

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

V SEMESTER

BA ENGLISH

CORE COURSE : ENG5 B10

2019 Admission onwards



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

School of Distance Education

Calicut University- P.O,

Malappuram - 673635, Kerala.

19016

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

School of Distance Education

Study Material

V SEMESTER

BA ENGLISH

CORE COURSE : ENG5 B10

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

Prepared by:

Smt. JISHINA GOPINATH,
Guest Faculty,
Department of English,
CKGM Govt. College, Perambra, Kozhikkode.

Scrutinized by:

Dr. MUHAMMED NOUFAL. K,
Asst. Professor,
Department of English,
CKGM Govt. College, Perambra, Kozhikkode.

DISCLAIMER

“The author shall be solely responsible for the content and views expressed in this book”

CONTENTS

1	Section One	5
2	Section Two	42
3	Section Three	55
4	Section Four	73

Syllabus for ENGB10 Indian writing in English

Module 1: Poetry

1. Rabindranath Tagore: Two verses - one each from *The Gitanjali* and *The Gardener*.

2. Sarojini Naidu: *The Coromandel Fishers*.

3. Kamala Das: *Introduction*.

4. Arun Kolatkar: *Old Woman*.

5. Agha Shahid Ali: *Country without Post office*

Module 2: Prose

1. B R Ambedkar: Speech at Mahad.

2. Salman Rushdie: *Imaginary Homelands*.

Module 3: Fiction

1. R K Narayan: *The Fortune Teller*

2. Temsula Ao: *Laburnum for my Head*.

3. Jhumpa Lahiri: *The Interpreter of Maladies*

Module 4: Drama and Film

1. Girish Karnad: *Fire and Rain*.

2. *Charulatha*: dir. Satyajit Ray.

SECTION ONE

POETRY

Gitanjali and The Gardener

Rabindranath Tagore

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet, short-story writer, song composer, playwright, essayist, and painter who introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of early 20th-century India.

In 1913 he became the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the *Upanishads*. He was educated at home; and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates, a project which brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest

in social reforms. He also started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time, he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he relinquished the honour as a protest against British policies in India. Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are *Manasi* (1890) [The Ideal One], *Sonar Tari* (1894) [The Golden Boat], *Gitanjali* (1910) [Song Offerings], *Gitimalya* (1914) [Wreath of Songs], and *Balaka* (1916) [The Flight of Cranes]. The English renderings of his poetry, which include *The Gardener* (1913), *Fruit Gathering* (1916), and *The Fugitive* (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake. Tagore's major plays are *Raja* (1910) [*The King of the Dark Chamber*], *Dakghar* (1912) [*The Post Office*], *Achalayatan* (1912) [The immovable] *Muktadhara* (1922) [The Waterfall], and *Raktakaravi* (1926) [*Red Oleanders*]. He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a number of novels, among them *Gora* (1910), *Ghare-Baire* (1916) [*The Home and the World*], and *Yogayog* (1929) [*Crosscurrents*]. Besides these, he wrote musical dramas, dance dramas, essays of all types, travel diaries, and two autobiographies, one in his middle years and the other

shortly before his death in 1941. Tagore also left numerous drawings and paintings, and songs for which he wrote the music himself. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: India's "Jana Gana Mana" and Bangladesh's "Amar Shonar Bangla". The Sri Lankan national anthem was inspired by his work.

Some important quotes from Tagore

- 1.. Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky."
2. "If you cry because the sun has gone out of your life, your tears will prevent you from seeing the stars."
3. "It is very simple to be happy, but it is very difficult to be simple."
5. "You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."
6. "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."
7. "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it".
8. "The butterfly counts not months but moments, and has time enough."
9. "Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."
10. "Love's gift cannot be given; it waits to be accepted."

Summary of the poem

***Gitanjali*- General introduction**

It is, a collection of poetry, the most famous work by Rabindranath Tagore, published in India in 1910. Tagore then translated it into prose poems in English, as *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*, and it was published in 1912 with an introduction by William Butler Yeats. Love is the principal subject, although some poems detail the internal conflict between spiritual longings and earthly desires. Much of his imagery is drawn from nature, and the dominant mood is minor-key and muted. Famous English writer Yeats was deeply influenced by this composition.

Verse 35 *Gitanjali*-Where the Mind is Without Fear

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards
perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into
the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country
awake

Summary of the poem

The poem 'Where the Mind is Without Fear' is a translated version of Chittojethabhoyshunyo. It is taken from Gitanjali in English as poem 35. The poem is a prayer to the God to grant a country where people can live freely, without fear and logically.

Paraphrase of the poem

A person who is truly independent should be allowed to think freely, without any kind of fear. The lives of people with dignity and without fear that brings a healthy life. People should live a life which has no fear. Fearful experience of life yields no meaning in life. It gives the people a taste of death before the ultimate demise of the body. The poet wishes for such a nation where people would have access to free education, a country with access to knowledge and freedom for everyone. The poet prays to God for such a nation which remains undivided. Where there is no possibility in the present as well as in future of partition within the country. The poetic persona is dead against any kind of division among the people of a same country. The term 'domestic walls' refers to-caste, creed, religion, beliefs, political alignments...The poet envisions a country where all the people speak truth. The poet tries to inspire the people to work hard for a better nation or a perfect land for all. The countrymen should strive for betterment in all aspects of the human world. This is his

exhortation. He also prays to Eeshwar, to impart reason and logic, enlighten the minds of the people so that they would not leave the path of reason to carry out day-to-day affairs. Thus, the poet sums up the prayer with final words that he wishes our country, India, should awake and taste the heaven that freedom can bring to us, under the guidance of our Parampita Parmeshvara (Indian idea of the divine).

Theme

It is a prayer from the poetic persona for a free, liberated, knowledgeable country and fellow people. The poet seems to be in a posture of thoughtful prayer. It can be said that the poem is entirely coming out of the poet's heart spontaneously, without any filtering of emotions or thoughts.

Structure, tone, poetic devices

Usually, a poem comes with many ornaments of language like metaphor, hyperbole, irony and others; however, in this poem, *Where the Mind is Without Fear*, the poet has decided to keep things simple and instantly communicating to the readers. A meditative tone is used in the poem. There is no identified rhyme scheme for the poem.

The Gardener Verse 46- You Left Me

Rabindranath Tagore

The Gardener is a song filled with the idea of love and unity of humanity with Universe. It was one of the best Tagore's poetry books, also known as the book of love. It is about the general love towards the world and humanity. The love he feels for a woman is only a cause for him writing magical verses in which he glorifies life, while physical and emotional love is only one of its wonderful elements. *The Gardener* was published in 1913.

The verse 46 in the collection depicts the relation between the speaker and his beloved. The poet lost something precious, probably his love. He feels doomed. But then he reflects...life is something like dew drops, it is short, its fleeting fast. And there are many more spectacular things in the world to enjoy. Thus, it is better to enjoy the beautiful things around and do away those evil thoughts.

Youth will wane before that the speaker has so many things to do. So instead of wasting his time, he should get engaged. There are so many things to enjoy in the world like rainy nights, golden seasonal changes, lovely spring etc. So, the speaker makes himself ready to enjoy the season and nature instead of mourning for the lost love. He tells the spring that, let me love you dear spring ... I feel you are mortal and you are more precious than the lost thing

Moreover he feels that it is really sweet to sit in a corner, musing on pretty things and write beautiful verses about the fresh and happy world. The speaker thinks that he can be melancholic by writing melancholy. That maybe heroic too. But he is determined to enjoy all those fresh thoughts and feelings peeping to his mind.

The poem is written in an optimistic manner or the poet has used a positive tone.

Theme

The brevity or transitory nature of life is highlighted by Tagore on this verse. Just like the concept of *carpe diem*, poet urges his readers to live the life and enjoy the world in all possible manner, instead of carrying the ghost of past forever.

Structure

The poem is written prose like manner and Tagore has used a very simple language. The verse is divided into four stanzas without any particular rhyme scheme or rhythmic pattern.

Short answer questions from *Gardener* and *Gitanjali*

1. What is the meaning of the word *Gitanjali*?
2. The English translation of *Gitanjali* is a combination of different poems by Tagore. Which are those?
3. What is the theme of the verse 35 of *Gitanjali*?

4. In what ways the title Gitanjali is appropriate?
5. What qualities does the poet wish to inculcate in his countrymen?
6. Explain the phrase Where knowledge is free?
7. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem Where the Mind is Without Fear?
8. What are the images used in the poem Where the Mind is Without Fear?
9. How does the poet describe reason and its relevance in the poem?
10. To whom the poem Where the Mind is Without Fear is addressed?
11. How does the poetic persona consoles himself in the grief of a loss?
12. How does the poet compare the life in the poem *The Gardener*?
13. What is the warning of the wise men to the speaker?
14. What are the major factors in the nature, that the poet wants to focus in order to forget his pain?
15. What is poet's conclusion in verse 46 *The Gardener*?

Paragraph questions from *Gardener* and *Gitanjali*

1. Explain the idea of freedom expressed in the poem verse 35 *Gitanjali*
2. What are the specialities of language used in the Where the Mind is Without Fear?
3. Bring out the significance of the *Gitanjali* and how the verse 35 goes along with it?
4. Write a short note about the poetic devices used in verse 46 *The Gardener*?
5. How does poet recover from the pain of loss in verse 46 *The Gardener*?

Essay questions

1. Explain Tagore's vision of his country expressed in the poem Where the Mind is Without Fear
2. *The Gardener* presents a universal love and it is philosophical meditation on the fleeting nature of human life. Substantiate.

Coromandel fishers

Sarojini Naidu

Introduction

Sarojini Naidu is known as “the Nightingale of India.” She was a celebrated poet, freedom fighter, political activist, she was the first woman to become President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to achieve the post of Governor of Uttar Pradesh state. She was born on 13th February 1879. Her family at that time lived in Hyderabad, India. Dr.AghomathChattopadaya, her father was a scientist and philosopher. VaradaSunderi Devi, her mother, was a poet. Sarojini was an extremely intelligent child, becoming fluent in five languages and wrote poems from a young age. She was granted a well-deserved scholarship so that she could study at King’s College in England. Here she expanded her writing to produce articles featuring themes such as the great temples and mountains of India and the complex details of Indian social life.

She returned to India when she was nineteen to be married. Her husband was Dr.MuthyalaGovindarajulu Naidu from southern India. Theirs was not a singular caste marriage which was not tolerated at that time. She joined the Indian freedom struggle after the 1905 partition of Bengal and met noted figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru. She travelled extensively to other parts of the world, including Europe and America, in order to speak about the Indian Nationalist cause.

Sarojini Naidu also led an active literary life and attracted notable Indian intellectuals to her famous salon in Bombay (now Mumbai). She acquired the sobriquet Bharat kokila -the Nightingale of India from Rabindranath Tagore due to the melodious, rhythmic poetry she penned on a wide variety of themes such as Indian myth, India's great myth, India's great mountains, rivers and temples. Mrs Naidu is often compared to English metaphysical poets like John Donne and Andrew Marvell. She was a prolific writer. Her first volume of poetry, *The Golden Threshold* (1905), was followed by *The Bird of Time* (1912), and in 1914 she was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Her collected poems, all of which she wrote in English, have been published under the titles *The Sceptred Flute* (1928) and *The Feather of the Dawn* (1961).

Coromandel Fishers

Rise, brothers, rise; the wakening skies pray to the
morninglight,
The wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn like a child
that has cried all night.

Come, let us gather our nets from the shore and set our
catamarans free,

To capture the leaping wealth of the tide, for we are the
kings of the sea!

No longer delay, let us hasten away in the track of the
sea gull's call,

The sea is our mother, the cloud is our brother, the
waves are our comrades all.

What though we toss at the fall of the sun where the

hand of the sea-god drives?

He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his
breast our lives.

Sweet is the shade of the cocoanut glade, and the scent
of the mango grove,

And sweet are the sands at the full o' the moon with the
sound of the voices we love;

But sweeter, O brothers, the kiss of the spray and the
dance of the wild foam's glee;

Row, brothers, row to the edge of the verge, where the
low sky mates with the sea.

Word meanings and explanations

1. Catamaran: a type of water craft.
2. Leap- jump or spring long way
3. Hasten – hurry away
4. Comrades- fellow workers or colleagues
5. Toss- row of the boat
6. Verge- end or border
7. Mate- friend or companion
8. Full o' the moon - the full moon
9. The wakening skies- the early morning sky which
compared to someone waking up from sleep
10. The low sky – the horizon

Summary of the poem

Coromandel fishers is a poem that focuses on the fishermen. Sarojini Naidu motivates the people through this poem. Though the poem is written for the fishermen, it metaphorically focuses on the Indian people. The poet urges the people to hasten their freedom struggle. *Coromandel fishers* is a poem that focuses on the fishermen. Sarojini Naidu motivates the people through this poem. It depicts the relationship of fishermen with nature. Nature stands as a symbol of beauty that expresses the optimistic view of life.

She asks the fisher folks to wake up and offer their prayers to the morning light. The wind is calm and quiet like a child that sleeps soundly after crying the whole night. She asks the fishermen to gather the nets and set their catamarans free and set out into the sea to gather the leaping wealth of the tide as they are the kings of the sea. She asks the fisher folks not to delay and quickly set forth in the track of the sea gull's call.

She comforts the folks by saying that the sea is their mother, the cloud is their brother and the waves toss their boats at sunset and drive them far, God who controls the storm will protect their lives from its rage.

Short answer questions

1. What is the rhyming scheme of *Coromandel Fishers*?

An. aabb

2. What is the wind being compared to?

An. The wind is compared to a child that has cried all night but now asleep in his or her mother's arms.

3. What does the caller ask his brothers to do?

An. The caller asks his brothers to wake up from sleep.

4. In what sense are the fishermen the 'kings of the sea?'

An. Like kings who have both powers to rule and responsibility to take care, the coromandel fishers too have their own power to rule the sea they go for fishing and their responsibility to take care of the mother-sea.

5. How and when does coconut shade appear sweet to the fishermen?

An. With their shade falling on the hot sand, the coconut trees cool the sand. After a day's horrible work, the fishermen return and take rest under these coconut trees.

6. What is the track of a sea-gull's call? Why should the fishermen follow this track?

An. The track of the sea-gull's call is the track by which the sea-gull has gone in search of fish. By following the sea-gull's track, the fishermen can easily get big catches of fish.

7. Why does the poet say:

- a) the sea is our mother
- b) the cloud is our brother
- c) the waves are our comrades all?

An: a) The sea is their mother because it is the source of their livelihood.

b) If there are a lot of clouds and it will be raining, they cannot go into the sea.

c) The waves also help them to go into the sea. If the sea is rough, they cannot venture into the sea.

8. 'The wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn' Which figure of speech is used in the given line?

An. The figure of speech used in this line is metaphor

9. Why do the fishermen prefer the dangers of the sea to the comfort of the land?

An. The sea provides the fishermen livelihood and presents them scope for adventure. Hence, they prefer the foam of the waves and the kiss of the salt waters of the sea.

10. Write the lines that show that the fishermen are not afraid of the sea or of drowning.

An. He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his breast our lives.

Paragraph Questions

1. Write a paragraph explaining the literary devices in the poem *Coromandel Fishers* by Sarojini Naidu

An. Literary/Poetic device is a technique a writer uses to produce a special effect on their writing. It adds beauty and elegance to the poem and also contributes to the thematic exhibition. Poets use different types of poetic devices to highlight different characteristics of a poem. There are different types of poetic devices like metaphor, simile, anaphora, personification, enjambment etc. *Coromandel Fishers* itself is woven with technique of personification. Wakening skies pray to the morning light,

wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn, sea gull's call, the sea is our mother, the cloud is our brother, the waves are our comrades all, he who holds the storm by the hair, dance of the wild foam's glee, low sky mates with the sea. We can see the usage of personification in all these lines. Simile is the comparison of two things using the words like/as. The line "The wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn like a child that has cried all night" is an example for simile in the poem. Another poetic device which is also based on the comparison of things is metaphor, "The sea is our mother, the cloud is our brother, the waves are our comrades all." This is an example for metaphor. Repetition of same letters in same line is said to as alliteration. In the line 'He who holds the storm by the hair, will hide in his breast our lives.' The letter h is repeated several times which can be considered as alliteration. The rhyme scheme used by the poet is abab.

Essay questions

1. What is the theme of Naidu's poem *Coromandel Fishers*?

An.Sarojini Naidu in the poem, '*The Coromandel Fishers*', has described the beauty of nature and the folk culture of the Coromandel Coast of India. It depicts the relationship of fishermen with nature. Nature stands as a symbol of beauty that expresses the optimistic view of life.

She asks the fisher folks to wake up and offer their prayers to the morning light. The wind is calm and quiet like a child that sleeps soundly after crying the whole night. She asks the fishermen to gather the nets and set their

catamarans free and set out into the sea to gather the leaping wealth of the tide as they are the kings of the sea. She asks the fisher folks not to delay and quickly set forth in the track of the sea gull's call. She comforts the folks by saying that the sea is their mother, the cloud is their brother and the waves toss their boats at sunset and drive them far, God who controls the storm will protect their lives from its rage.

In the poem '*The Coromandel Fishers*', she addresses the fishermen as brothers. She considers herself one among them. The poem is a call to the fishermen to gather their nets and set to catch fish. Addressing them as their comrade, she calls them to join her on the fishing expedition. She expresses her concern for them and asks them to rise and at the break of dawn to catch the leaping wealth of the tide. This helps in building a rapport with the fishermen. She considers them as her own kith and kin.

The poet Sarojini Naidu possesses a sharp aesthetic sensibility and is an admirer of the varied colours of nature. She has beautifully said that the fishermen set out for the sea at dawn when the wind is still sleeping as quietly as a child that sleeps after crying the whole night. Everything around is quiet and calm. It is the most suitable time for the fishermen to set out on their fishing task. This is an appropriate time for the fishermen to set out their fishing task. This is an appropriate time for the fishermen to set out for the sea gathering their nets and setting their catamarans free.

An Introduction

Kamala Das

Introduction

Kamala Das /Madhavikutty/ Kamala Surayya is a well-known Indian writer who wrote in English as well as Malayalam. She is notable for her candid and open writings about relationships and female sexuality. Das was part of a generation of Indian writers whose work centred on personal rather than colonial experiences, and her short stories, poetry, memoirs, and essays brought her respect and notoriety in equal measures. Kamala Das was born in Punnayarkulam near Thrissur in Kerala as the daughter of NalapatBalamani Amma, was a well-known poet, and, V.M.Nair, who was an automobile company executive and a journalist. Her maternal uncle, the famous author Nalappatt Narayana Menon had great impact on her literary career where as her grandmother or amamma like she fondly called influenced in her growth as an individual. She spent her girlhood days in Kerala as well as in Kolkatha. She was married to Das when she was 15 years old and moved to Bombay with her husband. She had three sons with Das. In 1999 she controversially converted to Islam, renaming herself Kamala Surayya.

Das's poetry collections included *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), and *The Old Playhouse, and Other Poems* (1973). Subsequent English-language works included the novel *Alphabet of Lust* (1976) and the short stories "A Doll for the Child Prostitute" (1977) and "Padmavati the Harlot" (1992). Notable among her many Malayalam works were the

short-story collection *Thanuppu* (1967; “Cold”) and the memoir *Balyakalasmaranakal* (1987; “Memories of Childhood”). Perhaps her best-known work was an autobiography, which first appeared as a series of columns in the weekly *Malayalanadu*, then in Malayalam as *Ente Katha* (1973), and finally in English as *My Story* (1976). A shockingly intimate work, it came to be regarded as a classic. In later life Das said that parts of the book were fictional.

Her poetic work could be classified under the genre of confessional poetry— not a common style for Indian poets, least of all women. She was quite the pioneer in this respect and also for using English to pen her verse. Her English poetry has been compared to that of Anne Sexton and won her both recognition and literary awards during her lifetime. The poems cast a critical eye on Indian society, with its strong patriarchy and notions about how a woman should conduct herself. Interestingly, while her poetry is replete with feminist yearnings, there is a strong sense of spirituality running through them.

Summary of the poem *An Introduction*

The poem *Introduction* was included in Kamala Das’s collection *Summer in Calcutta*. This collection is all about love, betrayal and the pain which follows it. The particular poem *Introduction* is a very clear feminist statement that advocates for free choice for all women. This is in regards to every aspect of life, but the poet puts a special emphasis on marriage. She compares and contrasts the roles of men and women in society and explains for the reader how her life, the rules she’s forced to obey, infringe on her freedom. Readers should be able to ask themselves while

moving through the poem how, if at all, the things Das is talking about apply to their own life. If nothing matches up, they might ask themselves why and if some kind of unaddressed or unacknowledged privilege is making their lives better. The author depicts how a woman is forced to be fit into some boxes and never gets an opportunity to express herself wholly. As an author, an individual, a creative person, she explores the boundaries a woman has to face in a patriarchal society. The poet Kamala Das proudly announces her identity as an Indian; she is brown, born in Malabar, Kerala. She speaks three languages, she is a bilingual writer who writes both in her mother tongue, Malayalam, and in English as well and she sees her dreams only in one. She is possibly trying to be boastful about her competence in academics. In a way, she is proving that she is no lesser than a man. “An Introduction” by Kamala Das encapsulates her personality as it expresses some incidents of her life, her rejection of patriarchal norms, and her rebellion against the gender role as well. This revolt ends with the assertion of her identity by recognizing herself with ‘I’.

Word meanings and explanations

1. Distortion: the act of twisting or altering something out of its true or original nature.
2. Queerness: oddity or strangeness
3. Caw: the harsh cry of a rook, crow, or similar bird
4. Sprout: to grow
5. Shrank: become or make smaller in size or amount

6. Schizophrenia: a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in the relation between thought, emotion, and behaviour, leading to faulty perception, inappropriate actions and feelings, withdrawal from reality and personal relationships into fantasy and delusion, and a sense of mental fragmentation.

7. Nympho: a woman with strong sexual desire.

8. Jilted: cheated

Short answer questions and answers

1. “Don’t write in English” who orders to whom?

An. The critics, friends and visiting cousins command to the speaker to not write in a foreign language.

2. Name three works of Kamala Das.

An.), *The Descendants*, *Padmavati the Harlot*, *Alphabet of Lust*

3. What do you mean by the metaphor ‘hungry haste of rivers’?

An. It refers to the impatience and selfishness of man in love.

4. What does the poet introduce in the poem “An Introduction”?

An. A notion of independent self.

5. What do you mean by the phrase ‘All mine, mine alone.’?

An. The speaker's sense of individuality is expressed through this phrase.

5. What do you mean by 'sword in its sheath' from the poem "An Introduction"?

An. Every individual has created a world of their own which they do not want to break.

6. What is the main theme of the poem "An Introduction" by Kamala Das?

An. The oppression faced by a woman in a highly patriarchal society.

7. Why did the speaker start to wear her brother's trousers?

An. To deny her womanliness.

8. What happened to the speaker when she asked for love?

An. That question ended with her marriage at sixteen and the closing of a bedroom door. Although her husband did not beat her, her sad woman-body felt so beaten.

9. To what does the poet compare her language?

An. She compares it to the cawing of crows and roaring of lions.

Paragraph questions

1. Write a paragraph based on the theme of confessional mode in the poem *An Introduction*

An. For most contemporary critics, confessional poetry marked a revolution in poetic style as well as specific subject matter and the relationship between a poem's speaker and self. Confessional poets wrote in direct, colloquial speech rhythms and used images that reflected intense psychological experiences, often culled from childhood or battles with mental illness or breakdown. They tended to utilize sequences, emphasizing connections between poems. They grounded their work in actual events, referred to real persons, and refused any metaphorical transformation of intimate details into universal symbols. Kamala Das is often compared with confessional poets like Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath, in her open and candid expression of internal conflicts. She wrote about female sexuality and urge for love without any restraints in the poem Introduction. Introduction by Kamala Das is based on her experiences as a woman in patriarchal society. "*An Introduction*" by Kamala Das encapsulates her personality as it expresses some incidents of her life, her rejection of patriarchal norms, and her rebellion against the gender role as well. This revolt ends with the assertion of her identity by recognizing herself with 'I'. One of the common features of Das's poetry is the honest expression of her privacy. This honest expression of Das's personal life is what Mary Erulkar called "the bitter service of womanhood". But a closer observation it becomes clear that it is not a "Nudity on sheets of weeklies," nor a wanton display of 'thigh and sighs', nor yet merely a case of 'from bed to verse', Kamala Das's persona is no nymphomaniac; she is simply 'every woman who seeks love'; she is 'the beloved and the betrayed. However, she remains the eternal Eve who proudly celebrates her essential femininity. The speaker

of the poem openly admits about the ruined nuptial knot she had, how she was forced by the society to keep certain standards especially as a woman and a female writer. She also opens up about how her language was even controlled by certain sects around her. All these declarations and her final statement of self -assertion makes the poem an Indian version of confessional poem.

Essay questions

1.Explain the depiction of patriarchy in Kamala Das' poem *An Introduction*

An. Kamala Das was one of the most prominent feminist voices in the postcolonial era. She wrote in her mother tongue Malayalam as well as in English. To her Malayalam readers she was Madhavi Kutty and to her English patrons she was Kamala Das. On account of her extensive contribution to the poetry in our country, she earned the label 'The Mother of Modern Indian English Poetry'. She has also been likened to literary greats like Sylvia Plath because of the confessional style of her writing. On the occasion of her birth anniversary, we look into the remarkable life of this literary icon.

Kamala Das's poems show strong sense of consciousness towards the feminine psyche. *An Introduction* voices the longing and complaint of a woman who represents all women and she complains against Man who represents every man. The poetess claims that India is her motherland; her colour is brown, very brown not fair. She is born in Malabar and speaks three languages, her own mother tongue, Malayalam; national language, Hindi and

global language, English. She asserts her choice to write in English despite social restrictions:

I am Indian,

Verybrown, born in Malabar, I speak three languages,
write in Two, dream in one. Don't write in English, they
said, English is not your mother-tongue. Why not leave
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in

Any language I like? The language I speak,
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half Indian, funny
perhaps, but it is honest, It is as human as I am human,
don't.

The poet sheds light upon the temporal sequence of growth and maturity of hers who represents every woman. She candidly writes about the process of maturity and manifestation of changes in woman's body. When a girl gets matured, she longs for love. In a traditional society like India, she gets married to a man who is inexperienced in the art of love making and is in dark about the psyche of woman. Hence in Das's first sexual encounter with her husband she gets irritated and feels that in matters of sex male dominates. This sense of subordination makes her a rebel. Whereas in the poem she was forced to get married off when she asked for love.

In a patriarchal society marriage is also a masculine activity. A legal act to get a slave who is always obliged to satisfy the needs and wants of the husband and his family. To be the best bride and wife become a necessary

action in a every girl's life. It gets implanted in her mind right from her girlhood days. The poem also depicts such a patriarchal society which compels the speaker to fit into one personality which will fit into the husband's need and wants.

Das also writes about the oceanic difference in the ways in which men and women involving in love. The natural desire of man and woman is to fall in love with each other but the way woman feels loved is different from the way man feels loved; the distinction in tendency is due to different psyche. The poet uses metaphors just to show the way man or woman chooses to be loved. The 'hungry haste of rivers' points to impulsive love of male and patient love of females. In matters of love Mrs. Das feels that woman is superior to man; that is why she uses ocean in the context of woman and river in context of man. Das demolishes male's supremacy in the matters of relationship.

An Old Woman

Arun Kolatkar

Introduction

Arun Kolatkar was an Indian poet who wrote extensively and prolifically in both Marathi and English, capturing the soul of Mumbai in his poetry. Born in 1932, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, Kolatkar grew up in a home that he described as "a house of cards — the rooms had mud floors which had to be plastered with cow dung every week to keep them in good repair". A graphic designer by

profession, he earned his reputation in the advertising world and it wasn't until the 1960s that he began to write. Kolatkar, with his 'two-headed pencil', was one of the pioneers of modern poetry in India. His work is reflective of other contemporary poets such as Vilas Sarang, DilipChitre and VindaKarandikar. A critique of a post-colonial India, combined with a dark humour, was an unmatched skill he possessed. His first collection of English poetry, *Jejuri* won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1977. His Marathi verse collection *BhijkiVahi* won a Sahitya Akademi Award in 2005. Marathi devotional poetry and popular theater (*tamasha*) had early influences on Kolatkar. American beat poetry, especially of William Carlos Williams were later influences. Along with friends like DilipChitre, he was caught up in the modern shift in Marathi poetry which was pioneered by B. S. Mardhekar. He was a reclusive figure who lived even without a telephone. He was died in September 2004. His poems tend to offer a whimsical tilted commentary on social mores. Many poems in *BhijkiVahi* refer to contemporary history. However, these are not politicians' comments but a poet's, and he avoids the typical Dalit -Leftist-Feminist rhetoric. ArunKolatkars major poetic collections are *Kala Goda poems*, *Sarpasatra*, *Jejuri*, *BhijkiVahi*.

Word meanings and explanations

1. Hobble: walk in an awkward way, typically because of pain from an injury.
2. Burr: (loosely) a regional accent.

3. finality: the fact or impression of being final and irreversible
4. Crone – an ugly old woman
5. Clatter – the sound of the hard objects
6. Wretched – miserable

Summary of the poem *An Old woman*

The Poem '*An Old Woman*' shows the society and surrounding place of Khandoba temple at Jejuri. Here an old woman tries to earn something from the pilgrims. She wants only fifty paise and if anyone shows indifference in giving the paise, then the old woman shows her some places like horseshoe shrine. She also takes the help of religion and takes the opportunity to use the pilgrims' blind faith. The woman is very eager to earn and does not want to leave the pilgrims. Really this is the picture of the society and social surroundings and the poet portrays this very beautifully. It is such a society that if anyone fails to do something it haunts him or her. The pilgrim's inability or disinterest in giving fifty paise to the old woman haunts at such extent that he feels like a very minor person like that minor fifty paise. It is the society for the commercial, money minded people and inability to cope up with these can make one alienated. Few lines from the poem show these. The old woman the poet has tried to create is the one who represents our culture, our heritage and our natural beauty. Initially, it seems that she is a little adamant when speaker refuses to give her any money. But it also shows how she does not resolve to beggary. She

wishes to take the speaker to the horseshoe shrine; in return, she demands a mere fifty paisa coin.

Poverty and old age are two curses that can cripple a person and make him utterly helpless. The old woman is shown as a helpless woman who laments saying “What else can an Old Woman do on hills as wretched as these?”

The Speaker looks into her eyes and realizes that she is right. Her helplessness because of her old age moves him. He is also touched by the fact that she wants to earn the fifty paisa coin by showing him the horseshoe shrine rather than demanding it as a charity. All this brings about a change in his approach and attitude.

The old woman the poet has tried to create is the one who represents our culture, our heritage and our natural beauty. Initially, it seems that she is a little adamant when speaker refuses to give her any money. But it also shows how she does not resolve to beggary. She wishes to take the speaker to the horseshoe shrine; in return, she demands a mere fifty paisa coin.

Short answer questions

- 1.Name two poetic collections of Arun Kolatkar
- 2.What does the old woman offer to do?
3. What is the real plight of the old woman in the poem?
4. What does the old woman expect for her service?
5. What is initial and final attitude of the speaker towards the old woman?

6. The old woman's eyes are compared to
7. What does the old woman demand in return of showing the pilgrims the shrine?
8. What is the major theme of the poem An Introduction?
9. What are the features of the old woman in the poem?
10. "You want to end the farce" what farce is referred here?

Paragraph questions

1. How does the society is reflected in Arun Kolatkar's poem *An Old Woman*?
2. Narrate the speaker's experience in the poem
3. The old woman represents inhuman negligence, greediness,
4. What is the actual status of the old woman a beggar or a person with self- respect?
5. Comment on the language used by the poet in the poem.

Essay question

1. The miserable plight of the old woman is a comment on the merciless society, discuss

Country Without Postcard by

Agha Shahid Ali

Introduction

Agha Shahid Ali is a Kashmiri American Muslim best known as a poet in the United States and identified himself as an American poet writing in English. He was born in New Delhi and grew up in New Delhi in an educated family atmosphere. He earned an MA from the University of Delhi, an MA and PhD from Pennsylvania State University, and an MFA from the University of Arizona. He taught at several universities inside and outside India. Ali wrote nine poetry collections and a book of literary criticism, as well as translated a collection of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poetry (*The Rebel's Silhouette*, 1992) and edited *Ravishing DisUnities: Real Ghazals in English* (2000), a collection of ghazals (a Persian poetic form employing repetition, rhyme, and couplets). Ali's collection, *Rooms Are Never Finished* (2001), was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2001; *The Veiled Suite* (2009), which contains selected works across the poet's career, was published posthumously it was personal and political tragedy. *A Walk Through Yellow Pages*, *A Nostalgic Map of America*, *The Beloved Witness* are some other literary works by Agha Shahid Ali. At the time of his death in 2001, Ali was noted as a poet uniquely able to blend multiple ethnic influences and ideas in both traditional forms and elegant free-verse. His poetry

reflects his Hindu, Muslim, and Western heritages. Known particularly for his dexterous allusions to European, Urdu, Arabic, and Persian literary traditions, Ali's poetry revolves around thematic and cultural poles.

Word meanings and explanations

2. minaret: a slender tower, typically part of a mosque, with a balcony from which a muezzin calls Muslims to prayer.
3. Wicked: evil or morally wrong
4. Refugees: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.
5. Muezzin: a man who calls Muslims to prayers from the minaret of a mosque.
6. Frantically: in a hurried, disorganised or excited manner.
7. Hone: refine/perfect or sharpen
8. papier mâché: a material that is made of paper mixed with water, glue, and other substances and that hardens as it dries
9. paisley: a distinctive intricate pattern of curved feather-shaped figures based on an Indian pine-cone design.
10. boarded up: to cover doors or windows with windows with thin, flat pieces of wood

11. Pane: a single sheet of glass in a window or door.

Summary of the poem

The poem originally called “Kashmir Without a Post Office” was published as the title poem in *The Country Without a Post Office* (1997). Taking its impetus from the 1990 Kashmiri uprising against India, which led to political violence and closed all the country’s post offices for seven months, Ali’s long poem is considered one of his masterpieces. The title of the poem derives from an incident that occurred in 1990, when Kashmir rebelled against Indian rule, resulting in hundreds of gruesome and violent deaths, fires, and mass rapes.

For seven months, there was no mail delivered in Kashmir, because of political turmoil pervading the land. A friend of the poet’s father watched the post office from his house, as mountains of letters piled up. One day, he walked over to the piles and picked a letter from the top of one, discovering that it was from Shahid’s father and addressed to him. The poem, dedicated to Ali’s friend and fellow poet James Merrill, is long, often complicated, with a rhyme scheme that doubles back on itself and a structure that works through accumulation and association rather than narrative logic. The poem is filled with recurring phrases and words and with haunting images of longing and desire, which evoke the pain of one who struggles to understand what is happening in his own land and heart. The poem is built on repetition and association instead of straightforward narrative logic, and consists of several types of recurring images as well as phrases. Dedicated to Ali’s life-long friend James Merrill, the poem continues to maintain the integrity of feeling in the

midst of political violence and tragedy. The poem focuses on traditional forms, such as the sonnet, canzone, pantoum, sestina, terza rima, villanelle, ghazal.

Through the first section of the poem the speaker has tried to develop an introduction before starting his poem and by picturizing a person climbing the stairs and reading “messages scratched on planets,” he introduces the image of an astrologer, and when he starts cancelling stamps of the letters that have doomed addresses, he picturizes the images of a postal inspector whose function is to sort out and distribute the letters sent to the post office. In the second stanza, the poet brings to light the gory state of Kashmir, which has been facing communal conflicts since the 1990s. The violence in the state has been so widespread and bloody that people shift to the plain areas, or become refugees by leaving their ancestral properties. The Kashmir Valley, which is also known as “Paradise” for its beauty, today has become the valley of death of innocent Hindus and Muslims. The second section uses same images in a different context. Here he very smartly picturizes the ceased postal delivery system in the country. Here the speaker himself comes ahead to help “cancel stamps” and open the lines of communication. In the second stanza of this part, the speaker brings forth a character that the speaker wishes to have a word with but gets unable. The stamps have no name of the nation, this may be because Kashmir isn’t an independent country, and both India and Pakistan are fighting on and on to capture this disputed territory. The narrator searches for this person through the ruins and smouldering houses, but can’t as “Everything is finished, nothing remains.” In the third section of the poem, the speaker assumes the role of

the muezzin. Further, the speaker talks about his own heart, and even talks to his different side. The inside fire he talks about is the fire of his own, and the various identities that he (Ali) has lived through as an Indian-born Kashmiri. The violence between the Hindus, Muslims, and the gory state of Kashmir has torn Ali apart. He empathizes with both communities. In the last stanza of the poem, the speaker finds his own voice by unearthing “the remains” of the voices of others, particularly the muezzin who is no more now.

Short answer question

1. *Country Without Postcard*, Agha Shahid Ali’s most significant poetic collection was published in
2. What is the historical background of the poem *Country Without Postcard*?
3. How the structure of the poem helps in the meaning establishment?
4. How the technique of repetition is used in the poem
5. What is the unconventional rhyme scheme used in the poem?
6. What is the epigraph of the poem and how it’s related to the theme?
7. What is the background of the poem?
8. what is the relevance of minaret in the poem?
9. How is the burning of Hindu Muslim riot is involved in the poem?

10. What is the relevance of the images of 'the fire' and 'the dark' in the poem

Paragraph questions

1. Write about the structure and the language used in Agha Shahid Ali's poem *Country Without Post office*
2. The poem *Country Without Postcard* is a commentary over the social upheavals which happened in Kashmir. Substantiate.
3. Describe poet's use of postcards as a central image in the poem
4. Write a short note on the historical background of the poem *Country Without Postcard*
5. What are the major literary techniques used by poet in the poem *Country Without Postcard*?

Essay Questions

1. What are the aftermaths of colonialism portrayed in Agha Shahid Ali's poem *Country Without Postcard*
2. What is the theme of the poem *Country Without Postcard*

Section Two

Prose

Speech at Mahad

B.R.Ambedkar

Introduction

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who is known as the architect of the Indian Constitution and as a lifelong champion of civil rights for the "untouchable" dalit caste, received his PhD in Economics from Columbia University in 1927 and an honorary degree in 1952 as "a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights. Born of a Dalit Mahar family of western India, he was as a boy humiliated by his high-caste schoolfellows. His father was an officer in the Indian army. Awarded a scholarship by the Gaekwar (ruler) of Baroda (now Vadodara), he studied at universities in the United States, Britain, and Germany. He entered the Baroda Public Service at the Gaekwar's request, but again ill-treated - by his high-caste colleagues, he turned to legal practice and to teaching. He soon established his leadership among Dalits, founded several journals on their behalf, and succeeded in obtaining special representation for them in the legislative councils of the government. Contesting Mahatma Gandhi's claim to speak for Dalits (or Harijans, as Gandhi called them),

he wrote *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* (1945).

Ambedkar was the first highly educated, politically prominent member of the Hindu "untouchable" caste. He is best remembered today for leading colonial India's only autonomous struggle for Dalit rights and social recognition; for his extensive writings that reprised caste as a form of inequality and historical injustice; and for his role as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, which allowed him to leave a profound and enduring mark on Indian trajectories of democratic justice and affirmative action policy.

In 1947 Ambedkar became the law minister of the government of India. He took a leading part in the framing of the Indian constitution, outlawing discrimination against untouchables, and skillfully helped to steer it through the assembly. He resigned in 1951, disappointed at his lack of influence in the government. In 1990 he was awarded with Bharatratna posthumously. Ambedkar was deeply influenced by buddhism

His major works are *Administration and Finance of the East India Company*, *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*, *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution*, *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* and *11 Other Essays*, *Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability*, *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*, *The Untouchables Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables*, *The Annihilation of Caste* (1936), *Pakistan or the Partition of India*

Summary of the speech

Indian caste system is always oppressive of Dalits. The system which was based on chaturvarnya considered Dalit equivalent to shudras. They were considered as untouchables in the society. They were denied for basic human rights like, right to live, right to travel free, drink water from public source, to enter into religious places etc. India witnessed a major uprising for freedom from 1850s itself. But the plight of Dalits was similar even after independence. They still lead a life of struggle, poverty and marginalisation. Ambedkar was one of the first prominent sound raised for the emancipation of dalit community. He used his entire political and social influence for the upliftment of the down trodden community. He himself has experienced extreme level caste oppression in his entire life. Mahad, located in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is situated on the banks of River Savitri. The people of high castes banned the entry of 'untouchables' to Chavadar Lake in Mahad on the ground that it was a private tank, reserved for the so-called high caste people of the society. As a result of such repression continuing for ages, Dr. Ambedkar led an agitation with his fellow Dalits, in March 1927, in an attempt to draw water from the same tank.

Mahad Satyagraha or Chavdar Tale Satyagraha was a satyagraha led by B. R. Ambedkar on 20 March 1927 to allow untouchables to use water in a public tank in Mahad (currently in Raigad district), Maharashtra, India. The day (20 March) is observed as Social Empowerment Day in India. But that was not simply an act of drinking from a tank but an assertion of equality ("We are going to the Lake to assert that we too are human

beings like others. It must be clear that this meeting has been called to set up the norm of equality”). According to Ambedkar a meeting like this was happening for the first time in the history of India. But he compares the satyagraha to an event happened in France on 24 January 1789. He parallels their efforts to establish a casteless society to French revolutionaries’ struggle to set up a classless society a hundred years before. According to Ambedkar the important thing is that the caste or class system was similar. The similarity to be noted is not only in the differentiation between classes: the inequality of our caste system was also to be found in the French social system. Just like French people successfully convened a class less French society Ambedkar envisions an equal Indian society without the cords of caste. Then he mentions some very important points in the proclamation made by the French regarding the freedom of citizens and they are all about freedom, equality and sovereignty of human beings and the country. In Ambedkar’s view point they must work hard not only to abolish untouchability but the caste system too. Because caste system is the real evil in society and all other social evils come as by-products of that concept. To prove his point Ambedkar takes instances from Mahabharata and European legends. Ambedkar suggests different solutions to eradicate untouchability. Like break down the prohibition against intermarriage, because he thinks intermarriage will establish real equality. Another way is to acquire government jobs and thereby independence

He concludes the speech by asserting that untouchability is not a, simple matter; it is the mother of all poverty and lowliness and it has brought them to the abject state they

are in today. Therefore, he says that if they want to raise themselves out of it, they must undertake this task not only for them but for the benefit of the nation

Mahad, a town in Konkan, was selected for the event because it had a nucleus of support from 'caste hindus'. These included A.V.Chitre, an activist from the Marathi Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu (CKP) community; G.N.Sahasrabudhe, a Chitpawan Brahmin of the Social Service League and Surendranath Tipnis, a CKP who was president of the Mahad municipality.

Short answer questions

1. What was the immediate reason of Mahad satyagraha?
2. Write a few names essays written by Ambedkar?
3. What was Poona pact?
4. Which historical event is taken as a reference by Ambedkar in his speech?
5. what happened in France?
6. what were the similarities pointed out by Ambedkar in France and India?
7. According to Ambedkar how can untouchability eradicated from society?
8. What is the actual cause or root of caste system?
9. What are the comments made by Ambedkar about the Brahmin superiority?

10. Which Roman legend is explained by Ambedkar in his speech?

Paragraph questions

1. How does inter-caste marriage help to eradicate untouchability according to Ambedkar?
2. How does Ambedkar bring out the parallelism between Indian and French society?
3. Write a short note on the proclamations included in the French constitution?
4. What are the specialities of language and linguistic devices used by Ambedkar in his speech?
5. What are the features of Hindu society according to Ambedkar?

Essay questions

1. Examine the contributions of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in awakening the Dalit consciousness taking the speech at Mahad into major consideration
2. Ambedkar has made valuable contribution to the social and political thinking and denounced the outrageous attitude of the Brahmanical Hinduism towards the untouchables and worked for the liberation of oppressed class from the high caste Hindus. Discuss in the light of speech at Mahad.

Imaginary homelands

Salman Rushdie

Introduction

Salman Rushdie is an Indian born British author whose allegorical novels examine historical and philosophical issues by means of surreal characters, brooding humour, and an effusive and melodramatic prose style. His treatment of sensitive religious and political subjects made him a controversial figure. Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947 as son of a prosperous Muslim businessman in India. He was educated at Rugby School and the University of Cambridge, where he received an M.A. degree in history in 1968. During the beginning of his career, he worked as a copy writer in London. After the publication of his first novel *Grimus* in 1975 he became a full-fledged writer and sometimes most controversial writer too. His works combine magical realism with historical fiction, is primarily concerned with the many connections, disruptions, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations, with much of his fiction being set on the Indian subcontinent. Rushdie's second novel *Midnight Children* won the Booker Prize in 1981 and was deemed to be "the best novel of all winners" on two occasions, marking the 25th and the 40th anniversary of the prize. His fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), was the subject of a major controversy, provoking protests from Muslims in several countries. Death threats were made against him, including a *fatwa* calling for his assassination issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran. Salman Rushdie is the author of fourteen

novels: *Grimus*, *Midnight's Children* (which was awarded the Booker Prize in 1981), *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, *Fury*, *Shalimar the Clown*, *The Enchantress of Florence*, *Luka and the Fire of Life*, *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights*, and *The Golden House* and *Quichotte*. Rushdie is also the author of a book of stories, *East, West*, and four works of non-fiction – *Joseph Anton – A Memoir*, *Imaginary Homelands*, *The Jaguar Smile*, and *Step Across This Line*. He is the co-editor of *Mirrorwork*, an anthology of contemporary Indian writing, and of the 2008 Best American Short Stories anthology.

Rushdie's name is often associated with literary concepts like, diasporic writing, magical realism, chutnification, historiographical fiction etc.

Magical realism is characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic fiction. Although this strategy is known in the literature of many cultures in many ages, the term magic realism is a relatively recent designation, first applied in the 1940s by Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier.

Chutnification refers to the adoption of Indian elements into the English language or culture. This term was coined by Rushdie in his novel *Midnight Children*.

Historiographic metafiction is a term coined by Canadian literary theorist Linda Hutcheon in the late 1980s. It incorporates three domains: fiction, history, and theory. It combines the literary devices of metafiction with historical fiction.

“Diaspora” (from the Greek word for “scattering”) refers to the dispersion of a people from their homeland. A simple definition of diaspora literature, then, would be works that are written by authors who live outside their native land. The term identifies a work’s distinctive geographic origins.

Summary of the essay *ImaginaryHomelands*

Imaginaryhomelands is collection of essays written by Salman Rushdie. These are the essays written between 1981 and 1992. This no-fictional work reflects his identity crisis and the country’s political and social upheavals. *Imaginary homelands* is divided into six sections. They are:

- Midnight's children
- Politics of India and Pakistan
- Indo-Anglian literature
- Movie and Television
- Experience of migrants, Indian migrants to Britain
- Thatcher/flout election, question of Palestine

Salman Rushdie's essay “*ImaginaryHomelands*” begins with an image of a photograph in the room where he writes. It is a picture of the house in which he lived as a child, taken before he was born, and he keeps it there to remind him “that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time.” On a trip to Bombay, he visited his old house once again after a long time not

as a faded image but in glorious technicolour. The wish to restore the past which accompanied this sight inspired him to write the novel *Midnight's Children*. They recreate these places in order to satisfy their loss in their real, physical lives – something that Rushdie says he did himself, writing on India, Pakistan, and London. Rushdie, however, says that even if expatriate Indians do engage in the act of looking back, they are always faced by the fact that due to their physical isolation from the home country, they will only be able to capture partial or imaginary versions of their homelands. He says that he was disturbed by this dilemma while writing his novel in North London. He tried to make his description of India as imaginatively true as possible, but then again, he is aware that imaginative truth is both honourable and suspect at the same time. Therefore, he does not claim authenticity for the India depicted in his novel, but admits that it is just one of the several possible versions. He says that this is why he made Saleem, the narrator of his novel *Midnight's Children* an unreliable narrator. An unreliable narrator often provides inaccurate details, which is evident to the reader. An unreliable narrator is one whose perception, interpretation, and evaluation of the matters he or she narrates do not coincide with the opinions and norms implied by the author. Rushdie realizes that because emigrant writers lose touch with the physical reality of the places in which they grew up, they necessarily create fictionalized versions of them: that is, imaginary homelands. Because he wanted to make it clear that he was wrong about “his” India, a version of the country he would never claim to be definitive, Rushdie made the protagonist of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem, an unreliable narrator with a fallible memory. In “*Imaginary*

Homelands,” Rushdie writes explicitly about these racist experiences and the way he felt torn between India and England, where he was making a new home. As a bilingual person, Rushdie was torn also between languages – he writes about how, even when returning to one’s home country, those who migrate no longer feel at home, because they have been inundated with ideologies from another world. As such, Rushdie makes it clear that “imaginary homelands” are essentially the fictional creations of migrants, who seek an understanding of the places they live now and the places they come from. They recreate these places in order to satisfy their loss in their real, physical lives – something that Rushdie says he did himself, writing on India, Pakistan, and London. In “Imaginary Homelands”, he deals at some length with the issue of one crucial colonial legacy as far as literature is concerned “the use of the English language in postcolonial societies”. Postcolonial societies have constantly displayed ambivalence towards the continued use of the English language. Rushdie says that the Indian writers who do use English do so in spite of their ambiguous feelings towards it, or even perhaps because of it. In fact, the language used by Rushdie in his fictional works is not the standard or ‘correct’ English, but it is flavoured with local coinages and idioms which better expresses the experiences of the societies of the subcontinent. In “Imaginary Homelands”, he deals at some length with the issue of one crucial colonial legacy as far as literature is concerned “the use of the English language in postcolonial societies”. Postcolonial societies have constantly displayed ambivalence towards the continued use of the English language. Rushdie says that the Indian writers who do use English do so in spite of

their ambiguous feelings towards it, or even perhaps because of it. In fact, the language used by Rushdie in his fictional works is not the standard or 'correct' English, but it is flavoured with local coinages and idioms which better expresses the experiences of the societies of the subcontinent. The major themes of the essay are cosmopolitanism, diasporic consciousness, literature and memory, postcolonial preoccupations, features of post-modern literature and nationalism.

Short answer questions

1. What is the meaning of the phrase imaginary homelands?
2. What is magical realism?
3. Who is an unreliable narrator?
4. With what symbol Rushdie begins his essay?
5. What is the meaning of the word diaspora?
6. What is the speciality of language used in Imaginary Homelands?
7. Who are the major diasporic writers in English?
8. What is chutnification?
9. Cosmopolitanism one of the major themes of the essay Imaginary Homelands. What is cosmopolitanism?
10. The Dean's December is a novel by?

Paragraph questions

1. Compare Rushdie's exuberant style of writing and a playful, highly experimental use of language in his fictional work and simple, lucid and lively style of the essay *Imaginary Homelands*
2. Explain the depiction of post-colonial theme in the essay *Imaginary Homelands*
3. How does *Midnight Children* become a post-modern work?
4. What is the relation between memory and literature according to Rushdie?
5. Explain the concept of translated man?

Essay questions

1. Write about the thematic concerns of Salman Rushdie's *Imaginary Homelands*
2. One of the foundational concerns in the essay "Imaginary Homelands" is Rushdie's desire to reclaim his 'homeland' through his literary exercises how does he achieves it?

SECTION THREE

The Fortune Teller

R.K.Narayan

Introduction

R.K.Narayanan, the creator of the fictional land Malgudi is a pioneer figure in the arena of Indian English fiction writing. Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayanswami, who preferred the shortened name R.K. Narayan, was born in Madras, India, on Oct. 10, 1906. His father, an educator, travelled frequently, and his mother was frail, so Narayan was raised in Madras by his grandmother and an uncle. His grandmother inspired in young Narayan a passion for language and for people. He attended Christian Mission School and later Maharaja's college in Mysore. He married Rajam, who died 1939 due to typhoid. Popular cartoonist R.K.Laxman was his younger brother. He presented his own life in a humorous way through his works. And that life of a middle-class Indian man attracted a huge reading public. Narayan tried his hand at different professions like as a teacher, an editorial assistant, and a newspaperman and eventually realised the fact that his actual profession is writing. But he struggled a lot to attain a publisher. Narayan's mentor and friend Graham Greene was instrumental in getting publishers for Narayan's first four books including the semi-autobiographical trilogy of *Swami and Friends*, *The*

Bachelor of Arts and *The English Teacher*. Narayan's stories begin with realistic settings and everyday happenings in the lives of a cross-section of Indian society, with characters of all classes. Gradually fate or chance, oversight or blunder, transforms mundane events to preposterous happenings. Unexpected disasters befall the hero as easily as unforeseen good fortune. The characters accept their fates with an equanimity that suggests the faith that things will somehow turn out happily, whatever their own motivations or actions. His first novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), is an episodic narrative recounting the adventures of a group of schoolboys. Among the best-received of Narayan's 34 novels are *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), and *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983). Narayan also wrote a number of short stories; collections include *Lawley Road* (1956), *A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories* (1970), *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1985), and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993) he also published shortened modern prose versions of two Indian epics, *The Ramayana* (1972) and *The Mahabharata* (1978).

Narayan wrote his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, in 1935, in it, he invented the small south Indian city of Malgudi, a literary microcosm that critics later compared to William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. More than a dozen novels and many short stories that followed were set in Malgudi. Malgudi was a portmanteau of two Bangalore localities - Malleshwaram and Basavanagudi. Narayan has successfully portrayed Malgudi as a

microcosm of India. Malgudi is located on the banks of Sarayu river near the also fictional Mempi forest.

Summary of the story

An Astrologer's Day' was first published in the newspaper 'The Hindu'. Afterwards it was made the title story of a collection of short stories, which appeared in 1947.

It is the story of an astrologer who has no knowledge in astrology in reality. The astrologer has set up his little shop amidst a busy marketplace among people fencing stolen goods, presenting the same cheap food as a variety of gourmet delicacies, and auctioning off low-quality fabrics. The astrologer, quickly established as a fraud, is in the company of other fraudsters and spin doctors selling their wares and making their livings. The marketplace is lit by various shop lights and flares, the dancing shadows of which enhance the astrologer's mystical quality. He notably has no light of his own, but simply borrows that of the other vendors. The astrologer had never had any intention of becoming one, but had been forced to leave his ancestral home and travel several hundred miles away with no plan and no money. Even so, he is a convincing holy man, using his own insights into human problems to offer vague but comforting advice to people in the market. He functions as a sort of therapist, offering self-affirming advice that he wraps in the guise of astrological wisdom. He is good at his trade; he tells people what they want to hear, and they leave comforted by it. Though it is not an honest living that the astrologer makes, it is still a well-earned one.

One evening a stranger named Guru Nayak appears. In the darkness, neither can see much of the other's face. Seeing the opportunity for one more client, the astrologer invites Guru Nayak to sit and chat. The stranger does so, but is instantly skeptical of the astrologer. He aggressively wagers that the astrologer cannot tell him anything true or worthwhile. They haggle over the price and the astrologer agrees. However, when Guru Nayak lights a cheroot, the astrologer catches a brief glimpse of the man's face and is filled with fear. He tries to get out of the wager, but Guru Nayak holds him to it and will not let him leave.

The astrologer tries his usual tack of vague, self-affirming advice, but Guru Nayak will have none of it. The astrologer sincerely prays for a moment, and then changes course. He reveals to Guru Nayak that he knows he was once stabbed through the chest and left for dead, and that now Guru Nayak is here searching for his assailant. He even reveals that he knows Guru Nayak's name, something he attributes to his cosmic wisdom. Guru Nayak is greatly excited by all of this, believing the astrologer to truly be all-knowing. He presses the astrologer for the whereabouts of the man who stabbed him so that he can have his revenge. The astrologer tells him that he died several months ago, crushed by an oncoming lorry. Guru Nayak is frustrated by this, but satisfied that at least his attacker died terribly. He gives the astrologer his money and leaves. The astrologer arrives home late at night and shows his wife the money he has made, becoming briefly bitter when he realizes that although Guru Nayak has paid him a great sum, it is not

quite as much as promised. Even so, his wife is thrilled. As they lie down to sleep, the astrologer reveals to his wife that a great burden has been lifted off of his shoulders. Years ago, the astrologer was the one to stab Guru Nayak and leave him for dead, which forced him to flee his home and make a new life as a fraudulent astrologer. He had thought himself to be a murderer, but was now content that he had not in fact taken a life. Satisfied by this, he goes to sleep. The story is told in third person point of view.

Short answer questions

1. What are the tools possessed by the astrologer?
2. What are the symbols used by the writer in the story?
3. Which point of view is used in the story/
4. What is the name of the stranger who came to visit the astrologer?
5. Who was actually stabbed Guru Nayak?
6. What was the fee the astrologer asked?
7. What was the lie told by the astrologer to Guru Nayak?
8. What is cowry shell?
9. “His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermillion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam” which character is described here?

10. Where does the astrologer is seated?

Paragraph questions

1. Write a short note about the language used by R.K.Narayan in *An Astrologer's Day*
2. How does the astrologer's appearance help him attract customers? How does he help the customers satisfy their needs? Prepare a character analysis of the astrologer
3. Why does he advise the stranger to go home immediately?
4. Analyze the conflicts in "*An Astrologer's Day*."
5. Write about the irony and contrast in the story

Essay questions

1. Analyse the humour and pathos which are the specialities of R.K.Narayan's stories focusing on *An Astrologer's Day*
2. compare and contrast the stories *An Astrologer's Day* and *The Financial Expert* by R.K.Narayan

Laburnum for my Head

TemsulaAo

Introduction

TemsulaAo is an India poet, short story writer and ethnographer. She is a retired Professor of English at North Eastern Hill University. She was born in October 1945 at Jorhat, Assam. studied at Ridgeway Girls' High School, Golaghat. She received her B.A with Distinction from Fazl Ali College, Mokokchung, Nagaland, and M.A in English from Gauhati University, Assam. From English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, she received her Post Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of English and PhD from NEHU. From 1992 to 1997 she served as Director, North East Zone Cultural Centre, Dimapur on Deputation from NEHU, and was Fulbright Fellow at the University of Minnesota. She received Padma Shri award in 2007 and Sahitya Academy Award in 2013. When she was in the University of Minnesota as a Fulbright fellow, she came in contact with the Native Americans. She learned about their culture, heritage and especially their oral tradition. This exposure inspired her to record the oral tradition of her own community, Ao Naga. After returning from the University of Minnesota, she worked on the oral tradition for about twelve years. She collected the myths, folktales, folklore, rituals, law, custom, belief system. This ethnographic work was published in 1999 as the Ao-Naga oral tradition from

Bhasha Publications, Baroda. This book is the most authentic document about the Ao-Naga community.

Temsula has published five poetic collections they are, Songs That Tell Songs that Try to Say, Songs of Many Moods, Songs from Here and There, Songs from The Other Life. These Hills Called Home: Stories from the War Zone, Laburnum for My Head are the two short story collections by TemsulaAo. Henry James' Quest for an Ideal Heroine is work of literary criticism by her. Laburnum for My Head (2009) is the collection of eight short stories by Indian author TemsulaAo. The stories are about the lives of people from the vibrant and troubled region of Nagaland in northeast India. The collection includes, Laburnum for My Head, Death of a Hunter, The Letter, Three Women, A Simple Question, Sonny, Flight.

Her writing addresses important issues like the question of regional identity or cultural identity in a land that has been in a continuous swathe with ethnic diversity, who share a common history, and how violence has seeped into the literature to breed a gut- wrenching contemporary mélange of content and essence of identity. Hailing from the region, she delivers an extremely sensible almost first-hand like experience of the happenings in the region in her writing that is so evocative at the same time.

Summary of the short story *Laburnum for My Head*

It is about a widow's fascination for the Laburnum tree ('Amaltas' in Hindi) to the extent that she wants it to be planted on her grave instead of having the customary tombstone of marble or granite. The story cocks a snook at all human aspirations of attaining immortality. The

writer says, “This consecrated ground has thus become choked with the specimens of human conceit⁸⁵. But nature has a way of upstaging even the hardest rock and granite edifices fabricated by man.” Lentina, the protagonist, is enchanted with this tree because she associates it with femininity and humility, unlike the garish gulmohars with their bright orange flowers. She goes to great lengths to fulfil her wish, antagonising her children and her kith and kin in the process. It is beautiful story, narrated with a great deal of tenderness and compassion.

Lentina was widowed after her husband passed away quietly in his sleep before any proper diagnosis could be made of his strange disease. She befriended her driver Babu who had been employed for more years than she remembers and made him her confidant. Her sacrosanct secret was an ‘epiphanic sensation’ to have a laburnum tree planted at her grave, one which would live on over her remains instead of a silly headstone. Lentina broke all conventions in confiding in an ‘outsider’ over her own sons and daughters about the spot where she wanted to be buried in the cemetery. This momentous decision was followed by her stretching of hand to Babu and leaning to him on their way back home as if to hint that a beautiful bond of intense understanding between the two was in the making. Their mother’s ‘crazy’ plan did not go down well with her children of course. The usurping of ‘rights’ by a mere driver left them sulking. Lentina pacified them with deft and crafty manipulation of her knowledge. Likewise, she also satisfied the members of Town Committee over issue about ‘ownership’ of her plot, settling it on her own terms. Later, in ripe old age after bouts of illness could not

deter her determination to see the laburnum for her head bloom before she breathed her last, she proceeded on her apparently routine outing that eventually turned out to be her last to see the phenomenon she had waited all her life; the sight of the luxuriant blossoms on her small laburnum tree. On reaching home, Lentina shook hands with Babu thanking and blessing him, as if in a symbolic gesture to end the bond which had bonded the two because after that day, Lentina had a self-imposed isolation for five days and retired from life, a satisfied 'recovered patriarchal woman' whose self-confidence and assertiveness undermined the qualities of women as self-effacing and being submissive. The next morning when the maid knocked on Lentina's door with the morning tea, there was no answer. She knocked again but only silence greeted her. She entered the room and found Lentina stretched on the bed; she seemed to be sleeping soundly. Putting the tray on the bed-side table, the maid said gently, 'Madam, I've brought tea.' She went and drew the curtains as usual but when she came near the bed, she noticed a certain stiffness in the body and an unusual valour on the oldon the old lady's face. Distinctly alarmed, she went out and urgently called the others, the sons, their wives and all the servants. They all came rushing, except Babu, who stood near a post, crying like a baby. Lentina attempted at self-representation, to be understood "a transaction between speaker and listener", the subaltern speaking, which is indeed 'something extraordinary'. So ends the story of the un-dramatic life of an ordinary woman who cherished one single passionate wish that a humble laburnum tree should bloom once a year on her crown.

In Literature, Man –Nature relationship has a long ancestry and the vast corpus of literary texts reflect the interplay of man and nature. There are many ways in which this dynamic relationship determine man's thought and activities. This is also shown in this short story.

Short answer questions

1. TemsulaAo is a ----- writer.
2. Who is the protagonist of the story *Laburnum of myHead*?
3. What is only wish?
4. What is ethnography?
5. How does the story begin?
6. How many stories are there in the collection *Laburnum of myHead*? Give the titles also
7. What is described as an epiphanic sensation in the story?
8. Who is Babu in the story?

Paragraph questions

1. What are the specialities of the language used by Temsula in *Laburnum of myHead*?
2. How does the writer has depicted the relation between nature and human beings in *Laburnum of myHead*

3. What are the specialities of the bond between Lentina and Babu?
4. Write a character sketch of the protagonist, Lentina in the story
5. What are the cultural markers in the story?

Essay questions

1. Lentina in the story *Laburnum of myHead* is a very strong feminist figure, who lives according to her own wishes. Substantiate.
2. Women have close association with natural resources in day-to-day life. Women's perspectives about nature are different from men's perspectives. Eco-feminist analysis offers a scope for examining the intricate relationship between women and nature. Attempt an Eco-feminist reading of Temsula Ao's story *Laburnum of myHead*

The Interpreter of Maladies

Jhumpa Lahiri

Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri, English-born American novelist and short-story writer whose works illuminate the immigrant experience, in particular that of East Indians. She was born, on July 11, 1967 in London and raised in Rhode Island. Her by name was Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri. Her

parents were Bengalis who settled in England. Nevertheless, they remained committed to their East Indian culture and determined to rear their children with experience of and pride in their cultural heritage. Lahiri graduated with a B.A. in English literature from Barnard College and obtained three master's degrees (in English, creative writing, and comparative literature and arts) and a doctorate (in Renaissance studies) from Boston University in the 1990s. During and after her college days she penned several short stories. *The Interpreter of Maladies* was her debut collection of short stories. The nine stories, some set in Calcutta and others on the U.S. East Coast, examine such subjects as the practice of arranged marriage, alienation, dislocation, and loss of culture and provide insight into the experiences of Indian immigrants as well as the lives of people in Calcutta. It won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in 2000 and PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction. In 2003, she tried her hand at novel writing and published *The Namesake* which was later adapted as a film in 2006. In 2013 came her another path breaking novel named *The Lowland* which chronicles the divergent paths of two Bengali brothers. She has also published a work in Italian, *In altre parole* (In Other Words), a meditation on her immersion in another culture and language. Lahiri's writing is characterized by her "plain" language and her characters, often Indian immigrants to America who must navigate between the cultural values of their homeland and their adopted home. Lahiri's fiction is autobiographical and frequently draws upon her own experiences as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances, and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. Lahiri examines her characters'

struggles, anxieties, and biases to chronicle the nuances and details of immigrant psychology and behaviour.

Summary of *The Interpreter of Maladies*

The Interpreter of Maladies is a story written by Jhumpa Lahiri which was first published in *Agni* review and later became the part of a volume with same title. Similar to Lahiri's other stories this also depicts the rootlessness and the conflicts of a migrant community. Mr. Kapasi, a middle-aged Indian tour guide, escorts Mr. and Mrs. Das and their three children, a young Indian American family from New Jersey who are on a sightseeing holiday in India, to the Sun Temple at Konarak. It is a bright, hot Saturday in mid-July. Mr. Kapasi and the family make conversation as they stop at a tea stall. When they resume their trip, monkeys dash across the road, and Mr. Das takes some photos. Mr. Das and his wife bicker about the hired car's lack of air conditioning. Mr. Kapasi holds down another job during the week. He works as a translator in a doctor's office, helping the doctor understand the symptoms and complaints of Gujarati patients who do not speak the local language. (Gujaratis are originally from the state of Gujarat in northwestern India, hundreds of miles away from Puri and Konarak, which are located in the eastern state of Odisha.) He thus serves as an "interpreter of maladies." Mrs. Das comments that Mr. Kapasi's job sounds "romantic." In a brief flashback, Mr. Kapasi reflects on his job as an interpreter. As a self-educated young man, he had hoped to build a more impressive career as a consequential intermediary between diplomats and dignitaries. Instead, his employment by the doctor sprang from an agonizing family experience: the death of

his son from typhoid. Mr. Kapasi feels his wife has no respect for his job as a translator. It flatters him that Mrs. Das pays him attention, and he wonders if Mrs. Das, like himself, is caught in an unhappy marriage. The group stops for lunch at a roadside restaurant, and Mr. Das takes more pictures. Mrs. Das asks Mr. Kapasi for his address so the family can send him some copies of the photos. He writes his address on a scrap of paper, which Mrs. Das drops into her handbag. The encounter, as well as the previous conversation, triggers a fantasy in which Mr. Kapasi anticipates a special relationship with Mrs. Das. The tourists arrive at the 13th-century Sun Temple in Konarak shortly after lunch. The temple is a stunning sight: a pyramid-like structure in the form of a chariot, with 24 giant wheels. According to Mr. Kapasi, the wheels symbolize the wheel of life. The medallion friezes in the spokes of the wheels are elaborately carved with women in erotic poses. The interior of the temple is inaccessible, since it has been filled with rubble for many years. Mr. Kapasi proudly shows off the statues of Surya, the sun-God, to Mrs. Das. He fantasizes that she will send him a letter from back home in America within the next six weeks. In the late afternoon, Mr. Kapasi drives the family back toward Puri, where their hotel is located. In order to extend his time with them, however, he recommends they make a detour to Udayagiri and Khandagiri in order to see the monastic dwellings there. Once they have arrived, Mr. Das explores the hills with the children. Mrs. Das, however, remains in the car, remarking that the numerous monkeys unnerve her and complaining that her legs are tired. Mr. Kapasi says he will join the family, but Mrs. Das asks him to stay at the car. She then makes a wholly unexpected revelation. Mr. Das,

she says, is not the real father of their boy Bobby. Instead, Bobby is the result of a secret extramarital affair—a liaison that Mrs. Das entered into with one of her husband's friends. For eight years now, Mrs. Das has suffered from guilt and painful depression. She asks Mr. Kapasi for help in his capacity as an "interpreter." Mr. Kapasi is shocked and somewhat insulted at Mrs. Das's request. Still, he feels it is his duty to be honest. He asks her whether it is really pain or guilt that she feels. She takes his question amiss and suddenly leaves the car, walking up the pathway and leaving a trail of puffed rice grains in her wake. The food attracts the monkeys, who converge threateningly on Bobby. Mr. Kapasi chases the monkeys away in the nick of time, and the family returns to their car. When Mrs. Das retrieves a hairbrush from her straw bag to straighten Bobby's hair, the slip of paper with Mr. Kapasi's address flutters away in the wind.

Interpreter of Maladies is told from **third-person limited point of view**—that is, the story is told by an objective narrator who reveals the perceptions of Mr. Kapasi's perceptions but not those of the other characters

Significance of title

The expression 'Interpreter of Maladies' suggests clarifying or explaining ailments of the body, mind, or moral. The character Mr. Kapasi, the tour guide has another role in his life, job of the interpreter of different maladies in a doctor's chamber. In fact, his assignment was to learn the nature of ailment of an ordinary Gujarati patient and to explain that in English to the doctor who did not know Gujarati. Here in this story Mr. Kapasi's function has nothing to do with as an Interpreter in

Doctor's chamber but his major role is associated as an interpreter while acting as a tour-guide to Das family. Mrs. Das told him deep secret and a great moral lapse in her life. Mrs. Das confessed the hard truth that her son Bobby had not been the child of Mr. Das. Mr. Kapasi was stunned and could hardly believe what he had heard. And she demands an interpretation of her lifelong dilemma regarding this. Though Mrs. Das would not get any proper remedy from Mr. Kapasi, the interpreter yet his candid confession to him could relieve his mental stress. Initially Mr. Kapasi felt astonished why a lady is disclosing this serious secret to a mere tourist-guide. After all, Mr. Kapasi used to act as an interpreter of maladies. That secret was tormenting her dreadfully. It was nothing less than a psychological malady of a patient.

Short answer questions

1. Who is the interpreter of maladies in the story *The Interpreter of Maladies*?
2. What is the point of view used in the narration of the story?
3. What is the profession of Mr. Kapasi?
4. What is the major ailment of Mrs. Das?
5. Where is the tourist destination of Das family?
6. What is the reason for fight between Mr. and Mrs. Das at the beginning of the story?
7. What are the names of the children?
8. How does the story ends?

9. Why does Mr.Kapsi is called as interpreter of maladies?

10. What are the major symbols in the story?

(Hints- camera, Mrs.Das' puffed rice, the names etc)

Paragraph questions

1. Write a brief note regarding the peculiarities of the character of Mr.Kapsi

2. Write about the point of view used in the story *The Interpreter of Maladies*?

3. Cultural clash in *The Interpreter of Maladies*

4. The ending of the story

5. Critically evaluate the psychological aspects of the story

Essay questions

1. Theme of the story *The Interpreter of Maladies*

2. "The family looked Indian but dressed as foreigners did, the children in stiff, brightly coloured clothing and caps with translucent visors." Identify the cultural conflicts in the story substantiate it with enough examples.

SECTION FOUR

DRAMA & FILM

Fire and the Rain

Girish Karnad

Introduction

Girish Karnad is Indian playwright, author, actor, and film director whose movies and plays, written largely in Kannada, explore the present by way of the past. He was born on May 19, 1938, Matheran, Bombay Presidency [now in Maharashtra], India. He finished his graduation from Karnataka University and went for Oxford with Rhodes scholarship. From there he wrote his first play, *Yayati* which was centred on the story of a mythological king, the play established Karnad's use of the themes of history and mythology that would inform his work over the following decades. His second play was *Tughlaq* which tells the story of the 14th-century sultan Mu ammadbin Tughluq and remains among the best known of his works. In his one-act radio drama, *MaNisada* (1964), Karnad emphasises the importance of the ordinary man for the hero Rama within the Ramayana. In his third major play, *Hayavadana* (1971), Karnad draws on a tale from the *Kathasaritsagara*, and its adaptation in Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads*.

Apart from being one of the most important Indian playwrights today, Girish Karnad is also a film-maker whose films have received much acclaim. But it has been his work in television, as actor and host of a science programme, which has made him a household name in India. But Girish Karnad's career does not stop even here. His further positions include: Director of the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune (1974-5), President of the Karnataka NatakaAkademi (1976-8).

Karnad was awarded with Jnanapith and Kalidas samman for his contributions in literature. He was conferred Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India and won four Filmfare Awards.

Karnad made his acting as well as screenwriting debut in a Kannada movie, Samskara (1970), based on a novel by U.R. Ananthamurthy and directed by Patabhirama Reddy. That movie won the first President's Golden Lotus Award for Kannada cinema. Some of his famous Kannada movies include TabbaliyuNeenadeMagane, OndanonduKaladalli, Cheluvi and Kaadu and most recent film KanooruHeggaditi (1999), based on a novel by Kannada writer Kuvempu. His Hindi movies include Nishaant, Manthan, Swami and Pukar. He has acted in a number of Nagesh Kukunoor films, starting with Iqbal, where Karnad's role of the ruthless cricket coach got him critical acclaim. This was followed by Dor, 8 x 10 Tasveer and Aashayein. He played a key role in movies "EkTha Tiger"(2012) and its sequel "Tiger Zinda Hai"(2017) produced by Yash Raj

Films.

For four decades Karnad composed plays, often using history and mythology to tackle contemporary issues. He translated his plays into English and received acclaim. His major plays which were translated into English are *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Yayati*, *Nagamandala*: *Play with Cobra*, *Fire and the Rain*, *Bali: The Sacrifice*, *Tale Danda*, *Wedding Album* and *Boiled Beans*. Karnad has also written number of plays in Kannada. He was died on 10th June 2019.

Summary of the play *Fire and the Rain*

The play was originally written in Kannada in 1995 and later in 1998 translated to English by the playwright himself. It displays the unmitigated violence arising from selfishness, greed, and sinfulness. The entire play depicts the negative impulses of a human being such as anger, violence, bloodshed, jealousy, pride, false knowledge, the intense feeling of hostility, hatred, greed, treachery and revenge. Karnad finds the myth quite relevant to the contemporary society. The play communicates the message that abuse of knowledge ultimately leads to the destruction of the world. It vividly portrays the conflict between the Brahmin traditional community and the benevolent tribal community. The former is rigid and ritualistic (symbolized by “fire”) whereas the latter is community-oriented and life-giving (symbolized by “rain”). The title of the play is used aptly and suggestively. The Brahminic culture is fire which destroys everything and the tribal culture is rain which gives and sustains life. The play is divided into three acts along with an epilogue and prologue. The play occurs in a small region of India long ago that has experienced a lack of rain for ten years. The king proposed to propitiate the Gods through fire

sacrifice. So that God would be pleased and send rain to the parched land. In this fire sacrifice Paravasu the son of a learned Brahmin Raibhya, was appointed as the Chief Priest. The play opens with the representative of an actor's group expressing their desire to give a dramatic performance as a means of entertainment for the Gods. After much discussion the group is given permission to perform at the fire sacrifice. The play performed by this group of actors has a dual audience. First group performing the fire sacrifices as well as the survivors of the drought stricken kingdom. Second group the actual audience watching the play. In this sense the play performed by the group of actors is the play incorporated within the main frame of the play „The Fire and the Rain’ Meanwhile, Paravasu's younger brother Aravasu is romancing Nittali. Aravasu is a Brahmin, but Nittilai is of a lower cast, and there is a difference between Brahmin and Tribal customs. Tribals are more free, more open in making a marriage proposal or declaration. Declaration of being fit normal and willing to marry had to be made in front of the entire village as per tribal customs.

Aravasu a Brahmin was unaccustomed to this idea and was both nervous and embarrassed about following this tribal custom. Aravasu has very clear idea about his position with reference to his family that he is inferior and therefore considered quite worthless by everyone. He is also clear about the one thing that he wanted in his life is to dance, sing, act, and be with his beloved Nittilai. Paravasu has marital problems of his own, having abandoned his spouse Vishaka, who is establishing a liaison with Yavakri, Paravasu's first cousin. Yavakri, who has just returned from ten years of meditation,

believes that Paravasu is unfit to be the high priest. His actual behavior and words are far from those of a purified and enlightened person. After all the penance and sacrifice he has done with God, he continues to be a victim of lust and desire something not acceptable from an enlightened monk.

Thus the reality turns out to be that Yavakri is not very different from what he was 10 years. For all the apparent „knowledge“ he is said to have acquired, is as ignorant and uncontrolled and coarse as he was before. He does not have the mastery of controlling his emotions and desires. All his knowledge is incapable of making him realize what was inappropriate in speech and acts. Through this the playwright raises the issue of knowledge versus wisdom. Blind Rabiya the father of both Paravasu and Aravasu, summon a demon to kill Yavakri, and asks Vishaka to save her lover by asking him to remain in his house for the whole day. After hearing her father-in-law words, Vishakha seeks Aravasu’s help. When Aravasu reaches the place of Yavakri to save him from demon, demon kills Yavakri. After finishing the funeral rites of Yavakri, Aravasu reaches the place of Nittilai’s village. That is the day Nittilai’s father has summoned the villagers to meet Aravasu in order to approve of their marriage. Because of cremation duties and other family matters delay Aravasu’s arrival in Nittilai’s village, her father loses patience and hands her off in marriage to the first volunteer. There is a conflict between father and son, selection of Paravasu at the fire sacrifice instead of the father who is senior in knowledge, experience, wisdom and age. Father’s opinion about the King’s choice is very bad of worsens after he sees the son’s behavior returning

home when there is still a month left for the sacrificial rite. Pravasu has responded Rabiya that if he returns back to the ritual in the morning no one would know. The father was shocked at this response because of the foolishness of the response during sacrificial rites were more for the sake of self and God and not for the public.

Soon, Paravusu kills Raibhya because he disrupted the sacrifice by killing Yavakri and he had behaved indecently with his daughter-in-law Vishakha. Hence according to Paravasu, Raibhya his father deserved to die. He asks Aravasu that he has to return to preside over the yajana and cannot leave the precincts of the sacrifice before the completion of the tenure. Arvasu complies with the orders of his brother which results in his being accused of murder and beaten almost to death. A dying Aravasu is rescued by the actor manager and nursed back to health by his beloved Nittilai. The care and concern shown by Nittilai in his hour of need lends a healing touch to Arvasu who had been wounded emotionally and physically by his brother. Arvasu wanted to take revenge for the betrayal by his brother because he was convinced that the chain of events that had occurred recently happened because he was about to reject his caste by getting married to Nittilai. The two deaths and their outcome had driven him away from Nittilai. Paravasu revenges his brother in two ways, one by denying his permission to act and by creating circumstances in which he could not get married to Nittilai. Nittilai who belonged to a hunter tribe that was very close to nature was full of practical common sense. She dissuaded Arvasu from the idea of revenge, because she sincerely thought that there would only be more bloodshed if Arvasu tried to take revenge. This would

only lead to more sorrow and suffering. The bloodshed of revenge did not have the capacity to set right or change in any way anything that had gone wrong. Her advice was to leave things as they were so that suffering might be minimized. When Aravasu regains his strength, he performs in a play wearing a mask in front of Paravasu, the priest, and the villagers. At a dramatic point in the play, Aravasu deviates from the script to burn down the temple, killing Paravasu, while villagers from Nittilai find her in the audience and slay her. With dying Nittilai in Aravasu's arms, the God Indra suddenly appears, offering to grant Aravasu a single wish. Although he could ask to rain, Aravasu clearly wants Nittilai alive. Indra says that such a wish would reverse time, but ultimately the same events would repeat. Then the demon who killed Yavakri appears, begging Aravasu to ask Indra for his release from a condition in which he can neither live normally nor die peacefully. Aravasu then asks Indra for the demon's freedom, reasoning that Nittilai would have made the same decision. Rain falls in abundance.

Short answer questions

1. Name three major plays by Girish Karnad
2. Where is the play *The Fire and the Rain* set?
3. What is the problem faced by the people of the kingdom?
4. Who is appointed as the chief in fire sermon?
5. How does the play *The Fire and the Rain* begin?
6. Who is the father of Paravasu and Aravasu?

7. Who kills Raibhaya and for what?
8. Who rescues Aravasu and who brings back him to life?
9. Why Nittilai discourages Aravasu to take revenge?
10. How does Aravasu takes revenge to Paravasu?
11. Which dialogue rings throughout the play frequently voicing the puzzled fury and heart-rending agony of betrayal by a worshipped brother?
12. *The Fire and the Rain* is a play based on the myth of?

Paragraph questions

1. Write about the myths and their representation in the play *The Fire and the Rain*
2. How the brahmin community and the tribal community are presented differently in Karnad's play?
3. What is the symbolic relevance of fire and rain in the play?
4. Write about the gender depiction in the play.
5. Write about the epilogue, plot structure actor character duality represented in

Charulatha

Satyajith Ray

Introduction

Satyajit Ray was an Indian film director, scriptwriter, documentary filmmaker, author, essayist, lyricist, magazine editor, illustrator, calligrapher, and music composer. He was born on 2 May 1921. Being India's first and only Oscar-winning director, Ray started his career as a graphic artist before heading to London to realise his passion for filmmaking. He directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and telly films. He was also a fiction writer, publisher, illustrator, graphic designer and film critic. He brought the Indian cinema to world recognition with *Pather Panchali* (The Song of the Road) and its two sequels, known as the *Apu Trilogy*. As a director, Ray was noted for his humanism, his versatility, and his detailed control over his films and their music. He was one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century. Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and shorts and authored several short stories and novels, primarily for young children and teenagers. *Feluda*, the sleuth, and *Professor Shonku*, the scientist in his science fiction stories, *Tarini Khuro*, the storyteller and *Lalmohan Ganguly*, the novelist are popular fictional characters created by him. His first film, *Pather Panchali* (1955), won eleven international prizes, including Best Human Documentary at the Cannes Film Festival and an honorary Academy Award in 1992. Ray was also honoured with the Bharat Ratna in 1992 by the Government of India. Ray is best known for his cult films *Pather Panchali*, *Nayaka*, *Aranyer Din Ratri*,

Seemabaddhaa, Charulata and the Feludaseries. Most of Ray's characters are, of average ability and talents—unlike the subjects of his documentary films, which include Rabindranath Tagore (1961) and *The Inner Eye* (1972). It was the inner struggle and corruption of the conscience-stricken person that fascinated Ray: his films primarily concern thought and feeling, rather than action and plot. He died on April 23, 1992.

Plot of the movie *Charulata*

Charulata (1964; *The Lonely Wife*), a tragic love triangle set within a wealthy, Western-influenced Bengali family in 1879, is considered by many as Ray's most accomplished film. The film was based upon the 1901 novella *Nastanirh* ("*The Broken Nest*") by Rabindranath Tagore. It features Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhabi Mukherjee and Sailen Mukherjee. When asked by interviewers which was his personal favourite among all the film he had made in his 40-year-long career, Satyajit Ray always said, '*Charulata*' (*The Lonely Wife*). For Ray, this was the film with the least number of defects, the one film which he would make in exactly the same way, if asked to again. Today, it is *Charulata* — along with the *Apu Trilogy* — that acts as a representative of Ray's entire body of work. The film is an adaptation of a novella titled *Nashtanirh* (*The Broken Nest*) written by Rabindranath Tagore. Set in the late 19th century, it tells the story of a young, intelligent, educated and beautiful woman named Charulata. She is the wife of an affluent, upper class Bengali gentleman named Bhupati. A product of the renaissance of Bengal, Bhupati is an out-and-out

liberal, and runs an English language newspaper named 'The Sentinel' — aimed at criticising the unfair practices of the British government in India. Bhupati and Charu's marriage is a childless one, and the man has very little time for his wife. However, he loves his wife dearly, encouraging her inherent artistic talents to flourish. Charu spends her days reading and supervising domestic chores. Amidst this scene, arrives like a hurricane (quite literally) Bhupati's cousin Amal — a jovial, free-spirited young man, fresh out of college, with no ambition in life other than the pursuit of his literary aspirations. Bhupati entrusts his cousin with the responsibility of nurturing Charu's artistic talents. Amal and Charu, both of the same age, and more friends than relatives, begin to spend time together. But as the days go by, Charu begins to fall in love with Amal. Umapada and Manda flee after scamming Bhupati of his money, destroying the prospects for the newspaper. Bhupati confides in Amal as the only one he can trust. Overcome by guilt and shame, Amal goes to England for higher studies and to marry, leaving behind a letter for Charu who is left heartbroken. Charu is shocked and dejected, and seeing her lament the void that Amal has left behind in her life, Bhupati realises the truth. The man and his wife are now left behind to reconcile — to pick up the pieces and rebuild the broken nest. The couple extend their hands towards each other but the film ends before their hands meet.

Ray and Tagore were inspired by the subtleties of change in people's lives and the complexities within relationships. Both were not consciously feminist;

however, they were concerned with social reform and the female point-of-view. Many of Tagore's stories feature women who, in their contexts and even today, remain dynamic and progressive. However, unlike Tagore, whose perspective was clouded by Victorian ideals, Ray was more concerned with the state of Bengali women in the local context. Through *Charulata* Ray's film making shows that the female gaze is not about the reversal of the male gaze or everyday stereotypes about women or having female film-maker, but about a reflection of how a woman in whatever context sees the world around her.

Short answer questions

1. *Charulata* was based on the story?
2. what is the name of *Charulata*'s husband?
3. what is the meaning of the word *Charulata*?
4. who is Amal?
5. Which films are included in Appu trilogy?
6. What is the meaning of the word *Nastanirh*?
7. What is the profession of Bhupati?
8. Who provides *Charulata* with much needed intellectual companionship and attention?
9. Why did Amal leave *Charulata*?
10. How does the film end?
11. Which song does Charu sing looking at Amal?
12. What was the name of Bhupati's news-paper?
13. who steals Bhupati's money?

Paragraph questions

1. What is the significance of music in the film Charulata?
2. Write about the setting and interior features used in the film Charulata?
3. Write about the tributes made by the later film directors to charulata?
4. How does Charulata become a classic story of a lonely young wife?
5. Prepare a character analysis of Charulata and how Madhabi Mukherjee portrayed that role?
6. Briefly write about the visual narrative of Charulata.

Essay questions

1. It is virtually impossible to place a finger on one thing that makes Charulata one of Ray's finest films. With so many elements coming together to elevate the film to the height that it has achieved today. How does Charulata become a typical Satyajit Ray film?
2. In Charulata, Satyajit Ray does not impose his gaze onto his heroine, but instead he allows her to see and view the world in the way she wants despite societal restrictions. Analyse the film Charulata on the basis of Laura Mulvey's theory of female gaze.
