theme of the drama by talking about the Life Force. He is also the character to mention the Nietzsche concept of Superman, which is part of the title. His Satanic Majesty, who rules in his palace of pleasure, is "not at all unlike Mendoza," although much older. His manners would seem to be perfect, but it is apparent that they are a veneer put on by one who is actually rather vulgar. When one recalls that Mendoza, the waiter turned brigand, was an incurable romantic suffering from unrequited love for a cook, and that he was a poet of sorts, one can understand why, among all the characters in the play proper, the Devil should resemble him. Certainly Shaw's Devil is no more terrifying than Mendoza and quite as accomplished as a speaker. Moreover, he is the thoroughgoing democrat, for he knows that the majority of humanity, particularly in England, are dreamers and drifters like him. He is content to leave Heaven to those few who recognize and accept reality and who are not pleasure seekers. Nevertheless, he is vain enough to resent the fact that Don Juan leaves Hell, which is a political defeat for the Devil.

9.2.14 The Statue

The Statue is an old man, noble, yet joyous, dignified yet confident. His voice is like that of Roebuck Ramsden and, apart from the moustache, their appearances are similar. Determined to embrace unreality and live content in Hell, the Statue nevertheless is quite honest about him and acknowledges the validity of many statements made by Don Juan. Excusing himself to the shocked Dona Ana, saying that Don Juan "has stripped every rag of decency from the discussion," he says that he "may as well tell the frozen truth." He then admits that Don Juan's argument that woman is the pursuer in the love game is sound and that he had often lied when making love to women. It is the Statue who tells Don Juan that there are no beautiful women or artists in Heaven — intelligence which makes the Spaniard all the more anxious to go there. He is impressed by Don Juan's conception of the Superman.

9.2.15 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. Who is the mouthpiece of Shaw?
2. Who is the heroine of the play?
3. What is the great mission in Ann's life?
4. Who is a foil to Tanner?
5. To whom does Mrs. Whitefield love as son?
6. Who is a foil to Ann?

B) Choose the correct alternatives:

1. Tanner's resemblance is to _____.
a. Tom Juan b. Don Juan c. Mot Juan d. Juan Don
2. Tanner is reputedly based on _____.
a. H. M Hyndmann b. M. H. Hyndmann
c. R. H. Hyndmann d. R. Ramsden
3. _____ is the incarnation of The Life Force.
a. Violet b. Ann c. Mrs. Whitefield d. Mr. Ramsden
4. _____ is the faithful and ardent lover of Ann Whitefield.
a. Mr. Ramsden b. Henry Straker c. Octavius d. Tanner
5. Who is the New Man for Tanner?
a. Mr. Ramsden b. Henry Straker c. Octavius d. Tanner
6. Hector Malone Jr. is _____ in origin.
a. Irish b. British c. Greek d. French
7. There is certain resemblance of the Devil to _____.
a. Mr. Ramsden b. Henry Straker c. Octavius d. Mendoza

C) State whether following statements are True or False

1. Ann is utterly Machiavellian in her unconsciousness belief. _____.

2. Ramsden does not consider himself an advanced thinker and a fearless outspoken reformer. _____
3. Ramsden likes Tanner. _____
4. Octavius is generous and liked by everybody. _____
5. Hector describes Octavius as 'a good fellow'. _____
6. Henry Straker is the efficient mechanic. _____
7. Henry Straker is more proud of his education. _____
8. Money means a lot to Violet. _____
9. Violet is a romantic heroine. _____
10. Hector denounces his father. _____

9.3 Life Force as a theme of *Man and Superman*:

As a proponent of the ideology of equality of men and women, Bernard Shaw has given this sense of equality not only in work and politics but in social relationship also. Since centuries women have been looked upon as 'object' and men have been 'subject' selecting women for marriage and love without any conscious approach of knowing women's wish and will. But Shaw has turned the table by giving his women characters an open platform to put forward their own choice of their mates. Shaw always reposed his strong faith in the saving goodness of women. His optimistic views about women as saviors are personified in this category; some of the women Shaw has portrayed as driving force.

Man and Superman is a comedy of sexual relationship between man and woman has been merged with an exposition of the idea of Life Force. Life Force, Shaw feels, makes man and woman comical, sexual puppets for its higher and superior purpose wherein a woman is assigned the role of a huntress in search of her suitable competent prey to fulfill the nature's purpose of evolving a Superman. Shaw's extreme faith in "Eugenics" is the underlying theme of the play. Shaw's concept of women is that they are men's driving force, that which gives birth, which makes men overcome their natural inertia and become creator as women naturally are. Shaw has projected Ann as an incarnation of this idea of the driving force.

The Life Force represents the main intellectual theme of *Man and Superman*. It provides not only the philosophical framework of the play, but it is also an important expression of Shaw's thinking. *Man and Superman* is the most fully developed exposition of Shaw's philosophy of Creative Evolution. It is concerned with a discussion of the role of woman as the agent of the Life Force for the creation of the Superman. It seizes Ann as its agent and she pursues Tanner across the continent and finally catches him. That is because she feels instinctively that this artist thinker would be the best father for her children. His happiness and all other emotions are sacrificed in order that a superman may be born. Ann is Octavius's inspiration, yet she rejects him. Ann coaxes him, cajoles him to give up his love-chase. Ann's refusal to Octavius exemplifies the concept that Shavian woman never believes in romantic ideals. Whenever there is confrontation between real life pursuits and poetic life, Shavian woman takes the side of life. Revealing this attitude Barbara Watson has written: "Shavian heroine (or hero) is expressed to assess herself and her choices without illusion. And between her alternatives she is expected to choose fearlessly on the side of life. No price is too high for the vital person to pay, even if the irony of life demands that one chooses the right to life." Ann is duty-bound to life and fulfills nature's purpose of the creation of Superman. She is the flesh-and-blood representatives of the life force. For Shaw, the Life Force works—leads Ann to refuse Octavius (as he is the poetical, chivalrous, romantic, idealizer of women) as husband; the poetic temperament is barren—the Life Force passes it by. Tanner's perception about Ann has a different stance contrary to Octavius's. He calls her 'Boa constrictor', 'lioness', 'cat', 'ironclad' pursuing and hunting for men. He perceives her trickery and unscrupulousness to win over all the people around her.

Shaw's thinking on evolution stems from Lamarck and Samuel Butler. Lamarckism stated that changes in species were conditioned by the environment. Survival depended on this adaptation to the environment. Butler maintained that a species was capable of effecting change and purposive improvement as an act of will. It was this aspect of Butler's thought that profoundly influenced Shaw. Shaw's universe contains two factors – matter and life. Life has as its aim the conquest of matter, the entering into matter to create living organisms. Ultimately the purpose of life is to become independent of matter. The immediate struggle is to enlarge the consciousness and acquire new powers. Life is now dependent on matter as the body is the expression of life for the individual. This is why Shaw in *The Revolutionist's*

Handbook finds that the biblical concept of man as the Temple of the Holy Ghost is 'precisely true'.

Development is based on desire. If man wants a physical or intellectual faculty enough, he will in some mysterious way acquire it. This effort to development, to stretching the resources with which we are endowed, lies at the heart of Shaw's interpretation of life. 'This is the true joy in life' he states in the preface, 'the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy'. The purpose of living is to improve the species not to pursue our own individual aims. To work for individual happiness is for Shaw a futile waste of time; happiness is a by-product of work in other directions. 'Happiness and beauty are by-products.' The acquisition of individual possessions beyond what a man needs leads not to happiness but to anxiety. Woman is instinctively closer to the demands of the Life Force. 'Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation' says Tanner. Women have a universal purpose, and they need man for its fulfillment. The only man who can stand out against this force is the artist who has his own powerful urge to creation to place against that of the woman. Morality and marriage are trivial details against the blind urge to creation. That is why Tanner approves of Violet's supposed immorality.

The Life Force rejects 'prudence, careful selection, virtue, honour, chastity'. So also the absurdity of expecting lifelong happiness and fulfillment from the company of one woman, whose presence might become tedious and, unless she is the man's intellectual equal, her conversation might lower him and her advice mislead. Woman's attempt to present herself in courtship as an intellectual companion, an understanding support, and one who will delight him with her beauty and accomplishments is merely a bait to induce him to marry her and maintain her and her family, to reduce him to a mere breadwinner instead of a thinking developing individual.

In *Man and Superman* the philosophy is developed in third act beyond the mere desire to perpetuate the species. Intellectual power provides the road to the Superman. Earlier species became extinct because they lacked the mental power to carry out their purpose. The evil of the Devil lies in the assertion that it is Death not Life that inspires man to his finest inventions. Under the influence of The Life Force

‘men will die for human perfection’, Don Juan asserts. Life is driving towards the development of brain for man to become God. The philosophic man is mankind’s hope for future. Mind must have a purpose. The law of life ought to be the working towards a better form of life, an ideal conceived in philosophical terms. Rules ought to be aiming at ‘more life for the world instead of at more power and luxury for our miserable selves.’ The philosopher is the production of The Life Force, and the next stage of the journey towards man’s perfection, the use of the brain to choose ‘the line of greatest advantage’ instead of ‘the direction of the least resistance’, the pursuit of the Superman, against which the Devil warns. Don Juan interprets this philosophically; it is significant that Ann ends by crying for the Superman; she is still, as Ann, on the biological level. In the play it is Ann who is victorious in using Tanner for her creative function. In Hell it is Don Juan who leaves her for Heaven. This is Tanner’s conflict at the end of act four. He loves Ann. The Life Force grips him, although he is fighting for his liberty and his essential selfhood, ‘my self, one and indivisible.’

Shaw believed that nature wanted man to evolve into the superman. But the evils of society were obstructing man’s betterment. So Shaw started a crusade to make people conscious of these evils. For him, the main sources for these evils were two—capitalism and marriage. He through his plays launched an attack on capitalism. For him, the capitalists have become the rulers of the state in a democracy. He also showed that capitalists control even religious and charitable organizations. The Life Force is also prevented from doing its normal work by our system of marriage. Sex is the urge given by nature to men and women for fulfilling the purpose of the Life Force. So, sex should be free. But generally men and women enter wedlock for considerations other than sexual attraction. It brings about sexual bondage for the couple. Divorce is very difficult. The main aim of the young men and women is happiness and not betterment. Marriages depend on property. A woman has to depend upon her husband for the care of her children, and she is not paid for her work in the house. In *Man and Superman*, Ann feels that her choice is limited to rich people like Octavius and Tanner. She does not even think of marrying Straker who, perhaps, might have been a better father for her child.

Shaw’s concept of The Life Force lacks definition in terms of its nature, development and origin. There is an assumption that the evolutionary progress towards the Superman must be good, but no detail is given of the nature of the

progress of its ultimate ideal or aim. Of course, Shaw would reply that the essence of evolution is that there never can be an ideal, for as progress is made, the ideal will become more refined. Nevertheless, even in terms of the play, apart from philosophy, the intellectual message would be more powerful if the audience were given some insight into the future direction of man under the influence of The Life Force. Shaw is an inveterate optimist, and it is perhaps this quality that enables him largely to ignore questions of freedom and the conflict between good and evil. What he does succeed in doing in *Man and Superman*, as in all his plays, is to provoke the audience to think for themselves about all the subjects he touches.

9.3.1 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. What does Shavian woman believe?
2. What is Shaw's attitude to work for individual happiness?
3. What does Shaw think about the purpose of living?
4. What does Don Juan assert under the influence of The Life Force?
5. Why does Shaw think 'sex should be free'?

B) State whether following statements are True or False

1. The Life Force does not represent the main intellectual theme of *Man and Superman*._____
2. Ann is duty-bound to life and fulfills nature's purpose of the creation of Superman._____
3. Intellectual power provides the road to the superman._____
4. The philosopher is not the production of The Life Force._____
5. The Life Force rejects prudence, careful selection, virtue, honour and chastity._____

9.4 The writing and production of *Man and Superman*:

While G. B. Shaw was writing *Man and Superman*, he was a member of the old St Pancras Vestry and later the Borough Council. At this time he gave his mornings to the writing of *Man and Superman*. Some of the social and economic interests he

found in the committee rooms may well have influenced the ideas in the play. His plays were never planned before writing. Once he had conceived the theme of the play, he wrote it without being clear in his mind what was going to develop. 'What I say today, everybody will say tomorrow, though they will not remember who put it into their heads', he wrote. Shaw was a consummate craftsman who took the work of writing plays very seriously.

Man and Superman is significant in terms of Shaw's development in being the first play that he wrote independently of an attempt to satisfy existing stage conditions. In this sense *Man and Superman* is an interesting personal document, especially the *Don Juan in Hell scene*. One publisher, John Murray, found the ideas in the play unacceptable and declined to publish. It was however published by Constable in 1903, the beginning of a lifelong connection. Critics began to take Shaw's ideas seriously for the first time; although the public acceptance of his concept of The Life Force was always disappointing.

Man and Superman was produced in America at the Hudson Theatre, New York on 4th September 1905. Lorraine, the director, was very demanding on the actors; he dismissed thirteen actors from the part of Straker. The play was an immediate success. The profits at the end of the first month were the highest in the history of that theatre and the takings for the season were higher than those of the famous dance and musical show, Zeigfield Follies. The run lasted for eight months. Ironically the published version was banned from the New York library. In 1907, Lorraine played the part of Tanner at the Royal Court Theatre, and at the Criterion. In the Royal Court production of 1907 Lilian McCarthy was Ann. The first full performance with the whole of act three was given at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, in June 1915. In June 1907, Vedrenne and Granville-Barker gave a separate performance of the Don Juan in Hell scene under the title of 'A Dream from *Man and Superman*'. It had eight matinee performances.

The play has been regularly produced in the professional theatre. One of the most well known was the revival at the New Theatre in 1951 with John Clements and Kay Hammond. It has been produced several times on television and on radio. In 1977, the Royal Shakespeare Company performed it at the Malvern Festival Theatre, where the Don Juan scene was given separately at lunchtime or late night performances. This production was transferred to the Savoy Theatre, London, with Susan Hampshire as Ann and Richard Pasco as Tanner.

9.4.1

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. Where was *Man and Superman* produced in 1905?
2. Where was the play *Man and Superman* produced regularly?
3. Who was Ann in the Royal Court Production in 1907?
4. Who played the part of Tanner at the Royal Court Theatre in 1907?

9.5 Shaw's style:

Shaw's writing is designed to persuade the reader. His plays are the vehicle for his ideas. His style of writing is totally different from others. Shaw's style is primarily a matter of assertion while the truth about his style is neither as simple nor as striking. He possesses a passionate desire to explain to reader or listener his own views and to persuade him of the rightness and incontrovertibility of them. There is no attempt in Shaw to imitate the stylistic conventions of other writers or periods. His aim is to be direct, simple and powerful. His prose has an almost physical impact in the directness of its appeal. Influences for Shaw are intellectual not stylistic. Among these are Bunyan, Blake, Hogarth, Turner, Goethe, Shelley, Wagner, Ibsen, Morris, Tolstoy and Nietzsche. It is significant that painters, composers, philosophers, poets, dramatists, novelists, English and foreign writers are all included here. A conscious stylist would have been more eclectic in his choice. Walkley was, to some extent, right when he stated that for Shaw drama was only an explanation. Shaw's moral and intellectual purposes are one. To make an audience think is to arouse a 'conviction of sin.' His ideal audience would be 'a pit of philosophers.'

This has given rise to the criticism that Shaw's plays are not effective drama. There is no necessary conflict between the expression of ideas and dramatic effectiveness. When Max Beerbohm first read *Man and Superman*, he considered it was not a play but a series of witty dialogues. However, when he saw it in the theatre, he admitted that it was much better than he thought on reading it. Some critics have asserted that Shaw continues the dialogue as long as he dares and then introduces a violent, unexpected or irrelevant piece of action to break the monotony. In this respect *Man and Superman* is very different. It is an example of sustained dialogue broken by the occasional incident. In this play, in act three the speeches are

sometimes longer than any drama can easily sustain. The Devil as well as Don Juan is given to very long speeches. 'Let us go on', the Devil says to Don Juan, 'for another hour if you like'; and the audience fears or hopes that they may, depending on the intellectual stamina or the individual member of the audience. However, there is an abundance of effective dramatic situations which are related to the ideas in the play.

The characters like the situations work on more than one level. No one would describe the characters in either play as memorable in depth or in breadth of humanity. Yet they work dramatically. They remain vividly in the memory of reader or audience. There is an element of caricature. They are a little too much all of a piece. There is an abundance of humour everywhere in Shaw. He can never be wholly serious for long. He can puncture Tanner's impassioned oratory by the debunking comment; he can do the same to his own ideas expressed in the play. One can be annoyed, but not embittered, by a writer who does not take himself altogether seriously. Tolstoy who in his own writing was never less than wholly serious found this frivolity unacceptable in a work like *Man and Superman*.

The sense of fun can range from the felicities of wit to obvious verbal humour. The mixture of French with English idiom in Mendoza's 'Du calme, duval: keep your hair on' is almost gross. There is hardly a page in *Man and Superman* that does not contain wit that delights. For good measure there is the rag-bag of wit assembled in *The Revolutionist's Handbook*. The best of the thought is often enshrined in the wit. Wit and observation are not confined to the intellectual characters. Ann wisely observes: 'I think men make more mistakes by being too clever than by being too good.' Shaw's witticisms are often an expression of the viewpoint of the character that makes them. In Oscar Wilde, they tend to stand on their own independently of the characters. Only Don Juan could have said: 'Hell is the home of honour, duty, justice and the rest of the seven deadly virtues.' Shaw's wit is not only decorative; it is organic part of the movement of thought in the play.

There is little of the poetic in Shaw. Mendoza's verse is comic in its badness. Yet one suspects that better verse would still have put Tanner—and perhaps Shaw also—to sleep. Shaw is first and last a writer of prose. When there is a magnificent opportunity to expatiate lyrically on the Sierra Nevada evening, Shaw concentrates on the details not the atmosphere of the scene. No writer of genuine poetic imagination would mention a Poor Law Guardian in connection with a description of

the brigands in the mountains nor use the simile: the mountains tolerate them as lions tolerate lice. Shaw's imagination like that of Swift is controlled by an icy sense of logic. For Shaw, the poetic imagination is dangerously near to sentimentality as he shows in the characters of Octavius. Shaw, like Plato, would doubtless have excluded poets from his ideal republic.

Shaw's prose is for use not for effect. It is disciplined, ruthless and economical. There are very few descriptive words. The choice of word is often colourless and mundane. There is no hesitation in employing a hackneyed or proverbial expression if that is what he needs to express an idea. There is a frequent use of abstract words as one would expect in an intellectual prose. There are few metaphors and similes, and these few are often designed rather to shock by their incongruity than delight by their imaginative appropriateness. The power of the style springs from the intensity of its discipline. The lack of ornament gives it a pace that stimulates and excites the audience.

9.5.1 Check your progress:

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. What does Max Beerbohm say about *Man and Superman*?
2. What is the view of Walkley about Shaw's play?
3. What does Don Juan say about Hell?

B) State whether following statements are True or False

1. The aim of Shaw's style is not simple, direct and powerful. _____
2. Influences for Shaw are intellectual not stylistic. _____
3. There is little of the poetic in Shaw. _____
4. Shaw's prose is disciplined, ruthless and economical. _____

8.6 Summary:

In this unit, we have read about almost all the characters used by Bernard Shaw in his play *Man and Superman*. Though there are many characters, a few characters are the major ones. They have occupied the major actions in the play. The Life Force represents the main intellectual theme of the play. It provides not only the philosophical framework of the play, but it is also an important expression of Shaw's

thinking. *Man and Superman* is significant in terms of Shaw's development in being the first play that he wrote independently of an attempt to satisfy existing stage conditions. Shaw's plays are never planned before writing. Shaw was a consummate craftsman who took the work of writing plays very seriously. Shaw's writing is designed to persuade the reader. His plays are the vehicles for his ideas. His style of writing is totally different from others. Shaw's style is primary matter of assertion while the truth about style is neither as simple nor as striking. His aim is to be direct, simple and powerful.

9.7 Terms to remember:

- **proclaim:** make known
- **precipice:** a very steep face of a cliff.
- **scintillates:** sparkle
- **abnegate:** give up, deny
- **perspicacious:** quick and understand
- **chauffeur:** servant
- **peremptory:** absolute
- **truculence:** an eagerness to fight
- **cajoles:** flatters
- **inveterate:** long established
- **incontrovertible:** that can not be disproved
- **frivolity:** lightness of character.

9.8 Answers to check your progress:

9.2.15

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. Tanner
2. Ann Whitefield
3. to find the right father for her children.
4. Mr. Ramsden
5. Violet

B) Choose the correct alternatives:

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

C) State whether following statements are True or False

1. True 2. False 3. False 4. True 5. True
6. True 7. True 8. True 9. False 10. True

9.3.1

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. The Shavian woman believes in real life.
2. For Shaw, to work for the individual happiness is a futile waste of time.
3. to improve the species not to pursue our own individual aims.
4. Under the influence of The Life Force men will die for human perfection.
5. For Shaw, Sex should be free because it is the urge given by nature to man and woman for fulfilling the purpose of the Life Force.

B) State whether following statements are True or False

1. False 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True

9.4.1

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. America
2. the professional theatre
3. Lilian McCarthy
4. Lorraine, the director

8.5.1

A) Answer in a word/ phrase/ sentence.

1. It is not a play but a series of witty dialogues.
2. Shaw's drama was only an explanation.
3. Hell is the home of honour, duty, justice and the rest of the seven deadly virtues.

B) State whether following statements are True or False

1. False 2. True 3. True 4. True

9.9 Exercises:

1. The Life Force is a dominant theme of Shaw's plays. Explain with special reference to Shaw's *Man and Superman*.
2. Thoughts about relationship between men and women are more important in *Man and Superman* than social, political and economic questions. Discuss.
3. John Tanner is too much concerned with ideas and too little with people. How far is this true?
4. Describe the differences of character and approach between Ann and Violet.
5. Shaw often uses minor characters to develop an intellectual point. Discuss this statement with reference to Henry Straker, Mendoza, and Mr. Hector Malone, Senior.
6. Examine the main feature of Shaw's style.

9.10 Reference for Further Study:

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5. Internet
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