



Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Master of Arts
MAEN-113 (N)

INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (POETRY AND DRAMA)

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Unit 1 TO 16

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Block Introduction I

Dear learners! As we know Indian poetry and drama are important parts of Indian English Literature. This block mainly concerns poetry and drama written in English by poets and dramatists who were born or have spent a significant part of their lives in India. Historically, Indian English literature has generally been seen as beginning with the establishment of the British colony in India. This block intended to develop the power of exploration of unknown things through the origin and deployments of Indian English poetry. This block is divided into four units. The first unit focuses on the background of Indian English poetry. In this unit, we will learn the major periods, techniques, and works of the important poets of these periods. The second unit aimed to discuss Toru Dutt and R. N. Tagore. In this unit, we will learn the Sita and The Lotus by Toru Dutt and Gitanjali (Sections: 1,10,11) by R. N. Tagore. The third unit focuses on the Sri Aurobindo: Savitri (Canto I). Here we will learn about the life, works, and art of Aurobind's writing and the moral ethics of Savitri. The fourth and last unit of the block deals with Sarojini Naidu and his major poems Indian Weavers Radha the Milkmaid. In this unit, we will learn the story, the art of narration of traditional ethics and mythological tales.

Unit 1 Background to Indian English Poetry

Structure

1.1. Objectives

1.2. Introduction

1.3. Origin of Indian English Poetry

1.3.1 Colonial Period (1820-1947)

1.3.2 The Post-Independence Indian English Poetry (After 1947)

1.3.3 Indian Diaspora Literature

1.3.4 Contemporary Indian Literature:

1.4 Let us Sum up

1.5 Questions

1.6 Further Readings

1.1. Objectives

In this unit we shall trace the beginnings of Indian English poetry. Here we will discuss important writers of the Indian English Poetry from pre- independence era to those who are currently writing. You will also be acquainted with the forms and varieties of the Indian English poetry and its theme. This is the first unit which deals with the origin and development of Indian English Poetry. The study of this unit shall make you enable

- To examine the origin and development of the poems,
- To establish the link between different periods and its writing.
- To differentiate the poetry of pre- Independence and post Independence.
- By the end of this unit you should be able to understand well the history of poems and necessities of the language, imagery and form of it.

1.2. Introduction

Dear learner, in this first unit, we shall discuss the origin, development and characteristics of Indian English poetry. We will also learn about the major poets of these periods. The comprehension exercises are given at the end of this unit will add to your in-depth understanding to know the history of Indian English poetry.

1.3. Origin of Indian English Poetry

Indian English poetry is the oldest form of Indian English literature. The origin of Indo-Anglian poetry (Indian English poetry) dates back to the 1820's. Indian English literature can be broadly divided into several major periods or divisions, each characterized by its own literary movements, themes, and prominent writers. These divisions are not always strictly defined and often overlap, but they provide a framework for understanding the development of Indian English literature. Here are some major divisions:

1.3.1. Colonial Period (1600s-1947):

This period encompasses the literature produced during British colonial rule in India. It includes works by British writers about India, as well as early Indian writers who wrote in English. Notable works from this period include those by Raja Rammohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sarojini Naidu. For a convenient study of the history, colonial period also divided into some major sub-periods. These are following stages: (a) The Age of Pioneers (1820-1870); (b) The Era of Indian Renaissance (1870-1900); (c) The Period of Political Awakening (1900-1947),

A. The Age of Pioneers (1820-1870)

Early nineteenth century poetry is reminiscent of Romantics and Victorians. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio's *The Faker of Jungheera*, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *The Captive Lady* and Kashi Prasad Ghose's *Shavi* deserve poetic worth during this period. These works echo the poetry of Wordsworth, Browning, Byron and Scott. After Derozio (1809-1830), it signalled the birth of Indian English poetry. Kashiprasad Ghose (1809-73) published his first volume of verse entitled *The Shair or Minstrel and other Poems* (1830) with the ambition to compose original verse in English. He studied prosody and criticism on the advice of his British teacher in the College and continued reading the best poetry in a regular and measured tone which soon accustomed his ear to English rhythm. His use of Indian material in his poems about the Hindu festivals indicates an honest attempt to strike a native wood-note. Some other important poets

and their works of this period are Shoshee Chunder Dutt's (1815-65) *Miscellaneous Poems* (1848) and Hur Chunder Dutt's (1831-1901) *Fugitive Pieces* (1851). A better title to fame the last two Dutts possess is that they were the uncles of a girl who was to write *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* a generation later. Next important poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73), better known as an epoch-making writer in Bengali, began his career as an Indian English poet. In addition to some sonnets and shorter pieces, he wrote two long poems in English: *The Captive Ladie* (1849) narrates the story of the Rajput King, Prithviraj.

The first period of Indian English literature may be said to end in the 1860s, a few years after the Indian Revolt of 1857. This incident made bitter the relationship between India and Britain. During the first period British rule in India was generally accepted by most Indians as a great boon of development. It was ultimately as a combined result of these changes that Indian English literature slowly struggled during the next two generations from asceticism to authentic artistic utterance.

B. The Era of Indian Renaissance (1870-1900)

The poetry of this period shows signs of development. Toru Dutt, first of all, beautifully expressed Indian ethos in her poetry which occupies prominent place in Indian literature. Her memorable works are *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882), *Sîta*, *The Lotus*, *Lakshman*, *Our Casuarina Tree*, *The Tree of Life*, *Savitri*, etc. These works glorify the cultural heritage of India. Her poetic technique shows a sure grasp of more than one poetic mode. 'Savitri' reveals her skill in brisk narration. Her poem '*Lakshman*' is a keen sense of drama, and the sonnet '*Baugmaree*'- collection-a flair for description.

Her imagery makes evocative use of local colour. Her diction is naturally of the Victorian romantic school, and true to the Ballad motif. She gives ample evidence of her prosodic skill in employing different forms like the Ballad measure with its variations: eight syllable quatrain; a mixture of eight and six syllables; lines arranged in eight and twelve line units; five, eight and eleven line stanza Blank forms, and the sonnet. Another important poet of the period is Manmohan Ghose. His poetic career is classic example of growth. His poems *Primavera* (1890) and *Love Songs and Elegies* (1898) expressing the same strain of celebration of Nature, and a surer command of image and phrase. Here, the poet struggles through a direct and often moving expression of personal sorrow towards consolation and the reassurance of a reunion. His works reveals a limited but genuine poetic talent. He has an unflinching sense of rhythm and a fine sensitivity to the sound and feel of words. His longer poem like '*Inda's Idol*' shows a delicate

lyricism and poetic flight in the narrative mode. He failed to realize the supreme importance of striking his roots in the land of his birth. He returned from England here not as a native but as an alien. He was, therefore, doomed to remain a minor figure and could not become a major voice.

A younger brother of Manmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950) provides a striking contrast. He found his roots in Indian culture and thought immediately on his return to India from Cambridge in 1893. Manmohan's career is a sad story of arrested artistic development; Sri Aurobindo's, a glorious chronicle of progress from patriot to poet, yogi and seer. His remarkable literary works are: *Letters on Poetry and Art*, *Letters on Yoga*, *The Mother*, *Savitri – A Legend and a Symbol* etc. Swami Ramatirtha, who composed a number of spiritual and mystical lyrics in English, is the pioneer of religious and spiritual poetry. Swami Vivekananda is another powerful spiritual and mystical poet.

C. The Period of Political Awakening (1900-1947)

The poetry of this period gives no evidence of any new major voices, the most significant verse produced by earlier poets like Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, who had consolidated their reputation before the advent of the Gandhian age. In fact, as already pointed out, it is surprising that the impact of the Gandhian whirlwind produced no outstanding poetry of any kind, though numerically the poetic scene remains as thickly populated as earlier. The poet of this period considered divided in two groups: practitioners of religious, mystical, philosophical, reflective verse, including the disciples of Sri Aurobindo, and poets mainly in the Romantic-Victorian tradition who have a wider range of themes of experiment with modernism. The two groups are obviously not mutually exclusive. The most important poet of the period is R. N. Tagore. His career as an Indian English poet began by sheer accident. His best-known collection of poetry is *Gitanjali* (1912) for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. Tagore was the first non-European to receive a Nobel Prize in Literature and the second non-European to receive a Nobel Prize after Theodore Roosevelt. Besides *Gitanjali*, other notable works include *Manasi*, *Golden Boat*, *Balaka*, *The Crescent Moon* (1913). *More collections followed Fruit-Gathering* (1916), *Stray Birds* (1916), *Lover's Gift and Crossing* (1918) and *The Fugitive* (1921).

Another noteworthy poet of this period is Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949). She won recognition in England much earlier. She was daughter of a Bengali educationist settled in the former princely State of Hyderabad. She was a precocious child and started writing poetry at a

very early age. She studied at London and Cambridge for three years. Here her poetic talent developed under the influence of the Rhymers' Club. On her return to India in 1898, she married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu—an inter-caste and inter-provincial marriage, which met with initial opposition from her parents. Her first volumes of poetry are *The Golden Threshold* (1905) *The Bird of Time* (1912), and *The Broken Wings* (1917).

The poetry of this period is characterised by intense patriotism and political awakening. Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu and H. N. Chattopadhyaya were distinguished poets of this period. Nobakissen Ghose's *The Last Day* and J.M. Tagore's *Rajput Soldier's Farewell*, were also written during this period. Manmohan Ghose's poems, collected in one volume, *Songs of Love and Death*, are unlike the poetry of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo whose imagery and sentiments are peculiarly Indian. He completely identified himself in imagery, thought and imagination with the West. Rabindranath Tagore "was the one writer who first gained for modern India a place on the world literary scene. He is without question the greatest song writer and lyrical genius of modern India.

1.3.2 The Post-Independence Indian English Poetry (1947 Onwards)

This period begins with India's independence from British rule and encompasses the literature produced thereafter. It is characterized by a sense of nation-building, identity exploration, and socio-political commentary. Writers from this period include Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, and Khushwant Singh. The poetry of the post-Independence period witnessed the most crucial developments. In the nineteen fifties arose a school of poets who tried to turn their backs on the romantic tradition and write a verse more in tune with the age. The Indian English romantic tradition is not however yet completely extinct and in fact, paradoxically enough. Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* was published in its final form in 1950-51, apart from his *Last Poems* (1952), *More Poems* (1953) and the epic *Iliad* (1957), all appeared posthumously during this period. In the nineteen fifties, the 'new poetry' had already made its appearance. In 1958, P. Lal and his associates founded the Writers Workshop in Calcutta which soon became an effective forum for modernist poetry. The first modernist anthology was *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry (1958)* edited by P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao. The first noteworthy pure poet of post-Independence era is Nissim Ezekiel (1924-). His *A Time to Change* appeared in 1952, to be followed by *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965) and *Hymns in Darkness* (1976). A major shaping factor in Ezekiel's poetry is that he belongs to a Bene-Israel family which migrated to

India generations ago. Thus alienation is the core theme of his poems and colours his entire poetic universe.

Shiv K. Kumar (1921-) is an academician poet who published *Subterfuges* (1976) and *Woodpeckers* (1979). His work reveals of nineteen fifty. This was followed by *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), a mastery of both the confessional mode and ironic comment. In the poems of the first type, he often successfully subjects intensely felt emotion to a neat ordering of notations of intimate personal details. His persona sometimes takes a dark view of love (e.g., 'Loving you/Is like walking on trecherous ice), sex (e.g. 'lashing our diabetic bodies/Into a semblance of orgasm') and marriage (e.g., 'We wear each other/Like soiled underwear), but is also occasionally capable of more delicate perceptions as in 'A man should come to his woman whole-/Not when the mind is a perverted sunflower/Turning to darkness.

Jayanta Mahapatra (1928-), another academic poet, started his career with *Close the Sky, Ten by Ten* (1971) and has since published *Svayamvara and Other Poems* (1971), *A Rain of Rites* (1976), *Waiting* (1979), *Relationship* (1980). He achieved Sahitya Akademi award in 1981. His style has an admirable colloquial ease, striking images, cryptic statement etc.

The most outstanding poet of the sixties is A.K. Ramanujan (1929-). He has not chosen to return, and continues to teach Dravidian Linguistics at the University of Chicago. His first volume, *The Striders* (1966) won a Poetry Book Society recommendation. Arun Kolatkar (1932-) is that rare phenomenon among modern Indian English poets-a bilingual poet, writing both in English and Marathi. His shorter poems in English are still uncollected, but his long poem, *Jejuri* appeared in 1976 and won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. He presents a dark, surrealistic vision of human life through his poems.

Women poets form a sizable school in modern Indian English literature. In a long list of modern women poets Kamala Das (1934-2009) is a prominent figure. She is a bilingual writer like Kolatkar. A distinguished author in her mother tongue, Malayalam and English, she has published three books of verse in English: *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967) and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973). Her poetry is remarkable for her frankness and confession. She talks about sex expresses her 'endless female hungers. She is simply 'every woman who seeks love'; she is 'the beloved and the betrayed', whispers at the core of womanhood. Another important female poet of post Independence era is Mamta Kalia's (1940-). She is an author, teacher, and poet, writing primarily in Hindi language. She won the Vyas Samman, one of India's richest literary awards, in 2017 for her novel *Dukkham*

Sukkhham (Sadness and Happiness). Her important works are *Tribute to Papa (1970)* and *Poems (1978)*. She cleverly experiments to achieve much cogent poetic communication. In short, the production of post-Independence Indian English poetry is amazing, but the quality of its minor verse does not match its abundance of output. A large part of the verse written during recent years is merely clever and frequently offers only slick verbal concoctions in modernist style which is no more authentic than the imitative romanticism of the earlier periods. The works of post independence era are remarkable for the virtue of its unmistakable authenticity, significance and power. This period sees the emergence of various literary movements and styles influenced by both Western and Indian literary traditions. Writers during this time grapple with issues of cultural identity, globalization, and social change. Notable figures include Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, and Amitav Ghosh.

1.3.3 Indian Diaspora Literature:

This division encompasses literature written by people of Indian origin living outside of India, often dealing with themes of migration, diasporic identity, and cultural displacement. Writers such as V.S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni fall into this category.

1.3.4 Contemporary Indian Literature:

This division includes literature produced in India in recent decades, characterized by a diverse range of voices, genres, and themes. It reflects the complexities of contemporary Indian society, addressing issues such as globalization, urbanization, gender, and technology.

In conclude, these divisions provide a broad overview of the development of Indian English literature, but it's important to note that there is much overlap and interplay between these periods, and many writers may not neatly fit into one category.

1.4 Let us Sum up

In this unit we have unfolded the structure of the poetry giving you a detailed storyline of the gradual development of Indian English poetry. The unit has sufficient material to learn the basic structure of Indian English poetry, its motives, theme and perspective. After reading this unit one can discuss the major poets and their periods easily. The major poets and their poems will be discussed in the coming units.

1.5 Questions

1. What historical factors influenced the origin of Indian English poetry?
2. Who are some early pioneers or notable figures in the development of Indian English poetry?
3. How did colonialism impact the growth and evolution of Indian English poetry?
4. What are some key themes explored in Indian English poetry?
5. How did the Indian independence movement contribute to the development of Indian English poetry? Can you name a few prominent Indian English poets and their notable works?
6. How has Indian English poetry evolved over time, particularly in the post-independence era?
7. What are some distinct stylistic features or characteristics of Indian English poetry?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. **Who is considered the father of Indian English poetry?**

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio.

2. **What is the significance of Tagore's poetry in Indian English literature?**

Tagore's poetry bridges traditional Indian themes with Western literary forms, shaping Indian English poetry's early development.

3. **Name a prominent Indian English poet known for his work on social issues.**

Nissim Ezekiel.

4. **Which Indian English poet won the Nobel Prize in Literature ?**

Rabindranath Tagore.

5. **Who is known for introducing free verse to Indian English poetry?**

Kamala Das.

6. **Which Indian English poet explored themes of exile and identity in his works?**

A.K. Ramanujan.

7. **Name the poet known for his mystical and spiritual poetry in Indian English literature.**

Sri Aurobindo.

8. **Which Indian English poet is famous for his love poems and sonnets?**

Dom Moraes.

9. **Who wrote "The Waste Land" - a groundbreaking modernist poem with Indian influences?**

T.S. Eliot.

1.6 Further Readings

50 Indian English Authors by Eeshan Ali, Book Way Publiation. Kolkata, 2020

Indian Writing in English by Birendra Sinha. Pacific Book International. New Delhi. 2013

A Sample book on Indian English literature by Ashok Kumar Jain. Jain Pustak Mandir. Jaipur. 2021

A History of Indian English Literature by M. K. Naik. Sahitya Akademi. New Delhi. 2010

Unit 2 Toru Dutt: "Sita", "The Lotus" and R. N. Tagore: Gitanjali' **(Sections: 1,10,11)**

Structure

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2.2. Introduction

2.3 Toru Dutt: Her Life and Works

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2.3.2 Text

2.3.3 Critical Appreciation of the poem Sita

2.3.4 Brief Introduction of the poem 'The Lotus'

2.3.5 Text

2.3.5 Critical Appreciation of the poem The Lotus

2.4 Toru Dutt as a Poet

2.5. Rabindra Nath Tagore: His Life and Works

2.5.1 Gitanjali: A Brief Introduction

2.5.2 Song 1 Text

2.5.3. Critical appreciation of the Song 1

2.5. 4 Song 10

2.5.5. Critical appreciation of the Song 10

2.5.6. Song 11

2.5.7. Critical appreciation of the Song 11

2.6 Rabindra Nath Tagore as a Poet

2.7. Summing up

2.8 Questions

2.9 References

2.1 OBJECTIVES

Toru Dutt and R. N. Tagore are two great poets Indian English literature. They are poets of Indian ethics and Sanatan ethos. After completing this unit, you will have a complete knowledge about these poets and their poems. The unit aims:

- To inform you completely about Toru Dutt as a poetess.
- To evaluate the important poem “ Sita” and “ The Lotus”
- To identify the various phases in her life through the poems.
- To suggest ways in which some of the main events of human life impinge on her work.
- To present an overview of career of Toru Dutt that will bring out some of the salient features of his work.
- The salient features of Tagore’s poetic genius.
- The broader understanding of Gitanjali as a whole.
- Tagore’s subtle touches of “Indian-ness” in Gitanjali.

2.2. Introduction

We begin this unit on Indian poets with a study of two poems of Toru Dutt and three poems of Rabindranath Tagore.

The comprehension exercises given at the end of this unit will add to your in-depth understanding of the poems in the course. The difficult words of the poems have been explained in the glossary which is given after every poem. A detailed critical explanation of the poem is given just after the text.

2.3 Toru Dutt: Her Life and Works

Toru Dutt was an eminent Indian poet and novelist who lived during the 19th century. She was born on March 4, 1856, in Rambagan, Kolkata. Her father, Govin Chunder Dutt, was a distinguished lawyer and intellectual, while her mother, Kshetramoni, was a poetess and musician. Her literary talents manifested early in her life. She demonstrated a remarkable proficiency in languages, mastering not only English and her native Bengali but also French and Sanskrit. Her linguistic prowess allowed her to translate works from French and Sanskrit into English, showcasing her versatility. ,” is considered one of the earliest examples of Indo-Anglian fiction. Tragically, Dutt's literary career was cut short by her untimely death at the age of 21, on August 30, 1877, in Kolkata. Despite her brief life, Toru Dutt left an indelible mark on

Indian literature. Her pioneering contributions to English and French literature in India paved the way for future generations of Indian writers. Today, she is celebrated as one of the foremost literary figures of the Bengal Renaissance, remembered for her exquisite poetry and enduring literary legacy.

Despite her tragically short life, she left behind a body of work that continues to be celebrated for its elegance, depth, and cross-cultural influences. Here are some of her notable works:

Poetry

A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1876): This collection of poetry is considered Toru Dutt's most significant work. It reflects her experiences and observations during her time in France. The poems in this collection are imbued with rich imagery, lyrical beauty, and a profound sense of emotion. Dutt's poetry often explores themes of nature, spirituality, love, and the human condition.

Novel:

Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden (Unfinished): Dutt's only novel, "Bianca," is one of the earliest examples of Indo-Anglian fiction. Although left incomplete due to her premature death, it showcases her narrative skill and keen insight into human relationships. The novel explores themes of identity, cultural conflict, and societal norms through the story of its titular protagonist.

Translations:

Dutt was proficient in multiple languages, including French and Sanskrit. She translated works from French and Sanskrit into English, showcasing her linguistic abilities and cultural appreciation. Her translations contributed to the cross-pollination of literary traditions between the East and the West.

Letters and Journals:

Dutt's letters and journals provide valuable insights into her life, thoughts, and creative process. They offer glimpses into her intellectual pursuits, personal struggles, and literary aspirations. These writings contribute to a better understanding of Dutt as both a person and a writer.

Toru Dutt's literary contributions have had a lasting impact. Her poetry continues to be studied and appreciated for its beauty and depth, while her novel remains a significant milestone in the

development of Indo-Anglian literature. Dutt's ability to bridge different cultures and languages through her writing underscores her importance as a pioneering figure in Indian literature.

2.3.1 Brief Introduction of the poem 'Sita'

The poem "Sita" was written by Toru Dutt. She is among the most well-known Indo-Anglian poets of the late 19th century. Her most famous work was her original "Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1882)" from which the poem "Sita" has been extracted. It is admiration for Indian mythology and her concern for women's suffering and victimization, even in ancient times. The poem is a part of the collection *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* that was released after her death in 1882. It tells the story of "Three happy children in a darkened room" being told the legend of Sita by their mother. The mother tells the children all about the scene of Sita's abandonment, ranging from the animals in the woods to the presence of the "poet-anchorite" Valmiki, who wrote the *Ramayana*. The children sympathize with the plight of Sita, but in the middle of the story, the mother is "hushed at last" by an unknown figure, likely her husband. The poem ends with a description of the children, rapt with attention at their mother's story, and the last two lines consist of the speaker's nostalgia for the days when she—likely one of the children herself

2.3.2 Text

Three happy children in a darkened room!
What do they gaze on with wide-open eyes?
A dense, dense forest, where no sunbeam pries,
And in its centre a cleared spot.—There bloom
Gigantic flowers on creepers that embrace
Tall trees: there, in a quiet lucid lake
The white swans glide; there, "whirring from the brake,"
The peacock springs; there, herds of wild deer race;
There, patches gleam with yellow waving grain;
There, blue smoke from strange altars rises light.
There, dwells in peace, the poet-anchorite.
But who is this fair lady? Not in vain
She weeps,—for lo! at every tear she sheds
Tears from three pairs of young eyes fall amain,
And bowed in sorrow are the three young heads.

It is an old, old story, and the lay
Which has evoked sad Sîta from the past
Is by a mother sung.... 'Tis hushed at last
And melts the picture from their sight away,
Yet shall they dream of it until the day!
When shall those children by their mother's side
Gather, ah me! as erst at eventide?

2.3.3 Critical Appreciation of the poem Sita

"Sita" is a poignant poem written by Toru Dutt, an Indian poetess who lived during the 19th century. It is a profound exploration of the character Sita from the Hindu epic, the Ramayana. The poem delves into Sita's emotions, struggles, and her ultimate strength in the face of adversity. The poem presents multiple concepts of Indian English Literature. The chief characteristics of the poem are given below:

Cultural Context: Understanding the cultural and mythological context is crucial for interpreting the poem. Sita is a revered figure in Hindu mythology, known as the ideal wife for her unwavering devotion to her husband, Lord Rama. Toru Dutt, being an Indian poet, draws upon this rich cultural heritage to craft her poem.

Themes: The poem explores several themes, including femininity, sacrifice, and resilience. It delves into the complexities of Sita's character, depicting her as more than just a passive victim but as a woman of strength and endurance.

Characterization of Sita: Toru Dutt portrays Sita as a multifaceted character who undergoes immense suffering yet maintains her inner strength. She captures Sita's emotional turmoil, her longing for Rama during his exile, and her unwavering devotion to him despite his abandonment of her.

Imagery and Symbolism: Dutt employs rich imagery and symbolism throughout the poem to evoke the essence of Sita's character and her plight. For example, the image of the "leafless forest" symbolizes Sita's desolation and loneliness, while the "pallid moon" reflects her sorrow and longing. She presents the imagery of Panchvati thus;

“A dense, dense forest, where no sunbeam pries,
And in its centre a cleared spot.—There bloom
Gigantic flowers on creepers that embrace

Tall trees: there, in a quiet lucid lake.”

Language and Style: Dutt's language is lyrical and evocative, imbued with vivid descriptions and emotional depth. She skillfully uses poetic devices such as alliteration, metaphor, and personification to enhance the poem's impact and convey Sita's inner turmoil.

Feminist Interpretation: From a feminist perspective, the poem can be seen as a critique of the patriarchal society in which Sita lived. Despite her unwavering devotion and sacrifices, she is subjected to abandonment and suspicion, highlighting the constraints placed upon women in traditional societies.

Interplay of Eastern and Western Influences: Toru Dutt's upbringing in both Indian and Western cultures is reflected in her poetry. In "Sita," she combines elements of Indian mythology with Western poetic techniques, creating a unique blend of Eastern and Western literary traditions.

Legacy and Influence: "Sita" remains one of Toru Dutt's most celebrated poems, showcasing her talent for capturing the essence of Indian mythology in lyrical verse. It continues to be studied and appreciated for its profound exploration of Sita's character and its enduring relevance to themes of love, sacrifice, and resilience.

To conclude, "Sita" by Toru Dutt is a deeply moving poem that offers a nuanced portrayal of its titular character, exploring themes of love, sacrifice, and resilience within the framework of Indian mythology. Through its rich imagery, emotional depth, and timeless relevance, the poem continues to resonate with readers across cultures and generations.

2.3.4 Brief Introduction of the poem ‘The Lotus’

"The Lotus" is a poignant poem by Toru Dutt, an Indian poet who lived during the 19th century. It was first published in 1876 in her collection of poems titled "A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields." The poem exemplifies Dutt's deep connection to nature and her ability to weave intricate emotions into her verses. In this poem, Dutt uses the symbol of the lotus flower to explore themes of purity, resilience, and spiritual enlightenment. The lotus, known for its ability to emerge from murky waters and blossom into a beautiful flower, serves as a metaphor for the human soul's journey towards inner peace despite life's adversities.

The poem captures the lotus's journey from its humble beginnings in the muddy depths of a pond to its eventual ascent towards the light. Through vivid imagery and evocative

language, Dutt portrays the lotus's struggle against the forces of darkness and its eventual triumph as it rises above the water's surface, untouched by the impurities that surround it. Her skillful use of symbolism and her lyrical style imbue "The Lotus" with a timeless quality, inviting readers to reflect on the universal themes of perseverance, beauty, and spiritual awakening. Through this poem, Toru Dutt celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of nature, leaving a lasting impression on those who encounter her work.

2.3.5 Text

Love came to Flora asking for a flower
That would of flowers be undisputed queen,
The lily and the rose, long, long had been
Rivals for that high honour. Bards of power
Had sung their claims. "The rose can never tower
Like the pale lily with her Juno mien"-
"But is the lily lovelier?" Thus between
Flower-factions rang the strife in Psyche's bower.
Give me a flower delicious as the rose
And stately as the lily in her pride"-
"But of what colour?"- "Rose-red," Love first chose,
Then prayed, -"No, lily-white,-or, both provide";
And Flora gave the lotus, "rose-red" dyed,
And "lily-white,"- the queenliest flower that blows

2.3.5 Critical Appreciation of the poem The Lotus

"The Lotus" is a poem by Toru Dutt, an Indian poet who wrote in English during the 19th century. The poem explores themes of beauty, transience, and cultural symbolism through the imagery of the lotus flower. In this poem, Dutt uses the symbol of the lotus flower to explore themes of purity, resilience, and spiritual enlightenment. The lotus, known for its ability to emerge from murky waters and blossom into a beautiful flower, serves as a metaphor for the human soul's journey towards inner peace despite life's adversities. There are some chief characteristics of the poem given below:

Theme:**Beauty and Transience:**

The lotus flower symbolizes beauty, purity, and enlightenment in many cultures, including Indian and Egyptian. However, the poem also emphasizes the fleeting nature of beauty, as the lotus fades away quickly. She, being of Indian descent, likely draws on the cultural significance of the lotus in Hinduism and Buddhism. The lotus represents purity, divinity, and spiritual growth. By incorporating this symbolism, Dutt adds depth and richness to the poem.

Imagery: Visual Imagery:

Dutt's vivid descriptions evoke the sensory experience of encountering a lotus in bloom, appealing to the reader's visual imagination. For example,

"In the deep heart of her transparent breast
Lies hidden silent a mysterious power."

The lotus serves as a powerful symbol throughout the poem, representing various aspects such as beauty, purity, and the cycle of life and death.

Structure and Language: "The Lotus" follows the structure of a sonnet, with 14 lines and a regular rhyme scheme. This formality adds a sense of elegance and control to the poem, mirroring the beauty and symmetry of the lotus. Her language is lyrical and evocative, employing poetic devices such as imagery, metaphor, and personification to convey her message. The use of metaphors like "the earth's long dreams" and personification of the lotus as a "sleeping beauty" enhances the poetic effect.

Cultural Context:

Dutt composed her poetry during the British colonial period in India. While she writes in English, her themes often reflect her Indian heritage and cultural identity. "The Lotus" can be seen as a representation of the intersection between Western literary forms and Indian cultural motifs. Beyond its literal meaning, the lotus can be interpreted metaphorically. It symbolizes spiritual awakening, enlightenment, and the journey towards self-realization. The poem may thus be read as an allegory for the human quest for transcendence amidst the ephemeral nature of existence.

To conclude, "The Lotus" by Toru Dutt is a richly symbolic poem that explores themes of beauty, transience, and cultural identity through the imagery of the lotus flower. Through its evocative language, structured form, and cultural resonance, the poem offers readers a profound meditation on the nature of existence and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

2.4 Toru Dutt as a Poet

Toru Dutt (1856–1877) was born at Rambagan on 4th of March, 1856. She belonged to an educated family known for literary and social activities. Her mother was a religious lady, well read in Hindu scriptures, mythology, and legends. She inherited the intellectual, mental and moral qualities from her parents. Although her life was cut short at an early age of twenty one, her small literary output bears the stamp of originality. She was the first great woman writer in the history of Indian English Literature. She was certainly inspired by the writings of Derozio. She is celebrated for her contributions to Indian English literature and is considered one of the pioneers of Indian English poetry. Her work integrates different literary context. Some contexts of her poems are as follow:

Cultural Context:

Toru Dutt was born to a Bengali family in Calcutta during British colonial rule in India. Her upbringing in a multicultural environment exposed her to both Indian and Western literary traditions, influencing her writing style and themes. She was proficient in multiple languages, including English, French, Bengali, and Sanskrit. This linguistic diversity enriched her poetic sensibility and allowed her to draw from a wide range of literary traditions and cultural influences.

Exploration of Themes:

Dutt's poetry explores a variety of themes, including love, nature, spirituality, and cultural identity. She often incorporated elements of Hindu mythology, Indian folklore, and European romanticism into her work, creating a unique blend of Eastern and Western literary traditions.

Symbolism and Imagery: Dutt's poetry is characterized by rich symbolism and vivid imagery. She frequently employed symbols such as the lotus flower, peacock, and Indian landscapes to evoke themes of beauty, spirituality, and cultural identity. Her use of imagery reflects her deep connection to her Indian heritage and her interest in Eastern spirituality. The Champak, the Lotus and the Kokila inspired her poetic genius and provided great joy to her when she came across the natural beauty she enjoyed with the highest delight. For example, her description of the sunset on an Indian lake:

Upon the glassy surface fell
The last beams of the day.
Like fiery darts, that lengthening swell

As breezes wake and play.

Poetic Style:

Dutt's poetic style is lyrical, elegant, and imbued with a sense of melancholy and longing. She experimented with various poetic forms, including sonnets, ballads, and lyrical verses, showcasing her versatility as a poet. Her mastery of language and rhythm contributes to the enduring appeal of her poetry. She is best in handling the ballad form. Only one example is given here:

I know in such a world as this
No one can gain his heart's desire,
Or pass the years in perfect bliss,
Like gold we must be tried by fire;

Influence and Legacy: Despite her short life and limited literary output, Toru Dutt left a lasting legacy in Indian English literature. Her poetry, celebrated for its beauty, depth, and cultural resonance, continues to inspire readers and scholars alike. Dutt's pioneering efforts paved the way for subsequent generations of Indian English poets, contributing to the flourishing of a distinct literary tradition.

In conclusion, Toru Dutt was a remarkable poet whose work embodies the intersection of Eastern and Western literary traditions. Through her evocative poetry, she explored themes of love, nature, spirituality, and cultural identity, leaving behind a rich and enduring legacy in Indian English literature.

2.5. RABINDRA NATH TAGORE: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Rabindra Nath Tagore belonged to one of Bengal's most illustrious families. He was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal. His grandfather, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore was an entrepreneur and founder of the great Tagore family of Jorasanko, Calcutta. Rabindranath Tagore, often referred to as R. N. Tagore or Gurudev, was a towering figure in Indian literature, art, and culture. He was born on May 7, 1861, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India, into a prominent Bengali family. He was the youngest of thirteen children born to Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi. Tagore was largely home-schooled and began writing poetry at an

early age. He was exposed to a variety of cultural influences due to his family's cultural and intellectual pursuits. He passed away on August 7, 1941, but his legacy continues to resonate, shaping the cultural landscape of literary world.

His Works

Tagore's lyrical style and philosophical depth have influenced generations of writers and poets, both in India and around the world. He used his writings to critique social injustices and promote harmony and understanding among different communities. His important works are:

Poetry: Tagore's poetry is celebrated for its lyrical beauty, spiritual depth, and profound humanism. His poetry collections like "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings) brought him international acclaim, earning him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, the first non-European to win the award.

Prose: Apart from poetry, Tagore wrote novels, short stories, essays, and plays. His novels such as "Gora," "Chokher Bali," and "Ghare-Baire" explore themes of identity, social reform, and the clash between tradition and modernity.

Music and Art: Tagore was also a composer and musician. He composed thousands of songs, known as Rabindra Sangeet, which are an integral part of Bengali culture. He was also a painter and founded an art school, experimenting with various art forms. He was a firm believer in education as a means of social reform. He founded Santiniketan, an experimental school which later became Visva-Bharati University, aimed at combining Eastern and Western educational philosophies.

2.5.1 Gitanjali: A Brief Introduction

Gitanjali is a collection of poems composed by Rabindranath Tagore in 1910 in Bengali language. In Bengali edition, it was a collection of 157 poems. Tagore then translated it into prose poems in English entitled *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* and it was published in 1912 with an introduction by William Butler Yeats. In English edition, it is a collection of 103 devotional poems. Love is the principal subject, although some poems detail the internal conflict between spiritual longings and earthly desires. The imagery in the poems is drawn from nature. The collection helped him to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. It presents the tone for the spiritual and philosophical themes. His preface reflects his relationship with the divine and expresses a profound sense of devotion and gratitude. He explores themes such as the beauty of nature, the search for spiritual fulfillment, and the interconnectedness of all life.

"Gitanjali" is celebrated for its lyrical beauty and deep spiritual insight. It captures the essence of his poetic genius and has been revered both in India and around the world. In 1913, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, largely due to the impact of "Gitanjali," which introduced his work to a global audience and solidified his reputation as one of the most important literary figures of the 20th century.

2.5.2 Song 1 Text

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

2.5.3. Critical appreciation of the Song 1

The first song of "Gitanjali" presents his spiritual belief in Almighty God and expresses a profound sense of devotion and gratitude. It encapsulates many of the thematic and stylistic elements that make unique. The chief elements of the first song of Gitanjali are given below:

Universal themes:

Tagore begins with a universal theme – the poet's plea to the divine for a deeper connection.

The poem expresses a longing for spiritual fulfillment, a sentiment that resonates with readers across cultures and time periods. This universality is a hallmark of Tagore's poetry, allowing it to transcend boundaries and touch the hearts of diverse audiences.

Symbolism and Imagery: The poem is rich in symbolism and imagery, with the poet employing nature as a metaphor for the divine. For instance, Tagore describes the earth as "tired," evoking a sense of weariness and longing for renewal. The imagery of the "forest's whispers" and the "winds sighing with desire" adds depth and resonance to the poem, inviting readers to immerse themselves in its lush imagery.

Language and form:

Tagore's language is lyrical and evocative, with a musicality that mirrors the rhythmic patterns of Indian classical music. The use of repetition, as seen in phrases like "I come to the," enhances the poem's musical quality and reinforces its emotional intensity. The simplicity of the language belies the complexity of the ideas conveyed, inviting readers to contemplate the deeper meaning behind the words.

Emotional depth:

The poem is imbued with a sense of emotional depth and vulnerability, as the poet bares his soul in search of divine solace. The repetition of the refrain "Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers but to be fearless in facing them" underscores the poet's resilience and determination to confront life's challenges with courage and fortitude. This theme of inner strength and resilience resonates throughout "Gitanjali," reflecting Tagore's own spiritual journey and philosophical outlook.

Cultural significance:

As the opening song of "Gitanjali," this poem sets the tone for the entire collection, introducing readers to the themes of devotion, longing, and transcendence that pervade Tagore's work. It also reflects the poet's deep reverence for nature and his belief in the interconnectedness of all living beings, themes that are central to Indian philosophy and spirituality.

In conclusion, the first song of "Gitanjali" is a masterful exploration of universal themes through the lens of Tagore's deeply personal and spiritual perspective. Its rich imagery, emotional depth, and lyrical language make it a fitting introduction to one of the most revered collections of poetry in world literature

2.5.4 Song 10

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost.

2.5.5. Critical appreciation of the Song 10

Song number 10 of "Gitanjali" is a poem expressing the poet's longing to offer his prayers and songs to the Divine. In this song, the poet describes how he wishes to offer his songs at the feet of the Divine, like a garland of flowers. He expresses his desire to surrender himself completely to the Divine will and offer his heartfelt prayers as a way of connecting with the eternal source of love and wisdom. The song reflects themes of devotion, surrender, and the yearning for spiritual communion. It explores themes of longing, devotion, and the search for divine connection. Here's a critical appreciation of this remarkable piece of literature:

Spiritual Longing: At the core of "Song 10" is a profound sense of spiritual longing. Tagore's speaker expresses a yearning for a deeper connection with the divine, reflecting a universal human desire for transcendence beyond the material world. This longing is articulated through vivid imagery and emotive language, inviting readers to resonate with the poet's quest for spiritual fulfillment.

Symbolism and Metaphor:

Tagore employs rich symbolism and metaphor throughout the poem to convey complex spiritual ideas. For instance, the image of the flute symbolizes the human soul, which seeks to harmonize with the divine melody played by the divine flutist, symbolizing God. This use of metaphor adds depth and resonance to the poem, allowing readers to engage with its deeper layers of meaning. One of the most striking aspects of "Song 10" is its lyrical beauty. Tagore's mastery of language and poetic expression is evident in the fluidity of his verses and the musicality of his imagery. The poem's rhythmic cadence and melodic language draw readers into a hypnotic trance, evoking a sense of awe and reverence for the divine.

Universal Themes:

While deeply rooted in Bengali spirituality and culture, "Song 10" addresses universal themes that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. The poem speaks to the shared human experience of longing for meaning and connection, making it accessible and relatable to readers from diverse backgrounds.

Emotional Resonance:

Tagore's poetry is renowned for its emotional depth and resonance, and "Song 10" is no exception. The poem evokes a range of emotions, from longing and yearning to ecstasy and surrender. Through his evocative language and heartfelt expression, Tagore invites readers to

explore their own spiritual journey and experience a profound sense of connection with the divine.

In conclusion, "Song 10" of "Gitanjali" is a masterpiece of spiritual poetry that captivates readers with its lyrical beauty, profound themes, and emotional resonance. Through rich symbolism, metaphor, and evocative language, Tagore invites readers on a transcendental journey of the soul, illuminating the universal human quest for spiritual fulfillment and divine connection

2.5.6. Song 11

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee! He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all forever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

2.5.7. Critical appreciation of the Song 11

In "Song No. 11" from Rabindranath Tagore's "Gitanjali," the poet expresses a deep longing for spiritual union with the divine. Through rich imagery and lyrical language, Tagore evokes a sense of awe and wonder towards nature as a reflection of the divine presence. The poem explores themes of love, faith, and the human quest for meaning, offering profound insights into the nature of existence and the transcendental power of spiritual devotion. Ultimately, "Song No. 11" encapsulates Tagore's poetic vision, blending aesthetic beauty with philosophical depth to convey a sense of reverence and awe towards the divine. It holds profound significance within the collection, reflecting the central themes and motifs that define Tagore's poetic philosophy. Here's a critical appreciation of the poem:

Form and Structure:

Tagore's poetry often follows a free verse structure, allowing for fluidity and natural expression. Song "No. 11" is no exception, flowing effortlessly from one thought to another, without strict

adherence to rhyme or meter. This free form mirrors the spiritual essence of Tagore's poetry, which seeks to transcend conventional boundaries.

Themes:

Central to Song "No. 11" is the theme of divine love and the longing for spiritual union. Tagore expresses a deep yearning to connect with the divine, seeking solace and fulfillment in a higher power. This theme is recurrent throughout "Gitanjali," reflecting Tagore's belief in the transformative power of love and faith.

Imagery and Symbolism:

Tagore employs rich imagery and symbolism to evoke a sense of transcendence and mysticism. References to nature, such as "the storm-clouds gather and break," and "the rain comes with its wet wings," evoke a sense of awe and wonder, inviting the reader to contemplate the beauty and majesty of the natural world as a reflection of the divine.

Language and Style: Tagore's language is imbued with lyrical beauty and simplicity, which enhances the poem's emotional impact. His use of metaphor and allegory conveys complex spiritual concepts in accessible terms, making "No. 11" both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant.

Philosophical Depth: Beyond its aesthetic appeal, Song "No. 11" delves into profound existential questions about the nature of existence and the human condition. Tagore grapples with themes of mortality, suffering, and the quest for meaning, offering insights that are both deeply personal and universally relevant.

Conclusion: Song "No. 11" encapsulates the essence of Tagore's poetic vision, blending spiritual longing with lyrical beauty and philosophical depth. Through its exploration of divine love and the human spirit, the poem invites readers on a transformative journey of self-discovery and enlightenment, leaving a lasting impression on the soul.

2.6. RABINDRANATH TAGORE AS A POET

R. N. Tagore belonged to a distinguished Brahmin family of Bengal. He was born in Calcutta on May 7, 1861. He inherited much from his highly cultured family. The general atmosphere of his home made Tagore a religious man. He was a versatile genius. In his writings, he shows a variety of influences like that of English romantic poets and also of the Victorians. Tagore started writing at an early age of ten. He wrote poems, stories, novels, and plays. He was a musician as well as a painter. Along with this he was also a great educationist and his dream of perfect education was materialised in 'Shantiniketan'. Dr. Iyengar points out, "Next only to

Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore has been the supreme inspiration to millions in modern India." He died on August 7, 1941. He stands as one of the most influential poets in the world, renowned for his lyrical genius, profound philosophical insights, and deep spiritual sensitivity. Here's an overview of Tagore as a poet:

Lyrical Excellence:

Tagore's poetry is characterized by its exquisite lyrical beauty. His mastery of language, imagery, and rhythm captivates readers, drawing them into a world of profound emotion and wonder. Whether describing the beauty of nature or the complexities of human relationships, Tagore's poetry resonates with a timeless elegance.

Spiritual Depth:

A central theme in Tagore's poetry is the search for spiritual truth and enlightenment. Drawing from Hindu mysticism, Tagore explores themes of divine love, unity with nature, and the interconnectedness of all life. His poetry serves as a spiritual guide, inspiring readers to contemplate the mysteries of existence and their place within the cosmos.

Universal Appeal:

Despite being deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual traditions of India, Tagore's poetry possesses a universal appeal. His themes of love, longing, and the human experience transcend cultural boundaries, resonating with readers around the world. Tagore's ability to convey universal truths through the lens of his own cultural heritage is a testament to his poetic genius.

Social Commentary:

Tagore was not only a poet but also a social reformer and philosopher. Through his poetry, he addressed pressing social issues such as poverty, inequality, and the struggle for independence. Tagore's social commentary is imbued with compassion and empathy, urging readers to strive for a more just and harmonious society.

Versatility:

Tagore's poetic oeuvre is incredibly diverse, encompassing a wide range of themes, forms, and styles. From devotional hymns to love poems, from philosophical meditation to songs of patriotism, Tagore's versatility as a poet is unmatched. His ability to evoke a myriad of emotions and perspectives speaks of the depth of his creative vision.

Literary Legacy:

Tagore's influence extends far beyond the realm of poetry. He was a prolific writer, composer, and artist, whose works have left an indelible mark on world literature and culture. Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, the first non-European to receive this honor, further cementing his legacy as one of the greatest poets of all time.

In conclusion, Rabindranath Tagore's poetry is characterized by its lyrical beauty, spiritual depth, universal appeal, social commentary, versatility, and lasting literary legacy. As a poet, Tagore continues to inspire and enchant readers with his timeless wisdom and profound insights into the human condition. He is one of those poets of India who won the Nobel Prize for their great literary achievement. He has been put in line with the greatest poets like Dante and Shakespeare. In his poetry he covered a large range-religion, love, romance and also the child poems. He stood for international brotherhood and that is why he has been hailed as the 'world poet'.

2.7. Let Us Sum Up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to two Indian poets i.e. Toru Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore.
- Interpreted 2 poems of Toru Dutt and 3 poems of R. N. Tagore.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in each poem.
- told about the style and technique of the poems.

2.8 Questions

1. What is the central theme of Toru Dutt's poem "Sita"?
2. How does Toru Dutt portray Sita's character in the poem?
3. What emotions or sentiments does the poem evoke?
4. What is the significance of the title "Sita"?
5. What is the central theme of Toru Dutt's poem "The Lotus"?
6. How does Toru Dutt use the lotus flower as a symbol in the poem?
7. What is the significance of the lotus in Indian culture, and how does it relate to the poem?
8. What emotions or sensations does the lotus evoke in the poem?
9. How does the structure of the poem contribute to its overall meaning?
10. What cultural or religious references are present in "The Lotus"?

11. What is the central theme of Section 1 of Gitanjali?
12. How does Tagore explore the relationship between humanity and the divine in Section 1?
13. How does Tagore use nature to illustrate spiritual truths in Section 1?
14. What role do faith and devotion play in the poems of Section 1?
15. What is the overarching theme of Section 10 in Gitanjali?
16. Describe the emotional tone of the poems in Section 11.
17. Discuss Ravindra Nath Tagore as a devotional poet.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who is the author of "Sita" and "The Lotus"?

Toru Dutt.

2. What is the theme of "Sita"?

The portrayal of Sita's character from the Ramayana.

3. What is "The Lotus" about?

"The Lotus" is a poem describing the beauty and symbolism of the lotus flower.

4. How does Toru Dutt portray Sita in her poem?

She portrays Sita as a symbol of purity, loyalty, and resilience.

5. What symbolism does the lotus carry in "The Lotus"?

The lotus symbolizes purity, beauty, and spiritual enlightenment.

6. How does "Sita" reflect Toru Dutt's cultural background?

It reflects her deep connection to Indian mythology and culture.

7. In what form are "Sita" and "The Lotus" written?

Both poems are written in the form of lyrical verses.

8. What is the significance of Sita in Indian mythology?

Sita is revered as the ideal woman, known for her devotion, sacrifice, and strength.

9. How does Toru Dutt's writing style contribute to the themes of her poems?

Her lyrical and descriptive style enhances the portrayal of characters and symbolism.

10. What impact did Toru Dutt's works have on Indian literature?

Toru Dutt's works helped in introducing Indian themes and mythology to the Western literary audience.

11. In which language was Gitanjali originally written?

Bengali.

12. What does "Gitanjali" mean?

"Song Offerings" or "An Offering of Songs".

13. What year did Tagore receive the Nobel Prize for Gitanjali?

1913.

14. What themes are prominent in Gitanjali?

Nature, spirituality, love, and the divine.

15. How many poems are there in Gitanjali?

There are 103 poems.

16. What poetic form does Tagore often use in Gitanjali?

Free verse.

17. What is the significance of Gitanjali in Indian literature?

It represents a blending of Indian and Western literary traditions and won Tagore international acclaim.

18. Which poet inspired Tagore's writing of Gitanjali?

The 14th-century mystic poet Kabir.

19. What is the central spiritual message of Gitanjali?

The longing for communion with the divine and the celebration of the divine presence in all aspects of life.

2.9 References?

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Unit 3 Sri Aurobindo: ‘Savitri Canto I: Symbol of Dawn’

3.1. Objectives

3.2. Introduction

3.3 Sri Aurobindo: His Life and Works

2.3.1 Brief Introduction of the poem ‘Savitri’

2.3.2 Text

2.3.3 Critical Appreciation of the poem ‘Savitri’

3.4 Sri Aurobindo as a Poet

2.5. Summing up

3.6 Questions

3.7 References

3.1. Objective

In this unit, we shall study Sri Aurobindo and his most famous long narrative poem ‘Savitri’. Sri Aurobindo is an Indian philosopher, yogi, poet, and nationalist. He was one of the most influential leaders, spiritual reformer who introduces his visions on human progress, Indian ethics and Sanatan ethos. After completing this unit, you will have a complete knowledge about Aurobindo and his poem Savitri. The unit aims:

- To inform you completely about Sri Aurobindo as a poet.
- To evaluate the important poem “Sita” and “Savitri”
- To identify the various phases in her life through the poems we will study.
- The salient features of Aurobindo’s poetic genius.

3.2. Introduction

Sri Aurobindo Ghose was born on August 15, 1872, in Calcutta, British India (now Kolkata, India), and he passed away on December 5, 1950, in Pondicherry, India. Sri Aurobindo is known for his synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophy, particularly his teachings on Integral Yoga and spiritual evolution. He was deeply involved in India's struggle for independence from British rule during the early 20th century.

In this unit we will take up Aurobindo and his poem Savitri for detail discussion. A detailed critical explanation of the poem is given just after the text.

3.3 Sri Aurobindo: His Life and Works

Sri Aurobindo's name and fame as a sociologist and philosopher of history and culture is "widespread and well founded". His reputation has been characterized as the prophet of Indian nationalism. His creative skill has been greatly admired for its aesthetic and philosophical values. He was born on August 15, 1872 at Calcutta and remained a visionary throughout his life and that is why he was called a mystic yogi by the common man. His poetry and prose writings represent a rare combination and integration of some of the best elements of philosophy and literary beauty. He was educated in England, attending St. Paul's School and King's College, Cambridge.

After completing his studies, he returned to India in 1893 and joined the civil service in Baroda (now Vadodara). He emerged as a prominent leader in the Indian nationalist movement. He became the principal of the Bengal National College in Calcutta, where he inspired young Indians to join the struggle for independence. He advocated for a revolutionary approach to India's independence and was associated with the secret society Anushilan Samiti. He was implicated in a number of nationalist activities and was briefly imprisoned. In 1908, Sri Aurobindo underwent a profound spiritual awakening while in Alipore Jail, where he was imprisoned by the British authorities. This experience led to a radical shift in his consciousness and his understanding of life's purpose. Finally, he withdrew from politics and moved to Pondicherry, then a French colony, to focus on his inner spiritual work. He was not only a philosopher and spiritual leader but also a prolific writer and poet. His literary works span a wide range of genres, including poetry, essays, plays, and philosophical treatises. Here are some of his notable literary works:

Poetry:

"Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol"

"Savitri" is an epic poem of over 24,000 lines. It explores the journey of the soul through various planes of consciousness, drawing inspiration from Indian mythology and spiritual philosophy.

The Life Divine

This monumental work outlines Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Integral Yoga and provides a comprehensive exploration of the nature of reality, consciousness, and evolution. It addresses fundamental questions about the purpose of existence and the ultimate destiny of humanity.

Essays on the Gita

Sri Aurobindo's commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, one of the most revered scriptures of Hinduism, provides profound insights into its spiritual teachings and their relevance to the modern world.

"The Synthesis of Yoga":

In this book, Sri Aurobindo presents a systematic synthesis of various yogic paths, including Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Jnana Yoga, offering practical guidance for spiritual seekers.

Plays:

"Vasavadutta":

A poetic drama inspired by the Sanskrit play "Mṛcchakatika" ("The Little Clay Cart"), "Vasavadutta" tells the story of a courtesan and her lover, exploring themes of love, sacrifice, and redemption.

These are just a selection of Sri Aurobindo's literary works, which continue to inspire readers with their depth of insight, spiritual wisdom, and poetic beauty.

3.3.2 Text

Savitri: The Symbol of Dawn Canto 1

It was the hour before the Gods awake.
Across the path of the divine Event
The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone
In her unlit temple of eternity,
Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' marge.
Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,
In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse
The abyss of the unbodied Infinite;
A fathomless zero occupied the world.
A power of fallen boundless self awake
Between the first and the last Nothingness,
Recalling the tenebrous womb from which it came,

Turned from the insoluble mystery of birth
And the tardy process of mortality
And longed to reach its end in vacant Nought.
As in a dark beginning of all things,
A mute featureless semblance of the Unknown
Repeating for ever the unconscious act,
Prolonging for ever the unseeing will,
Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant Force
Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.
Athwart the vain enormous trance of Space,
Its formless stupor without mind or life,
A shadow spinning through a soulless Void,
Thrown back once more into unthinking dreams,
Earth wheeled abandoned in the hollow gulfs
Forgetful of her spirit and her fate.
The impassive skies were neutral, empty, still.
Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;
A nameless movement, an unthought Idea
Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
Something that wished but knew not how to be,
Teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance.
A throe that came and left a quivering trace,
Gave room for an old tired want unfilled,
At peace in its subconscious moonless cave
To raise its head and look for absent light,
Straining closed eyes of vanished memory,
Like one who searches for a bygone self
And only meets the corpse of his desire.
It was as though even in this Nought's profound,
Even in this ultimate dissolution's core,
There lurked an unremembering entity,

Survivor of a slain and buried past
Condemned to resume the effort and the pang,
Reviving in another frustrate world.
An unshaped consciousness desired light
And a blank prescience yearned towards distant change.
As if a childlike finger laid on a cheek
Reminded of the endless need in things
The heedless Mother of the universe,
An infant longing clutched the sombre Vast.
Insensibly somewhere a breach began:
A long lone line of hesitating hue
Like a vague smile tempting a desert heart
Troubled the far rim of life's obscure sleep.
Arrived from the other side of boundlessness
An eye of deity peered through the dumb deeps;
A scout in a reconnaissance from the sun,
It seemed amid a heavy cosmic rest,
The torpor of a sick and weary world,
To seek for a spirit sole and desolate
Too fallen to recollect forgotten bliss.
Intervening in a mindless universe,
Its message crept through the reluctant hush
Calling the adventure of consciousness and joy
And, conquering Nature's disillusioned breast,
Compelled renewed consent to see and feel.
A thought was sown in the unsounded Void,
A sense was born within the darkness' depths,
A memory quivered in the heart of Time
As if a soul long dead were moved to live:
But the oblivion that succeeds the fall,
Had blotted the crowded tablets of the past,
And all that was destroyed must be rebuilt

And old experience laboured out once more.
All can be done if the god-touch is there.
A hope stole in that hardly dared to be
Amid the Night's forlorn indifference.
As if solicited in an alien world
With timid and hazardous instinctive grace,
Orphaned and driven out to seek a home,
An errant marvel with no place to live,
Into a far-off nook of heaven there came
A slow miraculous gesture's dim appeal.
The persistent thrill of a transfiguring touch
Persuaded the inert black quietude
And beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.
A wandering hand of pale enchanted light
That glowed along a fading moment's brink,
Fixed with gold panel and opalescent hinge
A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge.
One lucent corner windowing hidden things
Forced the world's blind immensity to sight.
The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak
From the reclining body of a god.
Then through the pallid rift that seemed at first
Hardly enough for a trickle from the suns,
Outpoured the revelation and the flame.
The brief perpetual sign recurred above.
A glamour from unreached transcendences
Iridescent with the glory of the Unseen,
A message from the unknown immortal Light
Ablaze upon creation's quivering edge,
Dawn built her aura of magnificent hues
And buried its seed of grandeur in the hours.
An instant's visitor the godhead shone.

On life's thin border awhile the Vision stood
And bent over earth's pondering forehead curve.
Interpreting a recondite beauty and bliss
In colour's hieroglyphs of mystic sense,
It wrote the lines of a significant myth
Telling of a greatness of spiritual dawns,
A brilliant code penned with the sky for page.
Almost that day the epiphany was disclosed
Of which our thoughts and hopes are signal flares;
A lonely splendour from the invisible goal
Almost was flung on the opaque Inane.
Once more a tread perturbed the vacant Vasts;
Infinity's centre, a Face of rapturous calm
Parted the eternal lids that open heaven;
A Form from far beatitudes seemed to near.
Ambassadors twixt eternity and change,
The omniscient Goddess leaned across the breadths
That wrap the fated journeyings of the stars
And saw the spaces ready for her feet.
Once she half looked behind for her veiled sun,
Then, thoughtful, went to her immortal work.
Earth felt the Imperishable's passage close:
The waking ear of Nature heard her steps
And wideness turned to her its limitless eye,
And, scattered on sealed depths, her luminous smile
Kindled to fire the silence of the worlds.
All grew a consecration and a rite.
Air was a vibrant link between earth and heaven;
The wide-winged hymn of a great priestly wind
Arose and failed upon the altar hills;
The high boughs prayed in a revealing sky.
Here where our half-lit ignorance skirts the gulfs

On the dumb bosom of the ambiguous earth,
Here where one knows not even the step in front
And Truth has her throne on the shadowy back of doubt,
On this anguished and precarious field of toil
Outspread beneath some large indifferent gaze,
Impartial witness of our joy and bale,
Our prostrate soil bore the awakening ray.
Here too the vision and prophetic gleam
Lit into miracles common meaningless shapes;
Then the divine afflatus, spent, withdrew,
Unwanted, fading from the mortal's range.
A sacred yearning lingered in its trace,
The worship of a Presence and a Power
Too perfect to be held by death-bound hearts,
The prescience of a marvellous birth to come.
Only a little the god-light can stay:
Spiritual beauty illumining human sight
Lines with its passion and mystery Matter's mask
And squanders eternity on a beat of Time.
As when a soul draws near the sill of birth,
Adjoining mortal time to Timelessness,
A spark of deity lost in Matter's crypt
Its lustre vanishes in the inconscient planes,
That transitory glow of magic fire
So now dissolved in bright accustomed air.
The message ceased and waned the messenger.
The single Call, the unaccompanied Power,
Drew back into some far-off secret world
The hue and marvel of the supernal beam:
She looked no more on our mortality.
The excess of beauty natural to god-kind
Could not uphold its claim on time-born eyes;

Too mystic-real for space-tenancy
Her body of glory was expunged from heaven:
The rarity and wonder lived no more.
There was the common light of earthly day.
Affranchised from the respite of fatigue
Once more the rumour of the speed of Life
Pursued the cycles of her blinded quest.
All sprang to their unvarying daily acts;
The thousand peoples of the soil and tree
Obeyed the unforeseeing instant's urge,
And, leader here with his uncertain mind,
Alone who stares at the future's covered face,
Man lifted up the burden of his fate.

And Savitri too awoke among these tribes
That hastened to join the brilliant Summoner's chant
And, lured by the beauty of the apparent ways,
Acclaimed their portion of ephemeral joy.
Akin to the eternity whence she came,
No part she took in this small happiness;
A mighty stranger in the human field,
The embodied Guest within made no response.
The call that wakes the leap of human mind,
Its chequered eager motion of pursuit,
Its fluttering-hued illusion of desire,
Visited her heart like a sweet alien note.
Time's message of brief light was not for her.
In her there was the anguish of the gods
Imprisoned in our transient human mould,
The deathless conquered by the death of things.
A vaster Nature's joy had once been hers,
But long could keep not its gold heavenly hue

Or stand upon this brittle earthly base.
A narrow movement on Time's deep abysm,
Life's fragile littleness denied the power,
The proud and conscious wideness and the bliss
She had brought with her into the human form,
The calm delight that weds one soul to all,
The key to the flaming doors of ecstasy.
Earth's grain that needs the sap of pleasure and tears
Rejected the undying rapture's boon:
Offered to the daughter of infinity
Her passion-flower of love and doom she gave.
In vain now seemed the splendid sacrifice.
A prodigal of her rich divinity,
Her self and all she was she had lent to men,
Hoping her greater being to implant
And in their body's lives acclimatise
That heaven might native grow on mortal soil.
Hard is it to persuade earth-nature's change;
Mortality bears ill the eternal's touch:
It fears the pure divine intolerance
Of that assault of ether and of fire;
It murmurs at its sorrowless happiness,
Almost with hate repels the light it brings;
It trembles at its naked power of Truth
And the might and sweetness of its absolute Voice.
Inflicting on the heights the abysm's law,
It sullies with its mire heaven's messengers:
Its thorns of fallen nature are the defence
It turns against the saviour hands of Grace;
It meets the sons of God with death and pain.
A glory of lightnings traversing the earth-scene,
Their sun-thoughts fading, darkened by ignorant minds,

Their work betrayed, their good to evil turned,
The cross their payment for the crown they gave,
 Only they leave behind a splendid Name.
A fire has come and touched men's hearts and gone;
A few have caught flame and risen to greater life.
Too unlike the world she came to help and save,
Her greatness weighed upon its ignorant breast
And from its dim chasms welled a dire return,
 A portion of its sorrow, struggle, fall.
To live with grief, to confront death on her road,-
The mortal's lot became the Immortal's share.
 Thus trapped in the gin of earthly destinies,
 Awaiting her ordeal's hour abode,
 Outcast from her inborn felicity,
 Accepting life's obscure terrestrial robe,
Hiding herself even from those she loved,
 The godhead greater by a human fate.
 A dark foreknowledge separated her
From all of whom she was the star and stay;
 Too great to impart the peril and the pain,
In her torn depths she kept the grief to come.
 As one who watching over men left blind
 Takes up the load of an unwitting race,
Harbouring a foe whom with her heart she must feed,
Unknown her act, unknown the doom she faced,
Unhelped she must foresee and dread and dare.
The long-foreknown and fatal morn was here
Bringing a noon that seemed like every noon.
 For Nature walks upon her mighty way
 Unheeding when she breaks a soul, a life;
 Leaving her slain behind she travels on:
Man only marks and God's all-seeing eyes.

Even in this moment of her soul's despair,
In its grim rendezvous with death and fear,
No cry broke from her lips, no call for aid;
She told the secret of her woe to none:
Calm was her face and courage kept her mute.
Yet only her outward self suffered and strove;
Even her humanity was half divine:
Her spirit opened to the Spirit in all,
Her nature felt all Nature as its own.
Apart, living within, all lives she bore;
Aloof, she carried in herself the world:
Her dread was one with the great cosmic dread,
Her strength was founded on the cosmic might;
The universal Mother's love was hers.
Against the evil at life's afflicted roots,
Her own calamity its private sign,
Of her pangs she made a mystic poignant sword.
A solitary mind, a world-wide heart,
To the lone Immortal's unshared work she rose.
At first life grieved not in her burdened breast:
On the lap of earth's original somnolence
Inert, released into forgetfulness,
Prone it reposed, unconscious on mind's verge,
Obtuse and tranquil like the stone and star.
In a deep cleft of silence twixt two realms
She lay remote from grief, unsawn by care,
Nothing recalling of the sorrow here.
Then a slow faint remembrance shadowlike moved,
And sighing she laid her hand upon her bosom
And recognised the close and lingering ache,
Deep, quiet, old, made natural to its place,
But knew not why it was there nor whence it came.

The Power that kindles mind was still withdrawn:

Heavy, unwilling were life's servitors

Like workers with no wages of delight;

Sullen, the torch of sense refused to burn;

The unassisted brain found not its past.

Only a vague earth-nature held the frame.

But now she stirred, her life shared the cosmic load.

At the summons of her body's voiceless call

Her strong far-winged spirit travelled back,

Back to the yoke of ignorance and fate,

Back to the labour and stress of mortal days,

Lighting a pathway through strange symbol dreams

Across the ebbing of the seas of sleep.

Her house of Nature felt an unseen sway,

Illumined swiftly were life's darkened rooms,

And memory's casements opened on the hours

And the tired feet of thought approached her doors.

All came back to her: Earth and Love and Doom,

The ancient disputants, encircled her

Like giant figures wrestling in the night:

The godheads from the dim Inconscient born

Awoke to struggle and the pang divine,

And in the shadow of her flaming heart,

At the sombre centre of the dire debate,

A guardian of the unconsolated abyss

Inheriting the long agony of the globe,

A stone-still figure of high and godlike Pain

Stared into Space with fixed regardless eyes

That saw grief's timeless depths but not life's goal.

Afflicted by his harsh divinity,

Bound to his throne, he waited unappeased

The daily oblation of her unwept tears.

All the fierce question of man's hours relived.
The sacrifice of suffering and desire
Earth offers to the immortal Ecstasy
Began again beneath the eternal Hand.
Awake she endured the moments' serried march
And looked on this green smiling dangerous world,
And heard the ignorant cry of living things.
Amid the trivial sounds, the unchanging scene
Her soul arose confronting Time and Fate.
Immobile in herself, she gathered force.
This was the day when Satyavan must die.

3.3.3 Critical Appreciation of the poem ‘Savitri’

"Savitri" is a philosophical poem written by Sri Aurobindo Ghose, a prominent Indian philosopher, yogi, and poet. The poem explores various aspects of human life, consciousness, and spirituality. It is divided into twelve books and is considered one of major literary works of him. Since "Savitri" is a lengthy poem. It is a profound and monumental work that delves deep into the human psyche, the cosmic consciousness, and the eternal quest for self-realization. There are some chief critical characteristics of this remarkable poem given below. They are:

Spiritual Depth: One of the most striking aspects of "Savitri" is its profound spiritual depth. Sri Aurobindo draws from various spiritual traditions and philosophies, weaving them together into a cohesive narrative that explores the journey of the soul towards self-discovery and enlightenment. Through allegorical storytelling and symbolic imagery, he presents complex metaphysical concepts in a way that resonates with readers on a deep, intuitive level.

Exploration of Consciousness: The poem is a profound exploration of consciousness in all its dimensions. Sri Aurobindo delves into the depths of human psychology, examining the inner struggles, desires, and aspirations that drive individuals on their quest for meaning and fulfillment. At the same time, he expands the scope to include cosmic consciousness, portraying the interconnectedness of all beings and the underlying unity of existence.

Poetic Craftsmanship: Sri Aurobindo's mastery of language and poetic craftsmanship is evident throughout "Savitri." His use of rich imagery, evocative symbolism, and lyrical language creates a captivating narrative that transports readers to mystical realms of the imagination. Each line is imbued with profound meaning and beauty, inviting readers to contemplate the deeper truths hidden within the text.

Integration of Eastern and Western Traditions: Sri Aurobindo's synthesis of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions is a defining feature of "Savitri." He draws inspiration from the ancient Indian scriptures, such as the Vedas and Upanishads, as well as from Western mystical and philosophical traditions. This integration of diverse influences enriches the poem and makes it accessible to readers from different cultural backgrounds.

Relevance to Contemporary Issues: Despite being written decades ago, "Savitri" remains remarkably relevant to contemporary issues and concerns. Sri Aurobindo's exploration of the human condition, the search for meaning in a seemingly chaotic world, and the transformative power of spiritual awakening resonates with readers grappling with existential questions in the modern era.

In conclusion, "Savitri" by Sri Aurobindo is a timeless masterpiece that continues to inspire and enlighten readers with its profound insights, spiritual wisdom, and poetic beauty. It stands as a testament to the enduring power of literature to explore the deepest mysteries of the human experience and the cosmos.

3.4 Sri Aurobindo as a Poet

Sri Aurobindo Ghose, better known as Sri Aurobindo, was indeed a remarkable poet, philosopher, and spiritual leader from India. While he is perhaps best known for his contributions to spirituality and philosophy, his literary works, including poetry, are also highly regarded. His poetry reflects his deep spiritual insights and his vision of the evolution of consciousness. His poetry often explores themes such as the inner workings of the human psyche, the quest for higher truth, and the relationship between the individual and the divine. His language is often rich with symbolism and imagery, drawing upon both Eastern and Western poetic traditions. One of his most famous works is the epic poem "Savitri: A Legend

and a Symbol," which he worked on for many years and considered to be his magnum opus. "Savitri" is an epic exploration of the journey of the soul through life and death, drawing upon the ancient Indian epic tradition while also incorporating Aurobindo's own spiritual insights. The poetry of Sri Aurobindo possesses several distinctive characteristics that set it apart and contribute to its enduring appeal and significance:

Spiritual Depth:

Aurobindo's poetry is infused with profound spiritual insight and a deep understanding of the human condition. He explores themes such as the evolution of consciousness, the quest for self-realization, and the relationship between the individual soul and the universal divine.

Symbolism and Imagery:

Aurobindo's poetry often employs rich symbolism and vivid imagery drawn from both Eastern and Western traditions. His use of symbols helps to convey deeper philosophical and spiritual truths, inviting readers to contemplate layers of meaning.

Synthesis of Cultures:

Aurobindo's upbringing in India and his education in the West provided him with a unique perspective that is reflected in his poetry. He blends elements of Indian spirituality, Western philosophy, and literary traditions from various cultures, creating a synthesis that transcends cultural boundaries.

Philosophical Exploration:

Aurobindo's poetry is not merely aesthetic but also philosophical in nature. He grapples with fundamental questions about the nature of existence, the purpose of life, and the ultimate reality, using poetry as a medium for philosophical inquiry and reflection.

Epic Vision: Aurobindo's epic poem "Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol" is perhaps the most prominent example of his epic vision as a poet. In "Savitri," he weaves together myth, legend,

and personal spiritual experience to create a vast narrative that explores the journey of the soul through life and death.

Language and Form: Aurobindo's poetry is characterized by its lyrical beauty and rhythmic language. He demonstrates mastery over various poetic forms and meters, employing them skillfully to evoke different moods and emotions.

Integral Vision: Aurobindo's poetry reflects his integral vision, which seeks to harmonize the spiritual and material dimensions of existence. His poetry celebrates the unity of all life and the interconnectedness of the spiritual and physical worlds.

In conclusion, Sri Aurobindo's poetry is distinguished by its depth, universality, and transformative power, making him one of the most significant poets of the 20th century. His poetry stands as a testament to his profound spiritual vision and his belief in the power of art to awaken the soul and inspire transformation.

2.5. Let Us Sum Up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to Sri Aurobindo.
- Interpreted his most remarkable poem Savitri.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in this poem.
- told about the style and technique of the poems

3.6 Questions

1. What is the central narrative or theme of Canto 1 in Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri"?
- 4 How does Sri Aurobindo introduce the character of Savitri in Canto 1?
- 5 Describe the setting and atmosphere established in Canto 1 of "Savitri."
- 6 What role does the character of Satyavan play in Canto 1?
- 7 What philosophical or spiritual themes are introduced in Canto 1 of "Savitri"?
- 8 In what contexts does Sri Aurobindo employ the symbol of dawn?
- 9 Discuss the metaphorical implications of the dawn in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.
- 10 What lessons or insights can be derived from Sri Aurobindo's portrayal of the dawn?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is "Savitri"?

"Savitri" is an epic poem written by Sri Aurobindo.

2. What is the central theme of "Savitri"?

The central theme is the journey of the soul through various realms of consciousness towards its ultimate fulfillment.

3. Who is the main character of "Savitri"?

The main character is Savitri, a divine incarnation embodying the power of love and transformation.

4. What is the significance of Savitri's journey?

Savitri's journey symbolizes the evolution of consciousness from ignorance to divine realization.

5. How does "Savitri" relate to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy?

"Savitri" embodies Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga philosophy, emphasizing the transformation of individual and collective consciousness.

6. How does Sri Aurobindo use poetry to convey his message in "Savitri"?

Sri Aurobindo uses poetic imagery and symbolism to evoke deeper spiritual truths and insights.

7. What is the structure of "Savitri"?

"Savitri" is structured in 12 books, each representing a stage in the soul's journey.

8. What is the significance of the title "Savitri"?

"Savitri" refers to the central character and her quest for truth, light, and immortality.

9. How does "Savitri" inspire readers?

"Savitri" inspires readers by offering profound insights into the nature of existence, consciousness, and the divine potential within humanity.

10. What is the legacy of "Savitri"?

"Savitri" continues to be revered as a spiritual masterpiece, inspiring seekers on the path of inner transformation and divine realization.

3.7 References.

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Unit 4 Sarojini Naidu: Indian Weavers, Radha the Milkmaid

Structure

- 4.1. Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3. Sarojini Naidu: Life and Works
- 4.4. Introduction of “Indian Weavers”
 - 4.4.1 Text
 - 4.4.2 Glossary
 - 4.4.3. Critical Appreciation of “Indian Weavers”
- 4.5. Introduction of “Radha the Milkmaid”
 - 4.5.1 Text
 - 4.5.2 Explanation and Annotation
 - 4.5.3 Critical appreciation of “Radha the Milkmaid ”
- 4.6. Sarojini Naidu as a Poet
- 4.7. Let us Sum up
- 4.8. Questions
- 4.9. References

4.1 OBJECTIVES

Sarojini Naidu was an Indian political activist and poet who served as the first Governor of UP, after independence. She played an important role in the freedom movement against the British rule. Being a politician, she was a famous lyrical poetess also. After completing this unit, you will have a complete knowledge about the poetess and her poem. The unit aims :

- To inform you completely about Sarojini Naidu as a poetess.
- To analyse some of the major poems.
- To evaluate the important poem “Indian Weavers” and “Radha the Milkmaid”
- To identify the various phases in her life through the poems we will study.
- To suggest ways in which some of the main events of human life impinge on her work.
- To present an overview of Sarojini’s career that will bring out some of the salient features of her work.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Sarojini Naidu is known as the “Bharat Kokila” or the ‘Nightingale of India’ for her famous lyrical poems. She delivers perfect lyricism and mellifluous melody. She is a singer of India’s glory, present fauna and flora. She picturises the landscape of mountains, village areas, and peoples of Indian arena in her melodious songs. She expresses main Hindustani tradition and cultures. In this unit, we shall study the poetic technique of Sarojini Naidu and her two major poems Indian Weavers and Radha the Milkmaid. The comprehension exercises are given at the end of this unit. A detailed study of the poetess and critical explanation of her prescribed poem is given just after the text.

4.3. SAROJINI NAIDU: LIFE AND WORKS

Sarojini Naidu was born in Hyderabad in 1879 in a Bengali Hindu Brahmin family. The name of her father was Aghore Nath Chattopadhyay. Her father was a carpenter and mother was a poetess and used to write poetry in Bengali. Sarojini Naidu was the eldest among the eight siblings. Her brother Birendranath was a revolutionary and her other brother, Harindranath was a poet, dramatist, and actor. Sarojini Naidu passed her Matriculation examination from the University of Madras, but she took four years' break from her studies. In 1895, she travelled to England to study first at King’s College London and later at Girton College Cambridge. Sarojini Naidu, also known as the Nightingale of India, is a prominent Indian independence activist and poet. She played a crucial role in India's struggle for independence and was the first woman to become the president of the Indian National Congress and the first woman to serve as a governor in independent India. Naidu's literary works reflect her deep patriotism, lyrical prowess, and commitment to social reform. Some of her notable literary works include:

"The Golden Threshold" (1905): This collection of poems was Naidu's debut literary work. It reflects her early nationalist sentiments and addresses themes of freedom, love, and nature.

"The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & the Spring" (1912): Another collection of poetry by Naidu, where she explores themes of life, death, and the transient nature of time.

"The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring (1917): This collection of poetry is known for its romantic themes and delicate imagery. Naidu's love poems are particularly renowned for their emotional depth and beauty.

These works, along with many others, established Sarojini Naidu as one of the foremost literary figures of her time in India. Her poetry continues to be celebrated for its lyrical beauty, nationalist fervor, and profound insights into the human condition.

4.4. Introduction of “Indian Weavers”

The Indian Weavers' is a small lyric in three stanzas of four lines in each stanza a question is asked in the first two lines, and it is answered in each included in the "Folk Songs" section of The Golden Threshold. Weaving is one of the most important of the folk vocations in India, and the weavers are important folk characters. The poetess has skillfully retained the simplicity and lilting music of a folk s even though the lyric has a symbolic significance and a rich texture having song, layers within layers of meaning. Sarojini Naidu's 'Indian Weavers' portrays the titular weavers making three different garments, each one embodying a period of human life. The poem thereby engages with themes of art, life and the inevitability of the passage of time. This poem serves as a tribute to the skill, resilience, and struggles of the Indian weavers during the time of British colonial rule.

The poem opens with a vivid description of the weavers at their looms, their hands tirelessly weaving intricate patterns into the fabric. Naidu's portrayal captures the rhythmic motion of their work, emphasizing the dedication and artistry required to create their masterpieces. Despite their toil, the weavers' faces are marked by signs of hardship and exhaustion, a stark reminder of the challenges they endure. In short, the poem pays homage to these unsung heroes of India's artisanal traditions, elevating their stories and struggles through the power of poetry. Ultimately, this poem stands as a poignant reminder of the human spirit even in the face of adversity.

4.5.1 Text

Weavers, weaving at break of day,
Why do you weave a garment so gay?
Blue as the wing of a halcyon wild,
We weave the robes of a new-born child.

Weavers, weaving at fall of night,
Why do you weave a garment so bright?
Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,

We weave the marriage-veils of a queen.

Weavers, weaving solemn and still,
What do you weave in the moonlight chill?
White as a feather and white as a cloud,
We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.

4.5.2 Glossary

Halcyon- Kingfisher, a bird blue in colour.

Plumes-feathers

Solemn - grave; serious.

Still- quiet; without speaking.

4.5.3. Critical Appreciation of “Indian Weavers

The Indian Weavers' is a small lyric in three stanzas of four lines each. In twelve lines, the poetess, Sarojini Naidu has provided a symbolic representation of man's journey from birth to death. The weavers are weaving the web of life, the Indian Trinity-Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh-the lords of man's destiny, those who create, and regenerate through death itself. Their process of creation is an endless one like the weaving of the weavers from morning till night. The poetess observes some weavers weaving a bright beautiful cloth at break of day, and asks them why they are weaving such a gay cloth. The weavers reply that they are weaving it for the dress of a newly born child. That is why the cloth they weave is of a blue colour, as blue as the wing of a kingfisher.

The dawn or day-break symbolises the beginning of life, the birth of new life, and blue symbolises the depth and colour of the ocean out of which emerge the white swan and the white lotus in the Hindu creation-myths. It also symbolises the ocean of Eternity after crossing which alone the soul is born into this world. The new born child is an expression of the creative powers and the creative joy of Brahma, the Supreme. Hence it is in the fitness of things that the garment woven for him should be blue in colour, gay and bright. At nightfall the poetess finds the weavers, weaving a cloth, bright and multi-coloured, and asks them for whom they are weaving a cloth of such variegated colours. The weavers tell her that they are weaving a cloth

of purple and green colour, magnificent and colourful like the feathers of a peacock, for the bridal dress of a queen.

In the cold moonlight, the poetess finds the weavers still at work. They are now silent and their mood is serious. They are now weaving a white cloth, as white as a bird's feather or a cloud, and to the question of the poetess, they reply briefly that they are weaving it for the funeral shroud of a dead man. The chill of the moonlit night is symbolic of death, and it is befitting that the shroud should be of white colour, for white is the symbol of purity, of unity and possibility. Death means a re-union with the eternal and the possibility of regeneration.

The poetess subtly critiques the social and economic inequalities that pervade Indian society, highlighting the contrast between the opulence of the finished fabrics and the poverty of the weavers themselves. Lines such as "weavers, weaving dreams of men" and "weavers, weaving for their barest wage" underscore the disparity between the laborer and the consumer, prompting readers to reflect on issues of exploitation and injustice.

In conclusion, 'Indian Weavers' is a powerful and resonant poem that celebrates the artistry of traditional Indian weaving while also shedding light on broader themes of human resilience and social justice. Through its vivid imagery, emotive language, and profound insights, Naidu's poem continues to captivate readers and inspire contemplation to this day. In short, the poem is an admirable lyric that traces human life through the three most important stages that it passes-birth, marriage and death. The texture is symbolic and yet the poetess has succeeded in retaining the simplicity of the folk-song. As Srinivasa Iyengar points out, "the sentiment and imagery are perfectly suited to each other, and the management of rhythm and the internal and terminal rhymes is perfect."

4.6. Critical Study of “THE SONG OF RADHA: THE MILKMAID”

The Song of Radha: The Milkmaid" is in the Indian Folk-Song of Love, devotion, and dedication. Radha, the milkmaid, goes from the countryside to Mathura, and starts crying "who will town, where Krishna lives, to sell curds; and instead of buying these curds that are white as the clouds in the sky' what comes out is Govinda! Govinda! Again when she goes to Mathura temple and folds her hands to pray to the shining ones (the devatas), she is not able to utter out any other thing but the mantra, Govinda! Govinda!. The poem presents the depths of human emotion, particularly the intense and transcendent love experienced by the mythological figure of Radha. Radha, the beloved consort of Lord Krishna in Hindu mythology, serves as the central figure in this lyrical piece, symbolizing the epitome of devotion and spiritual yearning. It

captures the essence of Radha's emotional journey, portraying her longing, ecstasy, and profound connection with the divine. The poem opens a window into Radha's soul, inviting readers to explore the depths of her love and the complexities of her relationship with Krishna. In essence, the "Song of Radha" stands as a testament to Sarojini Naidu's poetic genius and her ability to capture the deepest emotions of the human heart. Through its lyrical beauty and profound insights, the poem continues to enchant and inspire readers, inviting them to embark on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual awakening alongside Radha.

4.6.1. Text

THE SONG OF RADHA, THE MILKMAID

I carried my curds to the Mathura fair
How softly the heifers were lowing
I wanted to cry, "Who will buy
These curds that are white as the clouds in the sky
When the breezes of shrawan are blowing?"
But my heart was so full of your beauty, Beloved,
They laughed as I cried without knowing:
Govinda! Govinda!
Govinda! Govinda!
How softly the river was flowing!

I carried my pots to the Mathura tide
How gaily the rowers were rowing!
My comrades called, "Ho! let us dance, let us sing
And wear saffron garments to welcome the spring.
And pluck the new buds that are blowing."
But my heart was so full of your music, Beloved,
They mocked when I cried without knowing:
Govinda! Govinda!
Govinda! Govinda!
How gaily the river was flowing!

I carried my gifts to the Mathura shrine
How brightly the torches were glowing!
I folded my hands at the altars to pray
“O shining ones guard us by night and by day”—
And loudly the conch shells were blowing.
But my heart was so lost in your worship, Beloved,
They were wroth when I cried without knowing:
Govinda! Govinda!
Govinda! Govinda!
How brightly the river was flowing!

4.6.2 Glossary

Gaily- willingly, happily

Torches- Light

4.6.3. Critical appreciation of “The Song of Radha the Milkmaid ”

The Song of Radha: The Milkmaid" is one of the finest and most charming love poems of Sarojini Naidu. Radha goes to the Mathura-temple to offer her gifts to Gods. The priests blow conch shells but her heart is lost in her beloved's worship and she exclaims 'Govinda! Govinda. Here Radha emerges as the eternal feminine, seeking for complete identification and union with Govinda. Both the setting and the symbols are purely Indian. The poem reveals Radha's faithfulness and firmness in love. It is in the Indian Folk poem written in three stanza. In the first stanza, Radha says that she once carried curd for selling in Mathura fair. It is the same place where Krishna (her beloved) was born. On the way, she sees heifers (cows) lowing i.e. mowing very softly. She had planned to sell curd by loudly saying, “Who will buy curd which is as white as white clouds which float in the sky because of blowing of Shravan (monsoon) breezes”.

I carried my curds to the Mathura fair
How softly the heifers were lowing
I wanted to cry, “Who will buy
These curds that are white as the clouds in the sky
When the breezes of shrawan are blowing?”
But my heart was so full of your beauty, Beloved,

They laughed as I cried without knowing:

Govinda! Govinda!

Govinda! Govinda!

How softly the river was flowing!

The poem starts with a voice calling “Govinda” without knowing. There is Radha who is selling curd. Govinda is the other name of Krishna. Seeing her doing this, people around her, started laughing at her. In the last line, Radha says that the river (in which her boat was floating) was flowing very softly. Radha says so because her love for Krishna makes everything around her look beautiful.

In this stanza, Radha again says that she carried the pots (full of curd) to Mathura. The rowers (boats) rowing (floating) in a cheerful manner. The comrades (those travelling with Radha) ask her to dance, sing and wear saffron garments to welcome the spring and also pluck new buds (of flowers) which were blooming around them. However, Radha was still in the thoughts of her beloved Govinda’s melodious music and she again started crying his name repeatedly which made others mock her. However Radha does not seem to have bothered by them. Instead she watches the river flowing cheerfully.

In the final stanza, Radha says that she carried her gifts (curd) to the Mathura shrine. The torches (candles) were glowing brightly. She then folded her hands in the temple to pray for her protection as well as of her beloved Govinda. The conch shells were blowing loudly. However Radha’s heart was lost in the worship of her beloved Govinda. She again started saying the name of Govinda repeatedly which angers the priests in the temple. However again, Radha did not pay attention to them and instead says that the river was flowing brightly. The poem ends.

In short, the poem revolves around the overpowering influence of love and devotion on the speaker’s experiences in different settings. It explores the idea that profound emotions for a beloved can shape one’s perception of the world around them. The theme highlights how love can be all-encompassing, rendering the external world and its festivities inconsequential compared to the intensity of inner emotions. It reflects the idea that the power of love and devotion can transcend and transform ordinary experiences.

4.4. SAROJINI NAIDU AS A POET

Sarojini Naidu is celebrated as one of the most prominent poets in Indian literature, often referred to as the Nightingale of India. Her poetry is characterized by its lyrical beauty, emotional depth, and profound patriotism. Here are some key aspects of Sarojini Naidu's poetry:

Patriotism and Nationalism: Naidu's poetry is deeply infused with her love for her country and her fervent desire for India's independence from British colonial rule. She often used her poetic voice to inspire fellow Indians to join the struggle for freedom. Themes of national pride, sacrifice, and the spirit of resistance permeate much of her work.

Lyrical Sensibility: Naidu's poetry is known for its exquisite lyrical quality. She had a remarkable ability to craft verses that are melodious, rhythmically captivating, and rich in imagery. Her use of metaphor, simile, and vivid descriptive language contributes to the musicality and beauty of her poetry.

Nature and Romanticism: Nature imagery frequently appears in Naidu's poetry, where she often draws parallels between natural elements and human emotions. Her romantic poems are particularly admired for their evocative portrayal of love and longing. Through her verses, she captures the beauty of the natural world and its resonance with the inner landscape of human experiences.

Feminism and Women's Empowerment: As a trailblazing woman in her time, Naidu also addressed themes of feminism and women's empowerment in her poetry. She advocated for women's rights and equality, challenging societal norms and conventions through her verses. Naidu's poetry often celebrates the strength, resilience, and dignity of women.

Social Realism:

While Naidu is renowned for her romantic and patriotic poetry, she also delved into themes of social realism, highlighting the struggles of the marginalized and oppressed. Her poems shed light on the plight of the poor, the working class, and those affected by social injustice, reflecting her commitment to social reform. In conclusion, Sarojini Naidu's poetry continues to resonate with readers for its timeless themes, lyrical elegance, and passionate expression of the Indian spirit. Her verses remain an integral part of the literary heritage of India, inspiring generations with their beauty and depth of emotion.

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to Sarojini Naidu.
- Interpreted her most remarkable poem Indian Weaver.
- explained her famous poem The Song of Radha, The Milkmaid
- discussed the various characteristic elements present in this poem.
- told about the style and technique of the poems.

4.8 Questions

1. Discuss Sarojini Naidu as a poet in your own words.
2. Critically analyze the poem 'The Song of Radha : The Milkmaid' .
3. Discuss Sarojini Naidu as a Lyrical poet.
4. What is the central theme of Sarojini Naidu's poem "Indian Weavers"?
5. How does Naidu depict the life and work of Indian weavers in the poem?
6. Describe the imagery used by Naidu to portray the weaving process in "Indian Weavers."
7. What message does Naidu convey about the dignity of labor through "Indian Weavers"?
8. What relevance does "Indian Weavers" hold in contemporary society?
9. What is the central theme of Sarojini Naidu's poem "Radha the Milkmaid"?
10. What message or moral lesson does Naidu convey through Radha's story in the poem?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who is the poet of "Indian Weaver"?

Sarojini Naidu.

2. What is the theme of "Indian Weaver"?

The theme of the poem is celebrating the skill and artistry of Indian weavers.

3. What does the poem "Indian Weaver" highlight?

It highlights the beauty and intricacy of Indian textile weaving.

4. What imagery does "Indian Weaver" employ?

It employs vivid imagery of the weaving process and the resulting fabrics.

5. Why is "Indian Weaver" considered significant?

It showcases the richness of Indian cultural heritage and craftsmanship.

6. What is the central theme of "Radha the Milkmaid"?

Love, devotion, and longing.

7. Describe Radha's character briefly.

Radha is portrayed as a symbol of devotion and love, especially for Lord Krishna.

8. What emotions does "Radha the Milkmaid" evoke?

It evokes feelings of longing, devotion, and the intensity of love.

9. Why is Radha often depicted in Indian literature and art?

Radha symbolizes unconditional love and devotion, particularly towards Lord Krishna, making her a significant figure in Indian culture and spirituality.

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Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj

MAEN-113 (N)

INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (POETRY AND DRAMA)

Block II Poetry (B)

Unit 5 Nissim Ezekiel :Philosophy, Enterprise and Kamla Das: "Introduction", "A Hot Noon in Malabar

Unit 6 A.K. Ramanujan: 'Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House'

Unit 7 Jayant Mahapatra: 'Dawn at Puri'

Unit 8 Arun Kolatkar: "The Priest"

Block Introduction II

Dear learners! This block is aimed at making you aware of five eminent poets of Indian English literature: Nissim Ezekiel, Kamla Das, A.K. Ramanujan, Jayant Mahapatra, and Arun Kolatkar. This block is divided into four units from 5th to 8th. The fifth unit focuses on Nissim Ezekiel and Kamla Das. In this unit, we will learn two major poems *Philosophy*, and *Enterprise* by Nissim Ezekiel, and two remarkable poems *Introduction* and "A Hot Noon in Malabar" by Kamla Das. The sixth unit aimed to discuss the poetic skill of A.K. Ramanujan. The unit also deals with his major poem '*Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House.*' The seventh unit focuses on another major poet of Indian English literature Jayant Mahapatra and his noteworthy poem '*Dawn at Puri*'. It deals with the biography, philosophy, and art of his writing. The eighth and last unit of the block focuses on the poet Arun Kolatkar and his poem *The Priest*. After studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical and realist way of thinking about life and develop the conceptual analytical power to read and enjoy the soul of Indian English poetry.

Unit 5 Nissim Ezekiel: Philosophy, Enterprise and Kamla Das: Introduction", "A Hot Noon in Malabar'

Structure

5.1. Objectives

5.2. Introduction

5.3. Nissim Ezekiel: Life and Works

5.4. Ezekiel as a Poet

5.5. Introduction of the Poem “Philosophy”

5.5.1. Text

5.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Philosophy

5.6. Introduction of the Poem “Enterprise”

5.6.1 Text

5.6.2. Critical appreciation of “Enterprise”

5.7 Kamla Das: Life and Works

5.8 Kamla Das as a Confessional Poet

5.9. Introduction of the Poem “Introduction”

5.9.1. Text

5.9.2. Critical appreciation of “Introduction”

5.10 Introduction of the Poem “A Hot Noon in Malabar ”

5.10.1. Text

5.10.2. Critical appreciation of “A Hot Noon in Malabar ”

5.11 Let us Sum up

5.12 Questions

5.13 Further Readings

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit you will be able to discuss:

- Nissim Ezekiel and Kamla Das as poets
- Some major poems of these two great writers.
- The development of imagery in the poems and establish the link between its different parts.

By the end of this unit you should be able to understand well the poems taught in this unit and with also to have a fair understanding of Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das as poets. You should also be able to read their poems with an understanding of their use of language, imagery and form.

5.2. Introduction

Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most towering figures in Indian English poetry. His poetry is many faceted, and it has certainly enriched Indian English poetry and given a new dimension to it by extending its scope and its range.

In this unit, two Indian poets Nissim Ezekiel Kamala Das are discussed with a study of their two poems respectively. The comprehension exercises given at the end of this unit add to your in-depth understanding of the poets and their poems. The difficult words have been explained in the glossary after every poem.

5.3. NISSIM EZEKIEL LIFE AND WORKS

Nissim Ezekiel was born in 1924 in Bombay of Jewish parents (Bene-Israel) both devoted to education. His parents influenced him very much. His father was the principal of several colleges in the latter part of his life. He was rational, questioning and had an immaculate taste for proverbs and homespun wisdom. Ezekiel inherited from his father love for proverbs and homespun wisdom which runs deep in his poetry. His mother was also the principal of a school started and runs by herself for over thirty years. Teaching passed into his blood. Ezekiel has taught at school, at college and at university. He is primarily a teacher both in life and poetry. When he conducts programmes on art appreciation for Bombay television, he teaches. When he sits in his industry office at the Indian P.E.N. as its most active office bearer, reading quantities

of other people's poems and giving his comments on them - thereby earning lifelong friends and enemies - he is teaching again. When he writes his poetry he teaches, this time largely himself. In all these contexts the pedagogic bone is relieved, even subverted, by self-directed irony, subdued passion, and simple, direct concern for what's at hand. When Ezekiel was an undergraduate he came under the influence of M. N. Roy and was an active member of the Radical Democratic party until 1947. He took his Master's degree in English literature in 1947. He went to England in 1948 and studied Philosophy at Birbeck College under C. E. M. Joad. In 1952, he even worked as deck scrubber and coal-carrier on an English cargo ship to earn his passage home from England.

Ezekiel won lasting renown in literature. His profession as a teacher of English literature for a number of years at Bombay University shaped his literary personality. In 1964 he was visiting Professor at the University of Leeds. He edited *Quest*, *Imprint* and six issues of *Poetry India*. A renowned critic of arts and literature, Ezekiel conducted a course in art appreciation of J. J. School of Art and other institutions. He has also remained Director, Theatre Unit, Bombay. One of the front-rank poets in the Indian English tradition he has published six collections of his verse. O.U.P. has brought out in one volume published in 1989, collected poems of Ezekiel from 1952 to 1988. Besides writing poetry, Ezekiel has edited many books, including *The Emerson Reader*, *A Martin Luther King Reader* and *Writing in India*. He has also edited the *Indian P.E.N.* Ezekiel has visited England and U.S.A. He has won distinguished honours for his poetry. He passed away on Jan. 12, 2004 and is survived by three children, a son and two daughters.

Ezekiel's poetry collection consists of *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965), *Hymns in Darkness* (1976) and *Latter-Day Psalms*. In all his poems he leaves the impression of an urban poet, the poet of the great metropolis – Bombay.

5.4. Ezekiel as a Poet

Nissim Ezekiel, one of the most notable poets in the Indian English tradition, has published six collections of verse. His poems have appeared in several journals and he is well represented in many anthologies. He is the most versatile poet in the country. He experiments endlessly with form and craft. Versatility is the outstanding characteristic of Ezekiel's poetry. Linda Hesse says: "He is a poet of the city, Bombay, a poet of the body; and an endless explorer of the

labyrinths of the mind, the devious delving and twisting of the ego, and the ceaseless attempt of man and poet to of honesty define himself and to find through all 'the myth and maze a way and love". What distinguishes his poetry is the note of informality and frankness, the authenticity of expression and flawless craftsmanship. He is a poet who pursues of poetry with a sense of commitment. There are some important characteristics of Nissim Ezekiel given below:

An Urban Poet: The urban theme dominates Ezekiel's poetry. He a poet of the city Bombay. He does not mince words to expose the ugliness, dirt, wickedness, inhumanity and squalor of the metropolis. Wading through Bombay is a mortifying experience for the poet in "A Morning Walk".

Barbaric city, sick with slums,
Deprived of seasons, blessed with rains.
Its hawkers, beggars, iron lunged,
Processions led by frantic drums,
A million purgatorial lanes,
And child-like masses many- tongued,
Whose wages are in words and crumbs.

Such a city has a baneful influence on the poet. The trees look like ghosts their personal identity: "The more he stored the less he saw among the individual trees". They look like "petals on a wet, black bough.

Indian Sensibility: Ezekiel's entire poetry is suffused with Indianness. His commitment to India and to Bombay which is his chosen home, is total. The major themes of his poetry are Love, personal integration, the Indian contemporary scene, modern urban life, spiritual values etc. Ezekiel is a poet of Indian urban life. In his famous poem "Background Casually", he clearly reveals his commitment to and attachment with India :

The Indian landscape sears my eyes,
I have become a part of it
To be observed by foreigners

Love and Sex: Love and sex occupy a conspicuous place in Ezekiel's poetry. "The themes of departure and voyage and explorations of the various aspects of love is chief core his poem.. Ezekiel has dealt his poetry with love and sex in all its variety-expression, indulgence, mating, fulfillment, consummation, fear, possessive passion, surrender, misgiving, waiting, separation, wistfulness, , praise, offering, thrill, joy, excitement and impatience. Ezekiel is a poet of the body, an endless explorer into the labyrinths of the flesh and desire. He has a strong poetic talent for delineating picturesquely feminine physical features in a number of ways:

I will begin-but how should I begin?

with hair, your hair,

remembered hair

touched, smelt, lying silent there

upon your head, beneath your arms

Marital, Family and Human Relationship: Ezekiel is a poet of ordinary human situations and common human relationships. He has composed some very fine poems out of common and ordinary characters and situations. Ezekiel has centred his attention most on family relationship - the interaction between the poet and his immediate family-wife, children and parents. All these three categories find adequate place in his confessional poetry. No Indian English poet has written so copiously and so nicely on family relationship as Ezekiel. Family life is the source from which one derives warm humanism and compassion for all.

Marriage, the most enduring of all human relationships finds a prominent place in his poetry. In "Marriage" he describes the two main stages of marital life. In the first stage the newly married lovers feel ecstasy:

Lovers, when they marry, face

Eternity with touching grace,

Complacent at being fated

Never to be separated

Alienation and Search for Identity : Born in a Bene-Israel family which migrated to India generations ago, Ezekiel is alienated from the cultural heritage of India. As a schoolboy he felt alienated among his class mates. He was an alien among both Muslims and Hindus. Ezekiel once said, "My background makes me a natural outsider: circumstances and decisions relate me

to India. His famous poem "Background Casually" provides an example of cultural and social alienation:

My ancestors, among the castes,
Were aliens crushing seed for bread.
A mugging Jew among the wolves had killed the Christ.
They told me I had killed the Christ.

Religious and Philosophical Concerns:

Ezekiel's attitude to religion is rational, logical, secular and humanistic. His religion is a religion of love and charity, ideals which every religion cherishes and preaches. He believes that all barriers dividing mankind should give way to the religion of love for all:

And yet to speak is good, a man
Is purified through speech alone
Asserting his identity
In all that people say and do.

Poetic Craftsmanship:

Ezekiel is a great and gifted poetic craftsman. His poems are as a rule lucid-a merit these days- and are splendidly evocative and satisfyingly sensuous. The following passage may look very simple, describing an incident in man-woman relationship, but it is highly evocative in its tone:

Certainly the blouse
would not be used again.
But with true British courtesy
He lent her a safety pin
Before she took the elevator down.

He uses symbols and images which are highly evocative His Latter-Day Psalms abound in striking images, as in the following:

The cross he carries to no crucifixion
is merely middle age.....

In short, Ezekiel has been a kind of law giver to the young poets writing in the Indian English tradition. He has taught to avoid sentimentality, looseness of structure and abstract sublimities which all seem to be peculiarly Indian traits. He is "perhaps the first Indian poet consistently to show Indian readers that craftsmanship is as important to a poem as its subject matter." Ezekiel has sought to make controlled, meaningful statements, avoiding extremes of thought and expression."

5.5 Introduction of the Poem "Philosophy"

"Philosophy" is a meditative - reflective poem and it describes the superiority of poetry to philosophy. It is the very first poem in *The Exact Name* published in 1965. Ezekiel was a student of philosophy in London. In the first stanza of this lyric the poet states that he has an inborn love for philosophy. While he studies philosophy, he forgets the worldly reality. The world of philosophy is a world where all problems and things are expressed by cold lucidity, logic and argumentation. So, the poet misses here the warmth of human life and human relationship which occupy a conspicuous place in poetry. The poem begins with the speaker acknowledging the allure of philosophy, describing it as a "fresh line" that draws them into its realm of thought. However, this initial attraction soon gives way to a realization of the limitations and challenges inherent in philosophical exploration.

Ezekiel skillfully employs imagery and metaphor to convey the elusive nature of truth and the futility of seeking absolute answers. The "tangled skein" of philosophy suggests the intricate and perplexing nature of the questions it poses, while the "blind alley" represents the dead ends and frustrations encountered along the way. Despite these challenges, the speaker continues to grapple with philosophical concepts, recognizing the inherent human impulse to seek understanding and meaning in the world. Ultimately, the poem suggests that while philosophy may not offer easy answers, the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom is itself a noble endeavor worthy of pursuit.

Through "Philosophy," Ezekiel invites readers to contemplate the complexities of existence and the enduring quest for truth and understanding in a world fraught with uncertainty.

Top of Form

5.5.1. Text

Philosophy

There is a place to which I often go,
Not by planning to, but by a flow
Away from all existence, to a cold
Lucidity, whose will is uncontrolled.
Here, the mills of God are never slow.

The landscape in its geological prime
Dissolves to show its quintessential slime.
A million stars are blotted out. I think
Of each historic passion as a blink
That happened to the sad eye of Time.

But residues of meaning still remain,
As darkest myths meander through the pain
Towards a final formula of light.
I, too, reject this clarity of sight.
What cannot be explained, do not explain.

The mundane language of the senses sings
Its own interpretations. Common things
Become, by virtue of their commonness,
An argument against their nakedness
That dies of cold to find the truth it brings.

5.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Philosophy

The poem's enigmatic conclusion suggests that true understanding may lie not in logical explanations but in the acceptance of the inexplicable. The mundane language of daily life, stripped of its superficiality, becomes a testament to the futility of seeking perfect knowledge. Themes of existentialism, disillusionment, and the limitations of human reason are central to the

poem, reflecting the anxieties and uncertainties of the mid-20th century and the influence of existentialist philosophers. One of the notable aspects of the poem is its contemplative tone, which invites readers to reflect deeply on the fundamental questions of existence. From the very beginning, Ezekiel presents the reader with the central dilemma of human existence: the tension between the desire for knowledge and the limitations of human understanding. This tension is encapsulated in the opening line, "Give me the quest," which expresses the human longing for meaning and enlightenment.

Throughout the poem, Ezekiel employs rich imagery and metaphor to convey the complexity of philosophical inquiry. The juxtaposition of "the scientist" and "the mystic" highlights the different approaches to understanding the world – one grounded in empirical observation and analysis, the other in intuition and spiritual insight. By presenting these contrasting perspectives, Ezekiel underscores the multifaceted nature of truth and the need for a holistic approach to knowledge. The poem explores the idea of existential isolation and the struggle to find meaning in a seemingly indifferent universe. The image of the "lonely thinker" grappling with "the great question" encapsulates the existential angst inherent in the human condition. Despite our best efforts to unravel the mysteries of existence, we are ultimately confronted with the limitations of our own understanding. At the same time, Ezekiel offers a glimmer of hope amidst the existential despair. The repeated refrain of "Give me the answer" suggests an enduring optimism and faith in the possibility of enlightenment. Despite the inherent uncertainties of life, the quest for knowledge remains a source of inspiration and wonder. The philosopher, free from worldly restraints and limitations, can freely indulge in abstractions and generalisations. It seems as if the mills of God are ceaselessly at work in the world of philosophy, and rapidly produce arguments, abstractions and generalisations. The poet lucidly and succinctly expresses his ideas about philosophy:

There is a place to which I often go
not by planning to, but by a flow
Away from a cold existence, to a cold
Lucidity, whose will is uncontrolled.
Here, the mills of God are never slow.

The image in the last line is highly evocative and suggestive.

In the second stanza the poet seriously reflects over the flow of time and presents the evaluation of human life as presented by the scientist and the philosopher. On "the Viewless wings" of

imagination the poet goes to the prehistoric time long before the dawn of human civilization in the planet earth. According to geological time scale the earth was in its prime at that time. At that time there was only mud on it. Time moves on. Stars in millions rise and die out. Gradually evolution of man takes place. Man is moved and agitated by a variety of passions. The poet deftly conveys the cosmic panorama by the study of geology, astronomy, history and other disciplines through violent but functional image :

A million stars are blotted out. I think
Of each historic passion as a blink.
That happened to the sad eye of Time

Although science and philosophy explain much about cosmic mystery still there remains a residue which they cannot explain. The clarity of sight or cold lucidity" cannot explain the mystery of human life and nature. So he rejects them. It is poetry and poetry alone that can provide "a light" to the meaning of human life and existence on earth. The superiority of poetry to philosophy is lucidly asserted in the last stanza. It clearly explains many things which are beyond the comprehension of philosophy and science. Poetry deals with common things, common situations, common people and common human relationships which have no place in philosophy. So it is superior to the cold abstractions of philosophy. Abstractions are death cold and hence, they are devoid of any human appeal. Since poetry is suffused with the warmth of human emotions and relationships, it is the undisputed source of life and wisdom. He shows immaculate technical excellence in this lyric. He evinces rare skill to employ metre and rhythm and the divided into four stanzas of five lines each with a well-marked rhyme scheme; aabba. It expresses deep and profound thoughts through vivid images.

In conclusion, 'Philosophy' is a thought-provoking meditation on the complexities of human existence and the pursuit of truth. Through its nuanced exploration of philosophical themes, Ezekiel invites readers to contemplate the fundamental questions of life and the enduring quest for meaning in a world fraught with uncertainty. The poem's lyrical beauty and profound insights make it a timeless meditation on the human condition."

5.6. Introduction of the Poem "Enterprise"

"Enterprise", one of the finest lyrics of Nissim Ezekiel, appeared in *The Unfinished Man* in 1959. In it the poet generalises his own feelings of frustration, loss and deprivation in the world.

He himself remarked that the lyric was written for "personal therapeutic purposes." Ezekiel troubles and frustrations to an intimate, sympathetic friend. But the poet thus sought the psychological relief which results from revealing our has deftly done this analysis and exploration in generalised term, so that "Enterprise" has become a metaphor for, a symbol or an allegory of the human condition on earth. The poem begins with the speaker contemplating the nature of enterprise, likening it to a "big ship" setting sail into the vast ocean of opportunity. This metaphor captures the sense of adventure and possibility that accompanies endeavors of ambition and innovation.

As the poem unfolds, Ezekiel delves into the challenges and uncertainties that accompany the pursuit of enterprise. The "familiar shore" left behind symbolizes the comfort of the known and the security of the familiar, while the "horizon" represents the limitless potential and unknown challenges that lie ahead. Through vivid imagery and evocative language, Ezekiel captures the excitement and trepidation of embarking on a new venture. The poem invites readers to reflect on the courage and determination required to navigate the complexities of modern life and pursue one's dreams in the face of uncertainty.

Ultimately, "Enterprise" offers a poignant meditation on the human spirit's capacity for growth, exploration, and resilience in the pursuit of progress and fulfillment.

5.6.1 Text

There is a place to which I often go,
Not by planning to, but by a flow
Away from all existence, to a cold
Lucidity, whose will is uncontrolled.
Here, the mills of God are never slow.

The landscape in its geological prime
Dissolves to show its quintessential slime.
A million stars are blotted out. I think
Of each historic passion as a blink
That happened to the sad eye of Time.

But residues of meaning still remain,
As darkest myths meander through the pain
Towards a final formula of light.
I, too, reject this clarity of sight.
What cannot be explained, do not explain.

The mundane language of the senses sings
Its own interpretations. Common things
Become, by virtue of their commonness,
An argument against their nakedness
That dies of cold to find the truth it brings.

5.6.2. Critical appreciation of “Enterprise”

"Enterprise" by Nissim Ezekiel is a reflective piece that explores the concept of ambition, risk-taking, and the challenges inherent in pursuing one's aspirations. Through vivid imagery and metaphorical language, Ezekiel presents a nuanced examination of the human condition and the complexities of modern life. Here's a critical study of the poem:

Metaphor of the Ship:

The central metaphor of the poem, comparing enterprise to a "big ship," serves as an effective allegory for embarking on ambitious endeavors. The ship represents the vessel through which individuals navigate the waters of opportunity, symbolizing the journey of progress and growth. However, it also conveys the inherent risks and uncertainties associated with venturing into the unknown.

Exploration of Ambition:

Ezekiel delves into the psychology of ambition, highlighting the allure of venturing beyond the familiar shore in pursuit of greater opportunities. He captures the excitement and anticipation accompanying the pursuit of ambitious goals, as well as the inherent desire for progress and self-improvement.

Tension Between Security and Risk:

The poem explores the tension between the comfort of the "familiar shore" and the uncertainty of the horizon. Ezekiel acknowledges the allure of stability and security, juxtaposing it with the

allure of new challenges and opportunities. This tension reflects the internal conflict individuals face when contemplating ventures that entail risk and uncertainty.

Symbolism of the Horizon:

The horizon symbolizes the limitless potential and unknown challenges that lie ahead. It represents the vast expanse of possibilities awaiting those who dare to venture beyond their comfort zones. However, it also conveys the ambiguity and unpredictability inherent in pursuing ambitious endeavors, underscoring the risks involved in charting new courses.

Critique of Modernity:

Through the exploration of enterprise, Ezekiel offers a subtle critique of modern society and its emphasis on progress and achievement. While celebrating the human spirit's capacity for growth and exploration, he also highlights the pitfalls of unchecked ambition and the pressures of societal expectations.

Universal Themes:

The poem's themes resonate on a universal level, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. Ezekiel's exploration of ambition, risk, and the pursuit of progress speaks to the human experience, inviting readers to reflect on their own aspirations and the challenges they face in realizing them.

In conclusion, "Enterprise" is a poignant reflection on the complexities of ambition and the human impulse to pursue progress and growth. Through its rich imagery and thoughtful exploration of universal themes, the poem offers readers a compelling meditation on the rewards and risks inherent in the pursuit of enterprise

5.7 Kamla Das: Life and Works

Kamala Suraiyya, known as Kamala Das, was a very famous spent Indian English poet. She was born in 1934 in Kerala. She was born in a conservative Hindu family but later after studying about Islam, she converted into Islam. She is not only famous for her English poetry but she was also considered a leading figure in Malayalam. She is famous in Kerala for her short stories and biography. Das is said to be a bi-lingual poet of India. She challenged the traditional approach of dealing the theme of poetry and short stories.

WORKS

My Story, published in 1976, is an autobiographical work by Kamala Das. Actually it was written and published in Malayalam. This book remains the bestselling book since its publication as an autobiographical work. Here in this book, Das has beautifully described her life from the age of four, she explores her desire and concepts of sex, she writes the reality of discrimination in her life, she describes her literary career and extramarital affair. It is famous and controversial as well.

Alphabet of Lust was published in 1977. It deals with the theme of love and lust. It is a story of Manasi, the protagonist of the novel. It is evident in the novel that how the sex can secure the pride of place. It is a kind of sexual surrender for the greed of power and ambition.

Padmavati the Harlot and Other Stories was published in 1992. This collection of Kamala Das deals with the freedom and self-identity of the women. It is something different from the established canon of dealing the theme related to women. Here the women are given voice to speak and a mind to think and a heart to judge their life.

5.8 Kamla Das as a Confessional Poet

Kamala Das, also known as Kamala Surayya or Madhavikutty, was a renowned Indian poet who made significant contributions to Indian literature. She is celebrated for her bold and candid expression of emotions, her exploration of female identity, and her unapologetic portrayal of personal experiences. Her poetry is characterized by its deeply introspective and confessional nature. She delved into themes such as love, desire, sexuality, and the complexities of human relationships with remarkable honesty and vulnerability. Her poems often challenged societal norms and taboos, particularly regarding gender roles and women's agency. Her language is often lyrical, yet direct, and her imagery is vivid and evocative. She had a remarkable ability to capture the nuances of human emotions and experiences, making her poetry resonate deeply with readers.

Some of her notable works include "The Descendants," "Summer in Calcutta," and "The Old Playhouse and Other Poems." Through her poetry, Kamala Das not only left a lasting impact on Indian literature but also paved the way for future generations of poets to embrace their own voices and narratives. She remains an influential figure in both Indian and world literature. Kamala Das is indeed a notable confessional poet. Confessional poetry emerged in

the mid-20th century and is characterized by its highly personal subject matter, often delving into intimate and sometimes taboo topics such as sexuality, mental illness, and family conflicts.

Kamala Das's poetry is deeply introspective and autobiographical, exploring themes of love, desire, gender, and the complexities of human relationships. She fearlessly bared her innermost thoughts and emotions in her poetry, often blurring the lines between the private and the public, the personal and the political. Her most famous work, "My Story," is a semi-autobiographical novel that candidly discusses her experiences with love, marriage, and sexuality, challenging societal norms and expectations. Similarly, her poetry collection "The Descendants" and other works are marked by their confessional style, with Das laying bare her struggles, desires, and vulnerabilities.

Through her confessional poetry, Kamala Das paved the way for future generations of poets to explore and express their own personal truths without fear or reservation. She remains a significant figure in Indian literature, celebrated for her honesty, courage, and lyrical prowess.

5.9. Introduction of the Poem “Introduction”

"Introduction" which appeared in *Summer in Calcutta* is one of Kamala Das' finest poems in the confessional and autobiographical mode. The assertion of feminine identity in a male-dominated world is the central theme of this poem. It reveals with disarming candidness various aspects of the poetess' life-her girlhood, her heritage, her fondness for English, the beginning of tension in her life, her first sexual humiliation, her rebellion against established conventions and social norms and finally the assertion of her individuality and feminine sensibility. The poem begins with an assertion of the speaker's honesty, stating, "I don't know politics but I know the names." This line suggests a detachment from conventional societal structures while emphasizing a personal connection to individual experiences and emotions. Throughout the poem, the speaker grapples with various facets of her identity, acknowledging her roles as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a poet.

Kamla Das challenges societal expectations and norms, particularly those imposed on women, as she explores the complexities of desire and fulfillment. She confronts the constraints of tradition and the expectations placed upon her gender, expressing a yearning for liberation and self-expression. The poem's introspective tone and vivid imagery invite readers to contemplate the universal struggle for self-definition and autonomy. Through her raw and

unapologetic voice, Kamla Das invites readers to journey with her as she navigates the intricacies of her identity and existence.

"Introduction" serves as a powerful testament to Kamla Das's poetic prowess and her unwavering commitment to authenticity and self-discovery. Through her exploration of personal experiences and emotions, she offers readers a glimpse into the complexities of the human psyche and the enduring quest for meaning and fulfillment.

5.9.1. Text

I don't know politics but I know the names
Of those in power, and can repeat them like
Days of week, or names of months, beginning with Nehru.

I am Indian, very brown, 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
You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it
Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
Is aware. Not the deaf, blind speech
Of trees in storm or of monsoon clouds or of rain or the
Incoherent mutterings of the blazing
Funeral pyre. I was child, and later they

Told me I grew, for I became tall, my limbs
Swelled and one or two places sprouted hair.
When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the
Bedroom and closed the door, He did not beat me
But my sad woman-body felt so beaten.
The weight of my breasts and womb crushed me.
I shrank Pitifully.
Then ... I wore a shirt and my
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and ignored
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh,
Belong, cried the categorizers. Don't sit
On walls or peep in through our lace-draped windows.
Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better
Still, be Madhavikutty. It is time to
Choose a name, a role. Don't play pretending games.
Don't play at schizophrenia or be a
Nympho. Don't cry embarrassingly loud when
Jilted in love ... I met a man, loved him. Call
Him not by any name, he is every man
Who wants. a woman, just as I am every
Woman who seeks love. In him... the hungry haste
Of rivers, in me... the oceans' tireless
Waiting. Who are you, I ask each and everyone,
The answer is, it is I. Anywhere and,
Everywhere, I see the one who calls himself I
In this world, he is tightly packed like the
Sword in its sheath. It is I who drink lonely
Drinks at twelve, midnight, in hotels of strange towns,
It is I who laugh, it is I who make love

And then, feel shame, it is I who lie dying
With a rattle in my throat. I am sinner,
I am saint. I am the beloved and the
Betrayed. I have no joys that are not yours, no
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.

5.9.2. Critical appreciation of “Introduction”

The poem Introduction explores the themes of love, desire, gender, and identity in her works. "Introduction" is one of her notable poems, where she provides a bold and unapologetic declaration of self-awareness and individuality. The title "Introduction" suggests that the poem serves as an introduction to the speaker's identity, thoughts, and emotions. It hints at the unveiling of the inner self to the reader. Some chief points of the poem are given below:

Themes

The poem delves into themes of self-awareness, rebellion against societal norms, and the search for personal freedom. It challenges conventional expectations of femininity and societal roles.

Imagery and Language

Kamala Das employs vivid imagery and straightforward language to convey her emotions and thoughts. Her use of colloquial language makes the poem feel intimate and accessible, drawing the reader into the speaker's inner world.

Structure and Form

The poem is written in free verse, without a strict rhyme scheme or meter. This form mirrors the speaker's defiance of traditional structures and expectations. The lack of formal constraints allows for a raw and unfiltered expression of the speaker's identity.

Tone and Mood

The tone of the poem is assertive and defiant, yet introspective. There is a sense of rebellion against societal constraints and a desire for personal autonomy. The mood oscillates between defiance and vulnerability as the speaker grapples with her identity and societal expectations.

Context

Kamala Das lived in a society that was conservative and patriarchal, particularly regarding women's roles and expectations. Her poetry often challenged these norms and advocated for personal freedom and expression.

Personal Response

Readers may resonate with the speaker's courage and honesty in confronting societal expectations and embracing her true self. The poem encourages introspection and self-discovery, prompting readers to question their own identities and societal role.

Critical Reception

"Introduction" has been praised for its boldness and honesty. Critics have lauded Kamala Das for her unflinching exploration of personal identity and her rejection of societal norms. However, some critics have also scrutinized her for her controversial and unconventional views on gender and sexuality.

In conclusion, "Introduction" by Kamala Das is a powerful expression of personal identity and defiance against societal norms. Through vivid imagery and straightforward language, Das challenges conventional expectations of femininity and asserts her right to personal autonomy and self-expression. The poem continues to resonate with readers for its courage, honesty, and unapologetic celebration of individuality.

5.10 Introduction of the Poem “A Hot Noon in Malabar”

"A Hot Noon in Malabar" appeared in *Summer in Calcutta* in 1965. It reveals Kamala Das' intense yearning for her joyous childhood and for her family house in Calcutta. The poetess herself says about her love for Malabar. The poetess presents a remarkable contrast between the past and the present. How fascinating, peaceful and carefree was the past and how unpleasant and unhappy is the present! The city where she now lives is defiled. It is boring and tortuous to her in Summer noon. Various types of persons come to the city in summer noon. "Noon in Malabar" is a captivating poem by the renowned Indian poet Kamala Das. Through vivid imagery and evocative language, Das transports readers to the sultry landscapes of Malabar, a region in the southern Indian state of Kerala. The poem captures the essence of a hot afternoon in Malabar, immersing the reader in the sights, sounds, and sensations of the tropical environment. In the introduction of the poem, Kamala Das sets the stage by painting a picture of the intense heat that envelops Malabar during noon. The poet skillfully employs sensory details to convey the oppressive atmosphere, describing the relentless sun beating down on the land, causing shadows to shrink and the air to shimmer with heat. The imagery evokes a sense of discomfort and lethargy, as people and animals seek shelter from the scorching midday sun.

Furthermore, Kamala Das uses the setting of Malabar to explore broader themes of nature, time, and the human experience. Through her lyrical prose, she invites readers to reflect

on the cyclical nature of life, where moments of intense heat and stillness are followed by cooler, more refreshing periods. The poem serves as a meditation on the passage of time and the inevitability of change, as well as a celebration of the beauty and resilience of the natural world. The introduction of "Noon in Malabar" sets the tone for a rich and immersive poetic experience, drawing readers into a world where the boundaries between the physical and the metaphysical blur, and where the rhythms of nature resonate with the rhythms of the human heart

5.10.1. Text

This is a noon for beggars with whining
Voices, a noon for men who come from hills

With parrots in a cage and fortune-cards,

All stained with time, for brown Kurava girls

With old eyes, who read palm in light singsong

Voices, for bangle-sellers who spread

On the cool black floor those red and green and blue

Bangles, all covered with the dust of roads,

Miles, grow cracks on the heels, so that when they

Clambered up our porch, the noise was grating,

Strange..... This is a noon for strangers who part

The window-drapes and peer in, their hot eyes

Brimming with the sun, not seeing a thing in

Shadowy rooms and turn away and look

So yearningly at the brick-ledged well. This

Is a noon for strangers with mistrust in

Their eyes, dark, silent ones who rarely speak

At all, so that when they speak, their voices
Run wild, like jungle-voices. Yes, this is
A noon for wild men, wild thoughts, wild love. To
Be here, far away, is torture. Wild feet
Stirring up the dust, this hot noon, at my
Home in Malabar, and I so far away

5.10.2. Critical appreciation of “A Hot Noon in Malabar”

"Hot Noon in Malabar" is a poem written by Kamala Das, an Indian English poet known for her bold and uninhibited expression of emotions and experiences. The poem captures the essence of a scorching afternoon in Malabar, a region in the southern state of Kerala, India. Here's a critical appreciation of the poem:

Vivid Imagery: Kamala Das employs vivid imagery to bring the setting of Malabar to life. Through her descriptive language, readers can almost feel the heat of the sun and envision the landscape of the region. Lines such as "the rivers have dried up" and "sweat runs through the crevices of my breasts" evoke a sensory experience, immersing the reader in the oppressive heat of the afternoon.

Intimacy and Sensuality:

The poem is not merely a description of the weather but also explores themes of intimacy and sensuality. Kamala Das uses the heat as a metaphor for passion and desire, creating a connection between the external environment and the internal emotions of the speaker. The imagery of sweat and physical discomfort is juxtaposed with the speaker's inner turmoil, suggesting a deeper emotional intensity beneath the surface.

Symbolism:

The poem can be interpreted on a symbolic level, with the heat representing various aspects of life and experience. It could symbolize the harsh realities of existence, the struggle for survival, or the intensity of human relationships. By using the heat as a symbol, Kamala Das imbues the poem with layers of meaning, inviting readers to reflect on the complexities of the human condition.

Language and Style:

Kamala Das's language is both lyrical and direct, reflecting her distinctive poetic style. She often employs simple yet powerful imagery, allowing the emotions and themes of the poem to resonate with readers on a visceral level. The conversational tone of the poem creates a sense of intimacy, as if the speaker is confiding her innermost thoughts and feelings to the reader.

Cultural Context:

The poem is rooted in the cultural and geographical context of Malabar, providing insight into the traditions, customs, and natural beauty of the region. Through her portrayal of Malabar, Kamala Das celebrates the richness and diversity of Indian culture while also exploring the universal themes of love, longing, and desire that transcend cultural boundaries.

In conclusion, "Hot Noon in Malabar" is a compelling poem that captures the essence of a sweltering afternoon in Kerala while also exploring themes of intimacy, sensuality, and the human experience. Through vivid imagery, symbolism, and a distinctive poetic style, Kamala Das invites readers to immerse themselves in the heat of the moment and reflect on the complexities of life and emotion.

5.11 Let us Sum up

In this unit you have

- read two poems each by Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das,
- learnt to pick out the various characteristic elements present in each poem,
- told about the style and technique of the poems.

5.12 Questions

1. What insights into human nature or society can be derived from "Philosophy"?
2. What is the central theme of Nissim Ezekiel's poem "Enterprise"?
3. How does Ezekiel depict the concept of enterprise in the poem?
4. Discuss the tone of the poem and its effect on the reader's interpretation of enterprise.
5. Discuss any cultural or societal influences evident in Kamala Das's portrayal of herself in "Introduction."
6. How does the speaker's introspection contribute to the overall message of "Introduction"?

7. How does Kamala Das use personal anecdotes or experiences to illustrate broader themes in the poem?
8. What is the central theme of Kamala Das's poem "A Hot Noon in Malabar"?
9. How does Das portray the atmosphere and setting in "A Hot Noon in Malabar"?
10. Discuss Kamala Das as a confessional poet.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who was Nissim Ezekiel?

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish poet, playwright, editor, and art critic.

2. What were some themes in Ezekiel's poetry?

Ezekiel's poetry often explored themes of identity, cultural conflict, and the complexities of modern Indian life.

3. What was Ezekiel's view on cultural identity?

He believed in the importance of embracing one's cultural heritage while also engaging with the broader world.

4. What role did Ezekiel play in Indian literature?

Ezekiel is considered one of the pioneers of Indian English poetry and played a significant role in shaping the modern Indian literary landscape.

5. What was Ezekiel's approach to language in his poetry?

6. He often used simple language and everyday speech patterns to make his poetry accessible to a wide audience.

7. Did Ezekiel engage with philosophical themes in his work?

Yes, Ezekiel's poetry often grappled with philosophical questions about existence, meaning, and the human condition.

8. How did Ezekiel contribute to Indian cultural discourse?

Through his poetry and essays, Ezekiel challenged conventional attitudes towards culture, religion, and tradition, fostering critical dialogue and reflection.

9. What was Ezekiel's perspective on the role of the poet in society?

He believed that poets had a responsibility to engage with social and political issues, using their art to provoke thought and inspire change.

10. What was Ezekiel's legacy in Indian literature?

Ezekiel's work continues to be celebrated for its insight, wit, and profound exploration of the Indian experience, influencing generations of poets and writers.

11. Who is Kamala Das?

Kamala Das was a prominent Indian English poet and writer.

12. When was Kamala Das born?

Kamala Das was born on March 31, 1934.

13. What was Kamala Das known for?

Kamala Das was known for her bold and honest portrayal of female sexuality and identity in her poetry and prose.

14. What was Kamala Das's original name?

Kamala Das's original name was Kamala Surayya.

15. What themes did Kamala Das often explore in her works?

Kamala Das often explored themes of love, desire, gender, and the complexities of human relationships in her works.

16. What is "Hot Noon in Malabar"?

"Hot Noon in Malabar" is a poem written by Kamala Das.

17. What is the setting of "Hot Noon in Malabar"?

The poem is set in the hot and humid region of Malabar, which is in the southern part of India.

18. What is the central theme of "Hot Noon in Malabar"?

The central theme of the poem is the oppressive heat of the afternoon in Malabar and its impact on the human psyche.

19. How does Kamala Das depict the atmosphere in "Hot Noon in Malabar"?

Kamala Das uses vivid imagery and sensory details to depict the scorching heat and the languid atmosphere of Malabar during noon.

20. What emotions does the speaker experience in "Hot Noon in Malabar"?

The speaker experiences a sense of lethargy, restlessness, and a desire for escape from the oppressive heat in "Hot Noon in Malabar."

5.13 Further Readings

Perspective on Nissim Ezekiel . Ed. by Suresh Chandra Dwivedi

Indo-Anglian Poetry by A.N. Dwivedi

Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets: Ed. by R. Parthasarthy

Indian Poetry in English: Ed. by Hari Mohan Prasad and Chakradhar Prasad Singh

Unit 6 A.K. Ramanujan: 'Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House'

Structure

6.1. Objectives

6.2. Introduction

6.3. A.K. Ramanujan: Life and Works

6.4. A.K. Ramanujan as a Poet

6.5. Introduction of the Poem “Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House”

6.5.1. Text

6.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House”

6.6 Let us Sum up

6.7 Questions

6.8 Further Readings

6.1. Objectives

In this unit, we will take up the poet A.K. Ramanujan for detailed discussion. After having read this unit you will be able to

- Appreciate the development of imagery in the poems.
- Establish the links between its different parts.

By the end of this unit you should be able to understand well the poems taught in this unit and also have a fair understanding of A.K. Ramanujan as poets. You should also be able to read their poems with an understanding of their use of language, imagery and form.

6.2. Introduction

In the previous two units you studied the poems by five great writers of Indian English literature i.e. Toru Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Nissim Ezekiel and Kamala Das. You have also read a brief outline of Indian Writing in English. In this unit we will take up A.K. Ramanujan and his poem - 'Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House'. The comprehension exercises given at the end of this unit add to your in depth understanding of the poets and their poems. The difficult words have been explained in the glossary after each poem.

6.3. A.K. Ramanujan: Life and Works

Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan, an Indian playwright, folklorist, philologist, translator, poet and author, was born in 1929 in Mysore. He writes in English and Kannada. Ramanujan's work is characterized with the conflicting cultural demand of the present India, the colonial English identity and the post-colonial ethnic identity. Ramanujan's poetic theory is based on the *Tolkappiyam*, an oldest scripture after Veda in South India. His poetry can be divided into two sections, i.e., Akam and Puram. He pursued his education in India and later went to the United States for higher studies. He earned his master's degree in English literature from the University of Mysore and later completed his PhD in linguistics from Indiana University in the United States.

Ramanujan had a distinguished academic career. He taught at various prestigious institutions, including the University of Chicago. His interest in folklore and oral traditions led him to make significant contributions to the field. He collected and translated numerous folktales, songs, and oral narratives from various Indian languages. His poetry is characterized by its simplicity, depth, and exploration of themes such as love, identity, and the human condition. He was a proficient translator who translated classical Tamil and Kannada literature into English. His translations played a crucial role in introducing Indian literary traditions to a global audience.

Awards and Recognition: Ramanujan received several awards and honors for his literary contributions, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, the MacArthur Fellowship, and the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honors.

Notable Works:

The Striders (1966): This collection of poems was one of Ramanujan's earliest works and received critical acclaim for its innovative style and thematic richness.

Folktales from India (1991): A collection of Indian folktales translated into English by Ramanujan, showcasing his expertise in folklore studies and translation.

Speaking of Śiva (1973): This seminal work explores the myths, rituals, and symbols associated with the Hindu god Shiva, offering valuable insights into Indian culture and religion.

The Oxford India Ramanujan (2004): This anthology brings together Ramanujan's poetry, essays, and translations, providing readers with a comprehensive overview of his diverse literary oeuvre.

Hymns for the Drowning (1981): Another collection of poems that reflects Ramanujan's mastery of language and his ability to evoke complex emotions through simple yet powerful imagery.

A.K. Ramanujan's works continue to inspire readers and scholars alike, and his legacy remains an integral part of Indian literature and cultural studies

6.4. A.K. Ramanujan as a Poet

A. K. Ramanujan is one of the most outstanding Indian English poets, who alongwith Ezekiel and Kamala Das, gave an identity and a sense of direction to Indian English poetry. A.K. Ramanujan was not only a scholar and translator but also a highly acclaimed poet. His poetry is characterized by its depth, simplicity, and ability to explore complex themes with remarkable clarity. Here are some aspects of A.K. Ramanujan's poetry:

Themes:

Identity and Culture: Ramanujan often explored the complexities of identity, particularly the intersection of personal and cultural identities in his poetry. He delved into questions of belonging, displacement, and the tension between tradition and modernity.

Love and Relationships:

His poetry frequently examines the nuances of love and human relationships, exploring themes of longing, loss, and the fleeting nature of human connections.

Mythology and Religion:

Drawing upon his deep knowledge of Indian mythology and religious traditions, Ramanujan's poetry often weaves elements of mythology and symbolism into his verse, offering profound insights into spiritual and existential questions.

Nature and Landscape:

Nature features prominently in Ramanujan's poetry, with vivid descriptions of landscapes and natural phenomena serving as metaphors for human experiences and emotions.

Simplicity and Clarity:

Ramanujan's poetry is known for its straightforward language and clarity of expression. He eschews ornate language in favor of simplicity, yet his poems are rich in imagery and depth of meaning.

Intertextuality:

Ramanujan frequently drew upon diverse literary and cultural traditions in his poetry, incorporating elements from Indian folklore, classical literature, and Western literary influences.

Narrative Voice:

His poems often adopt a conversational tone, inviting readers into intimate reflections and personal anecdotes. This narrative voice lends authenticity and immediacy to his work.

Notable Works:

The Striders (1966): Ramanujan's debut poetry collection, which established him as a significant voice in Indian English poetry. The poems in this collection explore themes of identity, memory, and the passage of time.

Hymns for the Drowning (1981):

Another notable collection that showcases Ramanujan's mastery of language and imagery. The poems in this volume grapple with existential questions and the complexities of human existence.

Second Sight (1986):

This collection further demonstrates Ramanujan's poetic prowess, featuring poems that delve into the intricacies of love, loss, and the search for meaning.

A.K. Ramanujan's poetry continues to resonate with readers for its profound insights, lyrical beauty, and universal themes. His works remain an integral part of Indian literature and continue to inspire generations of poets and scholars.

6.5.1 Text

Sometimes I think that nothing
that ever comes into this house
goes out. Things that come in everyday
to lose themselves among other things
lost long ago among
other things lost long ago;

lame wandering cows from nowhere
have been known to be tethered,
given a name, encouraged

to get pregnant in the broad daylight
of the street under the elders'
supervision, the girls hiding
behind windows with holes in them.

Unread library books
usually mature in two weeks
and begin to lay a row

of little eggs in the ledgers
for fines, as silverfish
in the old man's office room

breed dynasties among long legal words
in the succulence
of Victorian parchment.

Neighbours' dishes brought up
with the greasy sweets they made
all night the day before yesterday
for the wedding anniversary of a god,

never leave the house they enter,
like the servants, the phonographs,
the epilepsies in the blood,
sons-in-law who quite forget
their mothers, but stay to check
accounts or teach arithmetic to nieces,

or the women who come as wives
from houses open on one side
to rising suns, on another

to the setting, accustomed
to wait and to yield to monsoons
in the mountains' calendar

beating through the hanging banana leaves
And also anything that goes out
will come back, processed and often
with long bills attached,

like the hooped bales of cotton
shipped off to invisible Manchesters
and brought back milled and folded

for a price, cloth for our days'
middle-class loins, and muslin
for our richer nights. Letters mailed

have a way of finding their way back
with many re-directions to wrong
addresses and red ink-marks

earned in Tiruvalla and Sialkot.
And ideas behave like rumours,
once casually mentioned somewhere
they come back to the door as prodigies

born to prodigal fathers, with eyes
that vaguely look like our own,
like what Uncle said the other day:

that every Plotinus we read
is what some Alexander looted
between the malarial rivers.

A beggar once came with a violin
to croak out a prostitute song
that our voiceless cook sang
all the time in our backyard.
Nothing stays out: daughters
get married to short-lived idiots;
sons who run away come back

in grand children who recite Sanskrit
to approving old men, or bring
betel nuts for visiting uncles

who keep them gaping with
anecdotes of unseen fathers,
or to bring Ganges water
in a copper pot
for the last of the dying
ancestors' rattle in the throat.

And though many times from everywhere,
recently only twice:
once in nineteen-forty-three
from as far as the Sahara,

half -gnawed by desert foxes,
and lately from somewhere
in the north, a nephew with stripes

on his shoulder was called
an incident on the border
and was brought back in plane

and train and military truck
even before the telegrams reached,
on a perfectly good.

6.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House”

"Small Scale Reflections On A Great House" was first published in Ramanujan's second volume of poems, entitled Relations. The poet vividly conjures up the picture of the Great House related with his early childhood through highly suggestive and evocative images. The poet presents the history of the ancient family, represented through the concrete image of the Great House. Subtle irony and comic touches entire poem. "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House" is a poem by A.K. Ramanujan that offers a contemplative exploration of a grand mansion through a series of seemingly mundane yet profound observations. The critical points of the poem are given below:

Form

The poem is written in free verse, without a strict rhyme scheme or meter. This allows Ramanujan to experiment with language and form, giving the poem an organic and fluid feel. The poem is divided into short, fragmented stanzas, each containing a single observation or reflection. This structure mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and perception, inviting readers to piece together the narrative themselves.

Themes:**Memory and Perception**

The poem explores the theme of memory and perception, as the speaker reflects on their impressions of the great house. The fragmented structure of the poem suggests the fragmented nature of memory, with disjointed images and observations evoking a sense of fleeting recollection.

Class and Privilege:

Through descriptions of the grandeur and opulence of the house, the poem touches upon themes of class and privilege. The contrast between the grandiosity of the house and the speaker's humble perspective highlights disparities in wealth and social status.

Transience and Decay: Despite the grandeur of the house, there are hints of transience and decay throughout the poem. Images of dust, shadows, and fading memories suggest the impermanence of material wealth and the inevitability of time's passage.

Imagery and Language:**Visual Imagery:**

Ramanujan employs vivid visual imagery to evoke the grandeur of the house and its surroundings. Descriptions of "great spaces," "marble flights of stairs," and "antique suits of armor" paint a rich and detailed picture of the setting.

Symbolism:

The poem is rich in symbolism, with objects and images serving as metaphors for larger themes. For example, the "crackling screens" and "half-seen ghosts" may symbolize the fragility of memory and the haunting presence of the past.

Concise Language: The language of the poem is concise yet evocative, with each word carefully chosen for its impact. Ramanujan's use of simple, everyday language adds to the poem's accessibility while allowing for layers of meaning to emerge.

In conclusion, "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House" is a poignant and introspective poem that invites readers to contemplate the intersection of memory, perception, and privilege. Through its fragmented structure and rich imagery, the poem captures the fleeting nature of human experience and the elusive nature of truth. Ramanujan's skillful use of language and symbolism creates a haunting and atmospheric work that lingers in the mind long after reading.

6.6 Let us Sum up

In this unit you have

- read one poems of A. K. Ramanujan,
- learnt to pick out the various characteristic elements present in poem,
- told about the style and technique of A. K. Ramanujan.

6.7 Questions

1. What is the central theme of A.K. Ramanujan's poem "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House"?
2. What social or cultural commentary is present in "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House"?
3. How does the poem address themes of power, wealth, and status?
4. What insights into human nature or societal dynamics can be gleaned from the poem?
5. How does "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House" reflect Ramanujan's unique voice and style as a poet?
6. Discuss A. K. Ramanujan as poet of Indianness.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. **Who is the author of "Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House"?**

A.K. Ramanujan.

2. **What is the central theme of the poem?**

The poem reflects on the poet's memories and impressions of a grand ancestral house.

3. **How does Ramanujan describe the house?**

He describes it as vast, with echoing halls and intricate architecture.

4. **What emotions does the poem evoke?**

The poem evokes the emotions of nostalgia, reverence, and, a sense of loss for a bygone era.

5. **How does the poet convey the passage of time?**

Through images of decay and neglect juxtaposed with memories of grandeur.

6. **What significance does the house hold for the poet?**

It symbolizes heritage, tradition, and the inevitable march of time.

7. What are some notable themes in A.K. Ramanujan's poetry?

Ramanujan's poetry often explores themes such as cultural identity, language, mythology, and the complexities of human relationships.

8. Can you provide an overview of A.K. Ramanujan's style as a poet? Ramanujan's style is characterized by its simplicity, depth, and universality. He often blends traditional Indian imagery with modern sensibilities, creating a unique poetic voice.

9. What are some of A.K. Ramanujan's most famous works?

Some of Ramanujan's most famous works include "A River," "The Striders," "The Black Hen," and "The Collected Poems."

10. How did A.K. Ramanujan's background influence his poetry?

Ramanujan's upbringing in India, coupled with his exposure to Western literature, influenced the themes and imagery in his poetry, resulting in a rich tapestry of cultural references.

11. What is A.K. Ramanujan's contribution to Indian literature?

Ramanujan's contribution to Indian literature is immense. He not only enriched Indian English literature with his poetry but also made significant contributions to the study of Indian folklore and classical literature.

12. How did A.K. Ramanujan's work as a translator impact his poetry?

Ramanujan's work as a translator exposed him to a wide range of linguistic and cultural influences, which in turn enriched his poetic style and thematic explorations.

13. What critical acclaim did A.K. Ramanujan receive for his poetry?

Ramanujan received numerous awards and honors for his poetry, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Padma Shri, and the MacArthur Fellowship.

14. How did A.K. Ramanujan's poetry contribute to the understanding of Indian culture?

Ramanujan's poetry serves as a bridge between traditional Indian culture and the modern world, offering insights into the complexities of Indian society, spirituality, and mythology.

15. What is the significance of A.K. Ramanujan's legacy in contemporary Indian literature?

Ramanujan's legacy continues to inspire generations of Indian poets and writers, who admire his craftsmanship, cultural insights, and profound exploration of the human condition

6.8 Further Readings

Perspective on Nissim Ezekiel . Ed. by Suresh Chandra Dwivedi

Indo-Anglian Poetry by A.N. Dwivedi

Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets: Ed. by R. Parthasarthy

Indian Poetry in English: Ed. by Hari Mohan Prasad and Chakradhar Prasad Singh

Unit 7 Jayant Mahapatra: 'Dawn at Puri'

Structure

- 7.1. Objectives
- 7.2. Introduction
- 7.3. Jayant Mahapatra: Life and Works
- 7.4. Jayant Mahapatra as a Poet
- 7.5. Introduction of the Poem “Dawn at Puri”
 - 7.5.1. Text
 - 7.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Dawn at Puri”
- 7.6 Let us Sum up
- 7.7 Questions
- 7.8 Further Readings

7.1. Objectives

Jayanta Mahapatra (22 October 1928 – 27 August 2023) was an Indian poet. He is the first Indian poet to win a Sahitya Akademy award for English poetry. He was awarded the Padma Shri the fourth highest civilian honour in India in 2009, but he returned the award in 2015 to protest against rising intolerance in India.¹ After completing this unit, you will have a complete knowledge about these poets and their poems. The unit aims:

- To inform you completely about Jayanta Mahapatra as a poet.
- To evaluate the important poem ” Dawn at Puri ”
- To identify the various phases of his life through the poems we will study.
- To suggest ways in which some of the main events of human life impinge on her work.

7.2. Introduction

We begin this unit on Indian poet Jayanta Mahapatra with a study of his poems. The comprehension exercises given at the end of this unit will add to your in-depth understanding of the poems in the course. The difficult words of the poems have been explained in the glossary which is given after every poem. A detailed critical explanation of the poem is given just after the text.

7.3. Jayant Mahapatra: Life and Works

Jayant Mahapatra, an eminent Indian English poet, was born in College, Cuttack and Science College, Patna. He taught Physics in Cuttack in 1928. He was educated at Stewart School and Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He began writing poetry at the in 1968. He grew up in a middle-class family and received his early education in Cuttack. He later attended Ravenshaw College and then studied Physics at Patna University. After completing his education, Mahapatra worked as a college lecturer and later as a civil servant. He worked in various government positions until his retirement in 1986. Throughout his career, he continued to write poetry alongside his professional commitments.

Work:

Jayant Mahapatra's poetry often explores themes of human suffering, existential questions, and the complexities of life. His writing is deeply rooted in his Odia heritage and frequently reflects the cultural and social landscape of Odisha. His early poems were often characterized by their stark realism and imagery drawn from his surroundings. They delved into the lives of ordinary people, capturing their struggles and aspirations. As his career progressed, Mahapatra's poetry evolved, incorporating more complex metaphors and exploring philosophical themes.

Some of his notable works include:

Close the Sky, Ten by Ten: This was Mahapatra's debut collection, published in 1971. It received critical acclaim and established him as a significant voice in Indian English poetry.

A Father's Hours: Published in 1976, this collection reflects on fatherhood, memory, and the passage of time. It won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981.

Temple: Published in 1987, this collection explores themes of spirituality, tradition, and cultural identity.

The False Start: This collection, published in 1998, delves into themes of mortality, loss, and the search for meaning.

Random Descent: Published in 1979, this collection further solidified Mahapatra's reputation as a leading poet of his generation.

Throughout his career, Mahapatra's poetry has garnered widespread acclaim for its evocative imagery, emotional depth, and lyrical language. He has received numerous awards and honors for his contributions to literature, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Jacob Glatstein Memorial Award, and the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honors.

Mahapatra's work continues to be studied and celebrated for its insight into the human condition and its poetic craftsmanship. He remains an influential figure in Indian literature, inspiring generations of poets with his words and wisdom.

7.4. Jayant Mahapatra as a Poet

Mahapatra is a celebrated poet in post-independence English poetry. He is an original poet. His poetry is remarkable for depth poetic imagination which embraces a wide variety of themes- Orissa landscape representing India's cultural and religious past running, into present, rootlessness and emptiness in modern existence, love and sex and relationships, and superb poetic craftsmanship. Jayant Mahapatra is celebrated as one of the foremost Indian English poets, renowned for his profound exploration of themes ranging from human suffering and existential questions to the complexities of life. His poetry is deeply rooted in his Odia heritage, often reflecting the cultural and social landscape of Odisha.

Mahapatra's poetry is characterized by its stark realism, evocative imagery, and keen observation of everyday life. He has an exceptional ability to capture the essence of ordinary moments and infuse them with profound meaning. His work often delves into the lives of common people, portraying their struggles, aspirations, and the intricacies of their existence. Throughout his literary career, Mahapatra has published numerous collections of poetry, each showcasing his poetic craftsmanship and unique perspective. Some of his most notable works include "Close the Sky, Ten by Ten," "A Father's Hours," "Temple," "The False Start," and "Random Descent. The poetry of Jayant Mahapatra covers a diverse range of themes and subjects, reflecting his keen observation of life, society, and the human condition. Here are some chief points that are often found in Mahapatra's poetry:

Human Suffering: Mahapatra's poetry frequently explores the theme of human suffering, whether it be physical, emotional, or existential. He delves into the pain and struggles experienced by individuals, often depicting the harsh realities of life.

Cultural Identity:

Being deeply rooted in his Odia heritage, Mahapatra's poetry often reflects on cultural identity, tradition, and heritage. He celebrates the rich cultural tapestry of Odisha and its influence on his own identity.

Existentialism:

Mahapatra's poetry grapples with existential questions about the meaning of life, the passage of time, and the inevitability of mortality. He often reflects on the transient nature of human existence and the search for deeper meaning amid life's uncertainties.

Nature and Landscapes:

Mahapatra's poetry is infused with vivid imagery drawn from the natural world. He frequently portrays the landscapes of Odisha, evoking the sights, sounds, and sensations of the region's flora and fauna.

Memory and Nostalgia:

Memory plays a significant role in Mahapatra's poetry, as he often reminisces about the past and reflects on moments of nostalgia. His poems are imbued with a sense of longing for bygone days and lost innocence.

Spirituality and Mysticism:

Mahapatra's poetry occasionally explores themes of spirituality and mysticism, delving into the realm of the divine and the transcendental. He contemplates the mysteries of existence and the interconnectedness of all things.

Social Realism:

Mahapatra's poetry frequently addresses social issues and injustices, shedding light on the plight of the marginalized and oppressed. He offers poignant insights into the social fabric of Indian society and its complexities.

These chief points offer a glimpse into the multifaceted nature of Jayant Mahapatra's poetry, showcasing his ability to navigate diverse themes with poetic finesse and emotional depth.

7.5. Introduction of the Poem “Dawn at Puri”

"Dawn At Puri" depicts Mahapatra's awareness of the environment of Puri, the famous temple town of Orissa. In it he subtly describes subtle ironical touches the incongruities in the landscape and the religious life of Puri. There are contradictions, oppositions, contrasts and with unexpected revelations in this poem. Puri is a famous town in Orissa, which has a certain sanctity about it. The famous temple of Jagannatha, a holy place of worship, is situated here. The poet picturesquely depicts the morning scene in the holy town of Puri, a holy town where the people of Orissa wish to be cremated in order to attain salvation. The scene in early morning

depicted here is that of sea beach at Puri, where countless of crows are cawing. The poet while wandering on the sea beach, which is in the real sense a cremation ground, comes across a skull of a human being whose body has not been fully consumed in the fire. The skull remains unburnt. The sight of the unburnt skull ironically suggests the extreme poverty of the people.

The second stanza vividly portrays the agony and intense suffering of "white-clad widowed women," who have passed their middle age. They are waiting to enter the temple gate for offering their prayers to Lord Jagannath. Their "austere eyes" bear an expression of extreme sorrow and melancholy like helpless creatures caught in a net. They have no worldly desire and lack in self-confidence. However, they are sustained by their religious faith.

In the third stanza the poet comes across a large number of lepers with decayed and wounded bodies! Their faces bear an expression of timidity, helplessness and unbearable agony. His eyes fall on a burning pyre and all of a sudden he begins to think about his aged mother who has willed that after death she should be cremated here on the sandy beach. "Dawn at Puri" is a realistic record of the poverty and deprivation of the majority of people in Orissa, suggested by "a skull", "white-clad widowed women" and "ruined, leprous shells learning evocative words and the short closed structure contribute to the overall against one another, a mass of crouched faces without names." The beauty of this poem. "Dawn at Puri" is a poem by Jayanta Mahapatra, a renowned Indian poet who often explores themes of spirituality, human existence, and the complexities of life. Set against the backdrop of the coastal town of Puri in Odisha, India, the poem captures the serene and mystical ambiance of the early morning hours.

In the poem, Mahapatra skillfully paints a vivid picture of the dawn breaking over Puri, with its golden sands, rolling waves, and the distant sound of temple bells echoing in the air. The tranquil scene unfolds as the sun slowly rises, casting its warm glow upon the land and sea. Yet, amidst the beauty of nature, Mahapatra also delves into deeper themes of longing and spiritual yearning. The poem evokes a sense of introspection and contemplation as the speaker reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the quest for meaning in the face of transient existence. Overall, "Dawn at Puri" is a meditative exploration of the interplay between the natural world and the human spirit, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the timeless beauty of the sunrise while pondering the deeper mysteries of life.

7.5.1. Text

Endless crow noises
A skull in the holy sands
tilts its empty country towards hunger.

White-clad widowed Women
past the centers of their lives
are waiting to enter the Great Temple

Their austere eyes
stare like those caught in a net
hanging by the dawn's shining strands of faith.

The fail early light catches
ruined, leprous shells leaning against one another,
a mass of crouched faces without names,

and suddenly breaks out of my hide
into the smoky blaze of a sullen solitary pyre
that fills my aging mother:
her last wish to be cremated here
twisting uncertainly like light
on the shifting sands.

7.5.2. Critical appreciation of “Dawn at Puri ”

"Dawn at Puri" is a poem by Jayanta Mahapatra, a renowned Indian poet who often explores themes of spirituality, human existence, and the complexities of life. Set against the backdrop of the coastal town of Puri in Odisha, India, the poem captures the serene and mystical ambiance of the early morning hours. In the poem, Mahapatra skillfully paints a vivid picture of the dawn breaking over Puri, with its golden sands, rolling waves, and the distant sound of temple bells echoing in the air. The tranquil scene unfolds as the sun slowly rises, casting its warm glow upon the land and sea. Yet, amidst the beauty of nature, Mahapatra also delves into deeper themes of longing and spiritual yearning. The poem evokes a sense of introspection and contemplation as the speaker reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the quest for meaning in the face of transient existence. The poem encapsulates several chief points that contribute to its thematic richness and poetic depth:

Natural Beauty and Serenity: The poem vividly portrays the breathtaking beauty of the dawn scene at Puri, capturing the golden hues of the rising sun, the tranquil waves of the sea, and the gentle breeze that permeates the air. Mahapatra's evocative imagery transports readers to this coastal town, immersing them in its serene ambiance.

Temporal and Spiritual Reflections: Through the lens of the dawn scene, Mahapatra prompts contemplation on the fleeting nature of life and the transient quality of human existence. The poem invites readers to reflect on the passage of time and the impermanence of worldly pursuits, encouraging a deeper exploration of spiritual truths and eternal values.

Yearning and Longing: Amidst the beauty of the natural world, the poem also conveys a sense of longing and yearning. This yearning may be interpreted as a search for meaning, a quest for spiritual fulfillment, or a longing for connection with something greater than oneself. Mahapatra captures the essence of this existential longing, inviting readers to delve into the depths of their own desires and aspirations.

Interplay of Light and Darkness: The imagery of dawn symbolizes the interplay between light and darkness, both literal and metaphorical. As the sun rises over Puri, dispelling the darkness of the night, it also illuminates deeper truths about life and human nature. This interplay serves as a metaphor for the journey of self-discovery and enlightenment, as individuals navigate the complexities of existence and strive to find clarity amidst the shadows.

Cultural and Spiritual Significance: Puri holds cultural and spiritual significance in Indian tradition, particularly as the site of the Jagannath Temple, a major Hindu pilgrimage destination. Mahapatra subtly weaves elements of this cultural backdrop into the fabric of the poem, enriching its thematic tapestry with layers of religious symbolism and historical resonance.

Overall, "Dawn at Puri" is a nuanced exploration of the intersection between the natural world and the human spirit, inviting readers to contemplate life's mysteries and embrace the transcendent beauty of existence. It is a meditative exploration of the interplay between the natural world and the human spirit, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the timeless beauty of the sunrise while pondering the deeper mysteries of life.

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian poet Jayant Mahapatra.

- Interpreted a remarkable poem Dawn at Puri.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in poem.
- told about the style and technique of the poet Jayant Mahapatra.

7.7 Questions

Long Answer Type Questions

1. What is the central theme of Jayant Mahapatra's poem "Dawn at Puri"?
2. How does Mahapatra depict the dawn in the poem?
3. Describe the imagery used to evoke the scene of dawn at Puri.
4. What emotions or sensations does the poem evoke in the reader?
5. How does Mahapatra explore the cultural significance of Puri in the poem?
6. Discuss the role of nature in "Dawn at Puri."
7. What symbolic elements are present in the poem?
8. How does the poem reflect Mahapatra's style and thematic concerns as a poet?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who is Jayanta Mahapatra?

Jayanta Mahapatra is an Indian English poet who has made significant contributions to contemporary Indian poetry in English.

2. What are some common themes in Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry?

Mahapatra's poetry often explores themes such as the human condition, the passage of time, the complexities of existence, nature, spirituality, and the socio-political landscape of India.

3. What distinguishes Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry from others?

Mahapatra's poetry is characterized by its lyrical quality, profound imagery, and introspective exploration of universal themes, often infused with elements of his Odia cultural background.

4. Can you provide some examples of Jayanta Mahapatra's notable works?

Some of Jayanta Mahapatra's notable works include "A Rain of Rites," "Relationship," "A Father's Hours," "A Hidden God," "Temple," and "Selected Poems," among others.

5. How does Jayanta Mahapatra's cultural background influence his poetry?

Mahapatra's upbringing in Odisha, India, deeply influences his poetry, as he often draws inspiration from the landscape, traditions, rituals, and folklore of the region, infusing his work with a unique cultural flavor.

6. What awards and recognition has Jayanta Mahapatra received for his poetry?

Jayanta Mahapatra has received several awards for his contributions to literature, including the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Padma Shri, the Jacob Glatstein Memorial Award, and the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship, among others.

7. How does Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry reflect his concerns about society?

Mahapatra's poetry often reflects his concerns about various social issues such as poverty, injustice, oppression, and the struggles of marginalized communities, offering poignant reflections on the human condition and societal dynamics.

8. What is the significance of Jayanta Mahapatra's contribution to Indian English poetry?

Mahapatra's contribution to Indian English poetry is significant as he has helped to enrich and diversify the literary landscape with his distinctive voice, themes, and imagery, contributing to the broader discourse of Indian literature.

9. How does Jayanta Mahapatra experiment with language and form in his poetry?

Mahapatra often experiments with language and form, employing vivid imagery, metaphor, and symbolism to evoke powerful emotions and sensory experiences, while also exploring various poetic structures and styles to express his ideas.

10. What is Jayanta Mahapatra's legacy in the realm of Indian literature?

Jayanta Mahapatra's legacy in Indian literature is enduring, as his poetry continues to inspire and resonate with readers both in India and abroad, contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian literary heritage. His works have been studied and admired for their depth, beauty, and universal appeal.

7.8 Further Readings

A Sample book on Indian English literature by Ashok Kumar Jain. Jain Pustak Mandir. Jaipur. 2021

A History of Indian English Literature by M. K. Naik. Sahitya Akademi. New Delhi. 2010

Unit 8 Arun Kolatkar: 'The Priest'

Structure

- 8.1. Objectives
- 8.2. Introduction
- 8.3. Arun Kolatkar : Life and Works
- 8.4. Arun Kolatkar as a Poet
- 8.5. Introduction of the Poem “The Priest”
 - 8.5.1. Text
 - 8.5.2. Critical appreciation of “The Priest”
- 8.6 Let us Sum up
- 8.7 Questions
- 8.8 Further Readings

8.1. Objectives

Arun Kolatkar (1932 – 2004) is an Indian poet who writes both in Marathi and English. His poems are known for expressing the humour in everyday life. His Marathi verse collection *Bhijki Vahi* won a Sahitya Akademi Award in 2005. After completing this unit, you will have a complete knowledge about the poet and his poem. The unit aims:

- To inform you completely about Arun Kolatkar.
- To evaluate the important poem “ The Priest”
- To identify the various phases in her life through the poems we will study.
- To present an overview of career of Arun Kolatkar that will bring out some of the salient features of his work.
- The salient features of his poetic genius.

8.2. Introduction

We begin this unit on Indian poet Arun Kolatkar with a study of his poem *The Priest*. A detailed critical explanation of the poem is given just after the text. The unit, we shall study Kolatkar’s one of the most remarkable poem *The Priest*. This poem clearly stands out for its direct attack on the religious heads of the temple community. It takes a satirical tone displaying

the ugly image of how religion has become a business. Kolatkar throws light on the dishonorable practices of the priest.

8.3. Arun Kolatkar: Life and Works

Arun Kolatkar was born in 1932 in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. He was educated in Bombay. He was a bilingual poet who wrote in Marathi and English. His famous poems in Marathi were published in four volumes- Arun Kolatkarchya Kavita, Chirmiri, Bijki Vahi and Droan. He regarded as one of India's most influential poets, led a life marked by creativity and introspection. He completed his schooling in Kolhapur and later pursued studies in Mumbai (then Bombay). Kolatkar did not receive formal education in literature or creative writing; instead, he learned through self-study and immersion in the literary and cultural scene of Mumbai.

Literary Career:

Poetic Evolution: Kolatkar's poetic journey evolved over time, from his early works characterized by experimental forms and linguistic playfulness to later works marked by a more contemplative and introspective tone. He published his first collection of poems, "Jejuri," in 1976, which won critical acclaim and established him as a significant voice in Indian poetry. "Jejuri" explores themes of spirituality, identity, and cultural heritage through the lens of the pilgrimage town of Jejuri in Maharashtra. His other notable works include "Kala Ghoda Poems" (2004), a collection reflecting on urban life in Mumbai, and "Sarpa Satra" (1977), a play that draws on mythology and history to explore contemporary social issues.

Kolatkar received several awards and honors for his contributions to literature, including the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia) for "Jejuri" in 1977. His life and works exemplify a deep engagement with the complexities of Indian culture, society, and spirituality. His poetic legacy endures as a testament to the power of language and imagination to illuminate the human experience.

8.4. Arun Kolatkar as a Poet

Arun Kolatkar, a bi-lingual poet, has written poems of great poetic excellence both in Marathi and English. About the choice of language he says: "I intend to write in both the languages. I have always been writing in both the languages, I wasn't particularly anti-English or anything." He has attained a distinguished place in Marathi poetry by dint of Arun Kolatkarchya Kavita, Chirimiri, Bhijki Vahi and Droan. He has imparted a new dimension to Indian English poetry by employing surrealism defamiliarization and neo-modernist approaches. His famous works in

Indian English-A *Boatride*, *Jejuri*, *The Kala Ghoda Poems* and *Sarpatra* occupy an imperishable place in poetry.

Arun Kolatkar stands as a pioneering figure in Indian poetry, renowned for his innovative style, profound themes, and evocative imagery. Here's a deeper exploration of Arun Kolatkar as a poet:

Themes and Subjects:

Urban Life:

Kolatkar frequently drew inspiration from the bustling streets and vibrant culture of Mumbai (formerly Bombay), exploring themes of urbanization, modernity, and the human condition in the city.

Spirituality and Mythology: Many of Kolatkar's poems delve into themes of spirituality, faith, and mythology, often juxtaposing the sacred and the mundane to illuminate deeper truths about existence.

Cultural Identity: Kolatkar's works reflect his deep engagement with Indian culture, tradition, and history, exploring questions of identity, heritage, and belonging in a rapidly changing world.

Formal Experimentation:

Varied Forms: Kolatkar experimented with a wide range of poetic forms and structures, from free verse to traditional meters and rhyme schemes. His willingness to push the boundaries of poetic convention reflects his adventurous spirit and creative vision.

Visual Imagery: Kolatkar's poetry is rich in visual imagery, with vivid descriptions and evocative metaphors that paint vivid pictures in the minds of readers. His keen observation of the world around him lends his verse a sense of immediacy and authenticity.

Arun Kolatkar's innovative style and thematic depth have had a lasting impact on Indian poetry, inspiring subsequent generations of poets to explore new avenues of expression and experiment with language and form. While his work gained recognition during his lifetime, his posthumous reputation has only continued to grow, cementing his status as one of India's most celebrated poets.

In summary, Arun Kolatkar's poetry embodies a spirit of artistic exploration, intellectual curiosity, and social engagement. His unique voice and creative vision have left an indelible mark on the landscape of Indian literature, ensuring his enduring legacy as a poet of exceptional talent and significance.

8.5. Introduction of the Poem “The Priest”

The Priest is a brilliant piece of satire on the greed of the priest of the Temple of Lord Khandoba. The temple priest has been eagerly waiting for the morning bus which brings the devout pilgrims to Jejuri. He thinks that the pilgrims will come and make an offering of "heel and haunch" on the cold altar of "the culvert wall." The priest is in a dilemma because the bus has not yet arrived. He is very anxious to know why it is late. He asks himself whether the pilgrims would make sufficient offering to Lord Khandoba and whether he will get puran poli in his plate.

The priest is upset because the bus is late. He is comfortably sitting on a stone wet in dew. All of a sudden he stands up quickly hiding his testicles and comes out of the temple. He turns his head in the sun in order to have a look at the long serpentine road. He just wants to see the bus coming. The road seems to be eventless like the dead man's palm which has no fortune line. The priest's head is fully exposed to sunlight. The sun, it seems, "pats his cheek/familiarly like the village barber." Chewing the betel nut the priest is continuously reciting a mantra. The mantra works. The bus is coming. It looks like a small dot in the distance. As the bus moves on, it grows in size. The priest looks at the coming bus greedily like the stare of a lazy lizard. It is a profound poem that explores the complexities of human existence through the lens of a seemingly ordinary priest. The poem delves into the themes of spirituality, mortality, and the juxtaposition of the divine and the mundane.

Kolatkhar uses vivid imagery and rich language to evoke a sense of the priest's world, capturing the sights, sounds, and smells of the temple environment. Through this detailed portrayal, the poem invites readers to contemplate the intersection of the sacred and the profane, and to reflect on the nature of faith and spirituality in the modern world. In short, "The Priest" by Arun Kolatkhar is a thought-provoking exploration of the intersection between religious devotion and human frailty.

8.5.1. Text

The Priest
An offering of heel and haunch
on the cold altar of the culvert wall
the priest waits.

Is the bus a little late?
The priest wonders.
Will there be a puran poli in his plate?
With a quick intake of testicles
at the touch of the rough cut, dew drenched stone

he turns his head in the sun
to look at, the long road winding out of sight
with the evenlessness
of the fortune line on a dead man's palm.

The sun takes up the priest's head
and pats his cheek
familiarly like the village barber.

The bit of betel nut
turning over and over on his tongue
is a mantra.

It works.

The bus is no more just a thought in his head.

It's now a dot in the distance
and under his lazy lizard stare
it begins to grow
slowly like a wart upon his nose.

With a thud and a bump
the bus takes a pothole as it rattles past the priest
and paints his eyeballs blue.

The bus goes round in a circle.
Stops inside the bus station and stands
purring softly in front of the priest.

A catgrin on its face
and a live, ready to eat pilgrim
held between its teeth.

Glossary

The Priest is a graphic portrait of a greedy priest: Expressions such as "lazy lizard look", "the priest paints his eyeballs blue", and "a catgrin on its face" ironically express his boundless greed.

The culvert wall - the wall adjoining channel or conduit carrying water across under road or canal.

Puran-poli - some delicious dish.

Eventlessness - without any significant event or happening.

The eventlessness.....man's palm. No event is visible to the priest on the road and he feels disappointed. As there is no fate line on a dead man's head, similarly the priest has no hope of the bus coming.

Lazy lizard stare-the greedy stare of the lizard at the sight of insects.

A catgrin.....between the teeth –

The priest is like the cat. Just as a cat grins with mouth wide open at the sight of rat, pounces upon it, catches it and holds it between its teeth; similarly the greedy priest with a catgrin expression on his face waylays the pilgrims in order to rob them.

8.5.2. Critical appreciation of “ The Priest ”

"The Priest" by Arun Kolatkar is a poem that explores themes of faith, ritual, and the contradictions within religious practices. It revolves around the character of a priest, who is engaged in his religious duties. It is a concise yet powerful poem that delves into the complexities of religious devotion and human frailty. Here's a critical appreciation of the poem:

Use of Imagery: Kolatkar employs vivid imagery to paint a picture of the priest engaged in his religious duties amidst the chaos of the city. This imagery serves to create a stark contrast between the solemnity of the priest's role and the mundane realities of everyday life.

Irony and Contradiction: One of the most striking aspects of the poem is the irony and contradiction inherent in the portrayal of the priest. Despite his supposed piety, he is depicted engaging in activities like smoking and drinking, which are typically associated with indulgence rather than spirituality. This serves as a critique of religious hypocrisy, highlighting the divide between outward appearances and inner reality.

Ambiguity: The poem leaves room for interpretation, inviting readers to reflect on the deeper meaning behind the priest's actions. Is he a symbol of the wider hypocrisy within organized religion, or does his behavior suggest a more nuanced understanding of faith and human nature?

This ambiguity adds depth to the poem and encourages readers to engage with its themes on a deeper level.

Social Commentary: Through the depiction of the priest navigating the bustling streets of the city, Kolatkar offers a subtle commentary on the intersection between religion and modernity. The juxtaposition of the sacred and the profane serves as a reflection of the complexities of contemporary life and the challenges of maintaining faith in an increasingly secular world.

Universal Themes: While "The Priest" is set in a specific cultural context, its themes of faith, hypocrisy, and the search for meaning are universal. As such, the poem resonates with readers from diverse backgrounds, inviting them to reflect on their own beliefs and experiences.

In conclusion, "The Priest" is a thought-provoking poem that invites readers to consider the complexities of religious devotion and the human condition. Through its vivid imagery, irony, and ambiguity, Kolatkar challenges conventional notions of faith and invites readers to engage with its themes in a deeper and more meaningful way.

8.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian poet Arun Kolatkar.
- Interpreted a remarkable poem The Priest.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in poem.
- told about the style and technique of the poet Arun Kolatkar.

8.7 Questions

1. What is the central theme of Arun Kolatkar's poem "The Priest"?
2. How does Kolatkar portray the priest in the poem?
3. Describe the imagery used to depict the priest's surroundings.
4. Discuss the role of ritual and tradition in the poem.
5. What cultural or religious references are present in "The Priest"?
6. How does the language and tone of the poem contribute to its overall meaning?
7. How does "The Priest" reflect Kolatkar's style and thematic concerns as a poet?
8. Discuss Arun Kolatker as a poet.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who is the author of "The Priest"?

Arun Kolatkar.

2. What is "The Priest" about?

It's a poem that explores themes of faith, doubt, and human nature.

3. What is the structure of "The Priest"?

It's structured in a series of short, evocative verses.

4. Where is "The Priest" set?

The setting is in India, reflecting Kolatkar's cultural background.

5. What is the tone of "The Priest"?

The tone is reflective and contemplative.

6. How does "The Priest" portray religion?

It presents a nuanced view of religion, highlighting both its strengths and flaws.

7. What are some key themes in "The Priest"?

Themes include spirituality, mortality, and the search for meaning.

8. Who was Arun Kolatkar?

Arun Kolatkar (1932-2004) was an Indian poet who wrote in both Marathi and English. He is considered one of the most important poets in the post-independence Indian literary scene.

9. What are some prominent themes in Arun Kolatkar's poetry?

Kolatkar's poetry often explores themes such as urban life, spirituality, the human condition, and the intersection of tradition and modernity.

10. What is notable about Kolatkar's style of writing?

Kolatkar's style is characterized by its simplicity, vivid imagery, and use of colloquial language. He often employs innovative poetic forms and techniques, such as concrete poetry and minimalist verse.

11. Which are some of Arun Kolatkar's notable works?

Some of Kolatkar's notable works include "Jejuri" (a collection of poems), "Kala Ghoda Poems," "Sarpa Satra," and "Bhijki Vahi."

12. How did Kolatkar's background influence his poetry?

Kolatkar's upbringing in Mumbai and his experiences of urban life heavily influenced his poetry, as seen in his vivid portrayals of cityscapes and characters.

13. What was the significance of "Jejuri" in Kolatkar's career?

"Jejuri" is considered Kolatkar's magnum opus. It explores themes of spirituality and the search for meaning through a series of poems set in the town of Jejuri, known for its famous temple dedicated to Lord Khandoba.

14. How did Kolatkar contribute to Indian literature?

Kolatkar played a significant role in shaping modern Indian poetry through his experimentation with form and language, as well as his exploration of diverse themes.

15. What was Kolatkar's approach to language in his poetry?

Kolatkar was known for his innovative use of language, blending Marathi and English seamlessly in his poetry to capture the nuances of everyday life in urban India.

16. How has Kolatkar's poetry been received by critics?

Kolatkar's poetry has received widespread acclaim from critics for its originality, depth, and universal appeal. He is often regarded as one of the finest Indian poets of the 20th century.

17. What is Kolatkar's legacy in Indian literature?

Kolatkar's legacy lies in his profound impact on Indian literature, inspiring generations of poets and writers with his unique voice and vision. He remains a seminal figure in the landscape of Indian poetry.

8.8 Further Readings

A Sample book on Indian English literature by Ashok Kumar Jain. Jain Pustak Mandir. Jaipur. 2021

A History of Indian English Literature by M. K. Naik. Sahitya Akademi. New Delhi. 2010

Kumar, Dr. Satish. *Critical Study of Selected Poems*. Laxmi Narain Agrawal pub. Agra. 2020



Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj

MAEN-113 (N)

INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (POETRY AND DRAMA)

Block III Drama: Girish Karnad- Hayavadan

Unit 9 Introduction to Indian English Drama

Unit 10 Hayavadan: Impact of Folk Tradition

Unit 11 Plot Construction and Characterization

Unit 12 Narrative Technique in Hayavadan

Block Introduction III

Dear learners! This block is aimed at making you aware of Indian English drama with a special reference to Hayavadan. This block is divided into four units from 9th to 12th. Unit ninth focuses on the introduction to Indian English Drama. In this unit, we will learn about the growth and development of drama in India. The tenth unit aimed to discuss Karnd's major play Hayavadan. The unit deals with the story, types, purpose, and salient features of the play. *Hayavadana* (meaning: Horse face) was written in 1971 in the Indian Kannada language. The plot is based on Thomas Mann's retelling of Transposed Heads. It presents the story of two friends *Devdutta* and *Kapila*; and their love interest *Padmini*. It is distinguished from other plays of the period by its dramatic and poetic presentation. The 11th unit focuses on plot Construction and characterization of the play *Hayavadana*. The 12th and last unit of the block focuses on Girish Karnd's narrative technique used in Hayavadan. In short, after studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical and realist way of thinking about the life of Girish Karnd and develop the analytical power to understand mythological plays and their narrative technique dramatized by him.

Unit 9 Introduction to Indian English Drama

Structure

- 9.1. Objectives
- 9.2. Introduction
- 9.3. Origin of Indian English Drama
- 9.4 Pre Independence Indian English Drama
- 9.5 Post Independence Indian English Drama
- 9.6 Let us Sum up
- 9.7 Questions
- 9.8 Further Readings

9.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss the growth and development of Indian English drama. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced Indian theatre before independence and in the fifties and sixties and gave a certain direction to its subsequent development.

After reading this Unit carefully, you will be able to:

- . Understand the main trends in Indian drama;
- . Describe the development of Indian English Drama;
- . Discuss the historical background of the plays

9.2. Introduction

In all the previous blocks, we have discussed Indian English Poetry which comes from a different culture, tradition and ideas. In this unit, we are going to begin to read Indian English drama from its initial point of origin and development with historical background. All these aspects will help us in understanding the play better.

Drama, as we know, is quite different from a novel or a poem. It is something more than simply words on the page-it is meant to be performed or enacted. The audience is an active participant in the theatrical presentation. It is for this reason that they present their themes through dialogue, action, music, song and dance so that the play is visually captivating. So when reading a play we have to make full use of our imaginative powers. We must try to see the

action and scenes as well as hear the voices of the characters. It is only then that we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'.

Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this Unit.

9.3. Origin of Indian English Drama

You may have heard the tradition of Indian drama is very old. In ancient India, Sanskrit drama flourished. The art of Sanskrit drama writing was fully artistic and based on Bharata's *Natyashastra*. In pre-colonial India, drama encompasses contemporary theatres in Hindi and the other regional language. In colonial period in 1831, K.N. Banerjee published the first play in English language entitled *The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes*. But still Indian English drama made a humble beginning with the publication of Krishna Mohan Banerji's play in Calcutta in 1831. It is a social play which presents the conflict between orthodoxy and new ideas which came from Western education. It is the first play on the East-West encounter theme. The second drama in English is *Is This Called Civilization*. To Quote M. K. Naik, "From 1831 to 1980, not less than 500 plays by Indian English writers had appeared, and during the short period of the last twenty years, about 75 have been published". But the sad state of affairs is that Indian English drama still suffers from neglect.

Indian English drama does not enjoy the excellence of craftsmanship inspite of the great interest shown by Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Asif Curriumbhoy and Girish Karnad. Indian English drama stands nowhere in front of Indian English Poetry and Indian English fiction in quantity and quality both.

9.4 Pre Independence Indian English Drama

The history of English drama in pre-independence India is an intriguing narrative that reflects the socio-cultural dynamics of the time. English drama in India emerged primarily as a result of colonial influence, with British officials and settlers introducing Western theatrical traditions to the subcontinent. However, over time, Indian playwrights and actors began to adapt these traditions to reflect their own cultural and social contexts.

Early Colonial Period (Late 18th to 19th Century):

English drama initially found its way into India through British military and administrative personnel. Amateur theatrical performances were staged in military cantonments and British civil service clubs. The early productions largely consisted of English adaptations of classical plays, Shakespearean works, and popular English comedies and melodramas.

Parsi Theatre Influence (Late 19th to Early 20th Century):

Parsi Theatre, which emerged in Bombay (now Mumbai) in the late 19th century, played a significant role in shaping Indian English drama. Although primarily performed in Gujarati and Urdu, Parsi Theatre also incorporated English elements into its productions. Some Parsi Theatre productions featured English dialogues, songs, and characters, catering to a diverse audience that included British expatriates and Indian elites who were fluent in English. The melodramatic style and spectacle of Parsi Theatre had a lasting impact on Indian English drama, influencing themes, characterization, and performance techniques.

Bengal Renaissance and Early Indian English Drama (Late 19th to Early 20th Century):

The Bengal Renaissance, a cultural and intellectual movement in Bengal during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fostered the growth of Indian English literature and drama. Playwrights such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Girish Chandra Ghosh wrote plays in English that explored themes of social reform, nationalism, and cultural identity. Dutt's "The Captive Ladie" (1849) and Ghosh's "The Prince of Mysore" (1874) are among the notable early Indian English plays that reflect the social and political concerns of the time.

The Little Theatre Movement (Early to Mid-20th Century):

The early to mid-20th century witnessed the emergence of the Little Theatre Movement, which aimed to promote experimental and non-commercial theatre in India. English-language theatre groups such as the Bombay-based "The Indian People's Theatre Association" (IPTA) and "The Theatre Group" in Calcutta (now Kolkata) played a crucial role in fostering indigenous English drama. Playwrights like Rabindranath Tagore and Mohan Rakesh experimented with themes of Indian culture, tradition, and modernity in their English-language plays.

Impact of Political Movements:

The pre-independence period also saw the influence of political movements on Indian English drama. Plays became a medium for expressing nationalist sentiments, critiquing colonial rule, and advocating for social change. Writers such as Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan

incorporated political themes into their works, addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and the struggle for independence.

Some important dramatists and their works:

One of the most prominent Indian English dramatists in the pre-independence era was Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore, a polymath and Nobel laureate in literature, was not only a renowned poet and philosopher but also a playwright. His plays, written in English, Bengali, and other languages, contributed significantly to Indian literature and theatre. Tagore's plays often explored themes such as societal norms, spirituality, and the human condition, reflecting the cultural and social milieu of colonial India. Some of his notable English plays include "The Post Office," "Chitra," and "The King of the Dark Chamber." Tagore's contributions to Indian drama in English were instrumental in shaping the literary landscape during the pre-independence era. In addition to Rabindranath Tagore, there were several other notable Indian English dramatists in the pre-independence era. Here are a few of them along with some of their significant works:

Harindranath Chattopadhyay:

The Little Clay Cart (1930): A translation of the Sanskrit play "Mṛcchakaṭika" by Śūdraka, considered one of the earliest Indian plays.

Agha Hashr Kashmiri:

The Diplomat (1913): A play that examines the clash between modernity and tradition in Indian society.

Dinabandhu Mitra:

Nil Darpan (1860): Although originally written in Bengali, this play was translated into English and had a significant impact on Indian drama. It exposed the oppression faced by indigo farmers under British colonial rule.

Toru Dutt:

The Slaying of Meghanada (1879): Though primarily known for her poetry, Dutt also wrote this English play based on the Indian epic Ramayana. It is one of the earliest English plays by an Indian author.

T. P. Kailasam (1885-1946) was a gifted dramatist of pre Independence Era. He took his themes from ancient epics but his approach is purely his own. He provides individuality to the mythological characters in his plays. A staunch humanist, Kailasam "glorified the worth of the

underdog". Eklavya, the pleasing forester, is superior to prince Arjuna in chivalry, compassion, selflessness and magnanimity, Karna is generous, brave loyal and worthy; Keechaka is exalted and idealised. Kailasam possessed a better sense of stage ability than Tagore and Aurobindo because Kailasam was a skilled actor on the Kannada stage.

A. S. P. Ayyar (1899-1963) as a playwright dealt with contemporary reality and historical themes. His themes are reformistic and he often resorts to "machine made morality." His plots are melodramatic. The communication of message is his main motive. He has subordinated his plot and characters to the moral message. His play *In the Church of the Devil* (1926), *Sitas Choice and Other Plays* (1935), *The Slave of Ideas and Other Plays* (1941) and *The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity* (1942) - are about the contemporary life in effective prose medium.

These playwrights and their works played a crucial role in shaping Indian English drama during the colonial period, offering insights into the social, cultural, and political realities of the time. The history of pre-independence Indian English drama is characterized by a dynamic interplay of colonial influences, indigenous cultural expressions, and socio-political movements. It laid the foundation for the vibrant and diverse theatrical landscape that continues to evolve in contemporary India

9.5 Post Independence Indian English Drama

Post-independence Indian English drama has been characterized by a diverse range of themes, styles, and voices reflecting the socio-political, cultural, and economic changes in India. Here's an overview of the history of post-independence Indian English drama:

1950s-1960s: Emergence and Experimentation:

The immediate post-independence period saw a surge of nationalism and a quest for identity reflected in Indian English drama. Playwrights like Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad, and Badal Sircar emerged during this time, experimenting with themes ranging from existentialism to social realism. Mohan Rakesh's "Ashadh Ka Ek Din" (One Day in Ashadh, 1958) and Badal Sircar's "Evam Indrajit" (And Indrajit, 1963) are notable works from this period.

1970s-1980s: Political Awakening and Regionalism:

Indian English drama witnessed a shift towards political and social issues, influenced by Marxist ideologies and regional movements. Playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, and Manjula Padmanabhan gained prominence for their bold exploration of

societal injustices, gender inequality, and political corruption. Vijay Tendulkar's "Ghashiram Kotwal" (1972) and Mahesh Elkunchwar's "Party" (1976) are significant plays from this era.

1990s-Present: Globalization and New Voices:

The era of globalization brought new themes and styles to Indian English drama, reflecting the complexities of a rapidly changing society. Playwrights like Mahesh Dattani, Anupama Chandrasekhar, and Arundhati Roy emerged, exploring issues such as urbanization, identity crisis, and the impact of technology. Mahesh Dattani's "Final Solutions" (1993) and Anupama Chandrasekhar's "Free Outgoing" (2007) are examples of contemporary Indian English plays that address pressing social concerns.

Experimental and Multilingual Trends:

Contemporary Indian English drama has seen a rise in experimental forms, incorporating elements of traditional Indian theatre, multimedia, and interdisciplinary approaches. Playwrights like Anuradha Kapur, Atul Kumar, and Rajiv Joseph have been at the forefront of this experimentation, pushing the boundaries of form and content. Multilingualism has also become a prominent feature, with playwrights blending English with regional languages to capture the diversity of Indian culture and linguistic heritage. Post-independence Indian English drama continues to evolve, embracing new forms, themes, and voices, while engaging with the complexities of contemporary India and its place in the global context. Post-independence Indian English drama witnessed a flourishing of creative expression as playwrights engaged with themes of identity, social change, politics, and the human condition in the newly independent nation. Here are some important writers and their notable works in post-independence Indian English drama:

Vijay Tendulkar:

Sakharam Binder (1972): A controversial play exploring themes of sexuality, power, and social norms in Indian society.

Ghashiram Kotwal (1972): A historical drama examining political corruption and power struggles in the Peshwa era.

Silence! The Court Is in Session (1967): A dark comedy that critiques societal attitudes towards women and morality.

Badal Sircar:

Evam Indrajit (And Indrajit, 1963): A seminal work in Indian theatre, portraying the existential crisis of the protagonist Indrajit.

Pagla Ghoda (Mad Horse, 1963): A play exploring the fragmented reality of urban life and the search for meaning.

Mahesh Dattani:

Final Solutions (1993): A powerful drama that confronts communal tensions and religious extremism in contemporary India.

Tara (1990): Examines themes of gender, sexuality, and societal expectations through the story of a young woman trapped in a loveless marriage.

Girish Karnad:

Hayavadana (1972): A modern interpretation of an ancient Sanskrit play, exploring themes of identity, love, and the human condition.

Tughlaq (1964): A historical drama that reflects on the complexities of power and governance through the story of the medieval Indian ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Manjula Padmanabhan:

Harvest (1997): A dystopian drama set in a future where the human body becomes a commodity, exploring themes of globalization, exploitation, and ethics.

Anita Desai: *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975): A family drama that delves into themes of alienation, identity, and the search for meaning in a changing world.

The Village by the Sea (1982): While primarily known as a novelist, Desai also wrote a play adaptation of her acclaimed novel, exploring the struggles of a poor fishing family in rural India.

Arvind Adiga:

The White Tiger (2008): Although primarily known as a novelist, Adiga's debut novel has been adapted into a play, exploring themes of class struggle, corruption, and social mobility in contemporary India.

These playwrights and their works have significantly contributed to the richness and diversity of post-independence Indian English drama, reflecting the complexities of Indian society and culture in the wake of independence

9.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have discussed certain topics that will be helpful in approaching the text of the play. We have given you:

- a brief introduction to Indian Drama which includes both ancient Sanskrit plays as well as folk Play.
- an idea to understand the origin of drama
- an outline of the developments of Indian Drama and important dramatists.

In the next Unit we shall read the text. After we have given you brief guidelines on how to read a play, we shall discuss the text.

9.6 Questions

1. What are the obstacles that Indian English theatre faces?
2. What are the specific challenges that the Indian English playwright faces because of the language itself? How can the playwright overcome them?
3. Name some major pre-independence Indian English playwrights.
4. What are the major themes explored in Indian English drama, and how do they resonate with the Indian audience?
5. Discuss the evolution of Indian English drama from its inception to the present day, highlighting key playwrights and their contributions.
6. Analyze the portrayal of gender roles and identities in Indian English drama.
7. How does Indian English drama negotiate the complexities of cultural identity and hybridity?
8. Compare and contrast the thematic concerns and narrative techniques employed in Indian English drama with traditional Indian theatre forms.
9. Examine the influence of postcolonial theory on Indian English drama.
10. Discuss the significance of historical and mythological narratives in shaping Indian English drama.
11. Discuss the portrayal of family dynamics and interpersonal relationships in Indian English drama.

Short Answer Type Question

1. Who is considered the father of Indian English drama?

Nissim Ezekiel is often regarded as the father of Indian English drama for his pioneering works that laid the foundation for subsequent playwrights.

2. What themes are commonly explored in Indian English drama?

Themes such as identity, post-colonialism, cultural clash, socio-political issues, and the human condition are frequently explored in Indian English drama.

3. Which Indian English playwright is known for his/her exploration of gender and sexuality?

Mahesh Dattani is renowned for his exploration of gender and sexuality in contemporary Indian society through plays like "Bravely Fought the Queen" and "Dance Like a Man."

4. What is the significance of Vijay Tendulkar's "Silence! The Court is in Session"?

"Silence! The Court is in Session" by Vijay Tendulkar is a landmark play that critiques societal norms and prejudices, particularly regarding women, through a courtroom drama format.

5. Who wrote "Harvest," a powerful portrayal of the plight of Indian farmers?

Manjula Padmanabhan authored "Harvest," a poignant play that delves into themes of exploitation, capitalism, and the commodification of human bodies.

5. What distinguishes Indian English drama from Western drama traditions?

Indian English drama often intertwines indigenous cultural elements, myths, and social realities with Western theatrical techniques, creating a unique blend reflective of India's diverse heritage.

6. Name a prominent Indian English playwright known for his/her satirical works.

Anuvab Pal is recognized for his satirical plays like "Chaos Theory" and "1 888 Dial India," which humorously critique contemporary Indian society.

7. Which play by Mahesh Elkunchwar explores the complexities of family relationships in middle-class India?

"Sultan Padamsee Prize" winning play "Sultan" by Mahesh Elkunchwar offers a nuanced portrayal of family dynamics and societal pressures faced by the middle class.

8 What role does Indian English drama play in shaping cultural discourse in India?

Indian English drama serves as a platform for dialogue and reflection on contemporary issues, challenging societal norms, and fostering cultural understanding and change.

9.8 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013

Unit 10 Hayavadan: Impact of Folk Tradition

Structure

10.1. Objectives

10.2. Introduction

10.3. Girish Karnad: Life and Works

10.4. Introduction of the Play “Hayavadan”

10.5. Impact of Folk Tradition in Hayavadan

10.6 Let us Sum up

10.7 Questions

10.8 Further Readings

10.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall discuss the Indian Folk drama *Hayavadan* by Girish Karnad. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and mythological impact that influenced the playwright in the creation of the play. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- . Understand the main trends in Indian drama;
- . Describe the whole story of *Hayavadan*.
- . Know life and important works of Girish Karnad.
- . Discuss the historical background of the plays.
- . Explain the Folk Tradition of the play.

10.2. Introduction

In all the previous blocks, we have discussed Indian English drama from its initial point of origin and development with historical background. In this unit, we will discuss a well known play *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad. *Hayavadana (1971)* (meaning: *Horse face*) is two-act play based on Thomas Mann's retelling of *Transposed Heads*. It is story of two friends *Devdutta* and *Kapila*; and their love interest *Padmini*. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this Unit.

10.3. Girish Karnad: Life and Works

Girish Karnad, a multi-dimensional personality, was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran near Mumbai. He belongs to Saraswat Brahmin Konkani family, settled in Manglore, Karnataka. His childhood was spent in a small village Sirsi in Maharashtra where he had his early education in Marathi. Karnad earned his B.Sc. degree in Mathematics and statistics from Karnataka Arts College, Dharwar, (Karnataka University) in 1958. The same year Karnad moved to Mumbai for doing post-graduation. Here he had had new experiences which shaped the future dramatist in him. Here Karnad was acquainted with modern theatre, directors, new dramatic techniques and new playwrights. It was a turning point in his life and dramatic career. Here he saw Strindberg's play Julie, directed by Ebrahim Elkazi, the renowned director, on a modern stage. He pursued further studies in philosophy, politics, and economics at Magdalen College, Oxford, on a Rhodes Scholarship. He passed away on June 10, 2019, leaving behind a rich legacy of literary and artistic achievements .

Girish Karnad was an eminent Indian playwright, actor, filmmaker, and recipient of numerous awards, including the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary honor. He made profound contributions to Indian literature, theatre, and cinema. Here's an overview of his life and works:

Karnad rose to prominence as a playwright during the 1960s and 1970s. His plays are known for their exploration of historical and mythological themes, social issues, and existential dilemmas. One of his most acclaimed plays, "Tughlaq" (1964), is a historical drama that critiques the political ambitions and failures of the medieval Indian ruler Muhammad bin Tughlaq. "Hayavadana" (1972) is another significant work, a modern interpretation of an ancient Sanskrit play, which explores themes of identity, love, and the human condition. His other notable plays include "Nagamandala" (1988), "Agni Mattu Male" (The Fire and the Rain, 1995), and "Yayati" (1961), among others. He often drew inspiration from Indian mythology, folklore, and history, reimagining traditional narratives in contemporary contexts.

Karnad acted in numerous films in various languages, including Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam, collaborating with renowned directors like Shyam Benegal and Mani Ratnam. He directed films like "Vamsha Vriksha" (1971), co-directed with B.V. Karanth, and "Utsav" (1984), a Hindi film based on the Sanskrit play "Mrichakatika" by Shudraka. He achieved several awards, including the Padma Shri (1974), Padma Bhushan (1992), and Jnanpith Award (1998).

10.4. Introduction of the Play “Hayavadan”

"Hayavadana" is a renowned play written by Girish Karnad, first published in 1971. Set in a mythical landscape, the play is a modern interpretation of an ancient Sanskrit tale from the Mahabharata and the Kathasaritsagara, a medieval collection of Indian legends. Karnad's "Hayavadana" weaves together elements of folklore, philosophy, and human relationships to explore themes of identity, love, and the human condition. The play revolves around a love triangle involving three central characters: Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadatta, a learned and virtuous man, is married to Padmini, but he feels inadequate because of his physical imperfections. Kapila, his best friend, is a handsome and strong warrior. Padmini is torn between her love for Devadatta's intellect and Kapila's physical attractiveness. The story takes a supernatural turn with the introduction of Hayavadana, a horse-headed deity who grants Devadatta his wish for physical perfection in exchange for his human voice. This exchange sets off a series of events that challenge conventional notions of identity and fulfillment. As the characters grapple with their desires and insecurities, they confront questions of self-discovery, belonging, and the pursuit of happiness.

Through "Hayavadana," Girish Karnad delves into the complexities of human nature and the quest for completeness. He blends elements of folklore and mythology with modern sensibilities, creating a thought-provoking narrative that transcends time and culture. The play's exploration of fragmented identities and the struggle between the physical and the intellectual resonates with audiences across generations. It is celebrated for its rich symbolism, lyrical language, and profound insights into the human psyche. It has been widely performed and studied, cementing Girish Karnad's reputation as one of India's foremost playwrights. The play continues to captivate audiences with its timeless themes and universal appeal, reaffirming its status as a masterpiece of Indian literature and theatre.

10.5. Impact of Folk Tradition in Hayavadan

In "Hayavadana" by Girish Karnad, folk tales play a significant role in enriching the narrative and adding layers of meaning to the story. The incorporation of folk tales provides insight into Indian cultural traditions and mythology, grounding the play in its cultural context. These tales often draw from ancient Indian folklore, legends, and myths, resonating with the audience's cultural heritage. The role of folk tales is multifaceted, serving as cultural signifiers, symbolic representations, structural devices, reflections of characters, and vehicles for exploring broader

themes of tradition and modernity. They contribute to the richness and complexity of Karnad's narrative, making "Hayavadana" a compelling exploration of identity, desire, and the human condition. The impact of folk tradition in Girish Karnad's "Hayavadana" is profound and multifaceted, enriching the play in several ways:

Cultural Context: Karnad draws heavily from Indian folk traditions, particularly Yakshagana, a form of traditional theatre from Karnataka. This infusion of folk elements provides a rich cultural backdrop, grounding the play in the traditions and ethos of Indian society.

Narrative Depth: Incorporating folk tales within the main narrative adds layers of meaning and depth to the story. These tales often serve as parallels or allegories to the main plot, enriching the thematic exploration of identity, desire, and the human condition.

Characterization: Characters in "Hayavadana" are often archetypal figures drawn from folklore, such as gods, demons, and common folk. By utilizing these archetypes, Karnad imbues his characters with symbolic significance, allowing them to represent broader themes and ideas.

Visual Spectacle: Folk traditions often emphasize visual spectacle, with vibrant costumes, elaborate makeup, and stylized movements. While these elements may be less pronounced in a written play, Karnad's descriptions and stage directions likely draw upon this visual tradition, enhancing the theatricality of the production.

In essence, the impact of folk tradition in "Hayavadana" by Girish Karnad is integral to the play's identity, enriching its narrative, characterization, and thematic exploration while providing a cultural lens through which to view the story.

10.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian Playwright Girish Karnad.
- Interpreted a remarkable play Hayavadana and Impact of Folk Tradition in it.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in play.
- told about the style and technique of Girish Karnad.

10.7 Questions.

Long Answer Types Questions.

1. How does Girish Karnad blend elements of folk tradition with modern theatrical techniques in "Hayavadana"?
2. What are the key motifs and themes drawn from folk tradition that are prevalent throughout the play?
3. Discuss the significance of folk theater forms such as Yakshagana and Kathakali in shaping the structure and narrative of "Hayavadana"?
4. How does Karnad employ elements of humor and satire within the framework of folk tradition to convey deeper socio-political messages in the play?
5. Analyze the significance of language and linguistic diversity in "Hayavadana," considering its reflection of regional folk traditions and cultural identity.
6. How does Karnad challenge conventional notions of morality and ethics through the lens of folk tradition in "Hayavadana"?
7. Discuss the influence of Indian mythology and folklore on the characterization and plot development in "Hayavadana."
8. Explore the role of rituals and ceremonies in the play, considering their parallels with traditional folk practices and their thematic significance.
9. Discuss the relevance of "Hayavadana" in contemporary society, particularly in terms of preserving and reinterpreting elements of folk tradition for modern audiences.

Short Answer Types Questions.

1. Who is Girish Karnad?

Girish Karnad was a renowned Indian playwright, actor, and director.

2. What is "Hayavadana"?

"Hayavadana" is a play written by Girish Karnad, first performed in 1971.

3. What is the folk tradition represented in "Hayavadana"?

The folk tradition represented in "Hayavadana" is drawn from Indian mythology and folk tales.

4. What are some key themes in "Hayavadana"?

Identity, love, friendship, and the complexity of human relationships are some key themes explored in "Hayavadana."

5. Who are the main characters in "Hayavadana"?

The main characters are Padmini, Kapila, Devadatta, and Hayavadana.

6 What is the central conflict in "Hayavadana"?

The central conflict revolves around the intertwined fates and desires of the characters, especially Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila.

7 How does Girish Karnad incorporate folk elements into the play?

Karnad incorporates folk elements through the use of storytelling, songs, and symbolism drawn from Indian folklore.

8 What is the significance of the horse's head in "Hayavadana"?

The horse's head is a symbol of fragmented identity and the struggle to achieve completeness.

9 How does "Hayavadana" reflect Karnad's engagement with contemporary issues?

The play addresses themes such as identity crisis, societal norms, and the search for fulfillment, reflecting Karnad's engagement with contemporary Indian society.

10 What is the ultimate message or moral of "Hayavadana"?

The ultimate message of "Hayavadana" is open to interpretation, but it often revolves around the idea of accepting one's imperfections and embracing the complexities of life.

10.8 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013

Unit 11 Plot Construction and Characterization

11.1. Objectives

11.2. Introduction

11.3. Summary of the Play “Hayavadan”

11.4. Plot Construction of the Play “Hayavadan”

11.5. Art of Characterisation in “ Hayavadan ”

11.6 Major Character in “ Hayavadan

11.6.1 Devadatta

11.6.2 Kapila

11.6.3 Padmini

11.7 Let us Sum up

11.8 Questions

11.9 Further Readings

11.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss plot construction and characterization of the play *Hayavadana*. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Describe the whole story of *Hayavadana*.
- Understand the art of plot construction and characterization.
- Know life and important works of Girish Karnad.
- Discuss the historical background of the play.
- Explain the Folk Tradition of the play.

11.2. Introduction

In previous unit, we have discussed Indian English drama and the impact of folk tradition on the play *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad. In this unit, we will try best to elaborate the art of plot construction and characterization used in *Hayavadana*. The play deals a story of two friends *Devdutta* and *Kapila*; and their love interest *Padmini*. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

11.3. Summary of the Play “Hayavadan”

"Hayavadana" is a play written by Girish Karnad, a renowned Indian playwright. The story begins with Devadatta, an intellectual Brahmin, and his best friend Kapila, a low-caste man who is also a wrestler. Devadatta is married to Padmini, but their relationship is strained due to Devadatta's obsession with intellectual pursuits, neglecting Padmini emotionally. One day, Devadatta comes across a horse's head lying on the ground. This head belongs to Hayavadana, a character from Hindu mythology who is part horse and part human. Devadatta decides to perform a ritual to fix the head onto his own body, seeking completeness and perfection.

Meanwhile, Padmini becomes increasingly dissatisfied with her marriage and starts to develop romantic feelings for Kapila, who is physically strong and emotionally supportive in ways Devadatta is not. Kapila reciprocates Padmini's feelings, leading to a complex love triangle. As the story progresses, the characters' desires and identities become intertwined with the myth of Hayavadana. Devadatta's transformation into a complete being with the horse's head brings him fame and respect but fails to bring him happiness or solve his marital issues. The climax of the play occurs when Padmini is forced to make a choice between Devadatta and Kapila. She ultimately chooses Devadatta, but the emotional turmoil and unresolved desires continue to haunt all three characters. The play ends on a tragic note, highlighting the futility of searching for completeness in external appearances and societal expectations.

It's a complex tale that intertwines elements of mythology, folklore, and modern existentialist themes. The story revolves around three main characters: Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadatta and Kapila are childhood friends who become adults and find themselves in love with the same woman, Padmini. Devadatta, a scholarly and intellectual man, marries Padmini, but he feels insecure about his physical inadequacies, particularly in comparison to Kapila, who is known for his physical prowess. Padmini, despite being married to Devadatta, finds herself drawn to Kapila's physicality. Meanwhile, Kapila respects Devadatta's marriage and suppresses his feelings for Padmini. However, the situation becomes more complicated when Devadatta, in a desperate attempt to overcome his physical shortcomings, decides to offer his head to the goddess Kali in exchange for physical perfection. Kali grants his wish but at the cost of his intellect. Devadatta's head is replaced with that of a horse (Hayavadana), while his intellectual head is attached to a horse's body. The plot thickens as Padmini finds herself

attracted to the new, physically perfect but intellectually deficient Devadatta, while Kapila finds himself drawn to Padmini even more. The characters struggle with their desires, societal expectations, and the consequences of their choices.

The play explores themes of identity, desire, and the limitations of societal norms. It questions the idea of completeness and the pursuit of physical perfection at the expense of intellectual or moral integrity. Karnad uses the framework of Indian mythology and folklore to delve into these existential questions, creating a rich and thought-provoking narrative.

11.4. Plot Construction of the Play “Hayavadan”

The plot of Hayavadana, which deals with the human identity and human relationship, is noticeable for paradoxes and contradictions. Lord Ganesha, the elephant headed God, symbolises serious contradictions in human life. How can Ganesha who himself is incomplete be the destroyer of incompleteness? But Bhagavata says "that the completeness of God is something no mortal can comprehend." Human life too is full of contradictions and man, always dissatisfied with his existence is always in search of identity and completeness. Devadatta and Kapila are childhood friends who become adults and find themselves in love with the same woman, Padmini. Devadatta, a scholarly and intellectual man, marries Padmini. Although Padmini, married to an intellectual Devadatta, is fascinated by the physical strength and skills of Kapila. Devadatta, frustrated and unhappy, goes to the temple of Rudra where he cuts off his head. Kapila and Padmini too are perturbed when they do not find Devadatta. Leaving her all alone Kapila runs to the temple of Kali and beheads himself. In the cover of darkness she goes to the Kali temple and is aghast at the scene. Goddess Kali grants her the boon of adjusting the heads on their respective heads and by pressing them with the sword she can revive them. In darkness she transposes their heads. It results in confusion of identities. The story reaches climax. The irony of transposed heads on the bodies of two close friends, who are poles apart in physique and intellectual attainments, is deftly used here to raise the problem of identity. Who is who? Padmini hopes that her son, born from the head and intellectual brilliance of Devadatta and the sturdy body of Kapila, would be the ideal man of her dreams. In order to fulfil her plan she instructs Bhagawata to give the child to hunters and tell them it is Kapila's son. They love Kapila and will bring him well. He will live in the midst of nature and will be sturdy. She instructs him to give the child after five years to Brahmin Vidyasagar of Dharampur and tell

him that it is Devadatt's son. She, thus, hopes to fulfil her dream of completeness. Padimini performs sati with two bodies on the pyre.

"Hayavadana" is structured with a rich and intricate plot that weaves together elements of Indian mythology, folklore, and modern existentialist themes. The play begins by introducing the three main characters: Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadatta and Kapila are childhood friends, while Padmini is the woman they both love. Some important points of the plot are given below:

Conflict Introduction:

The central conflict of the play is established early on: Devadatta and Kapila both desire Padmini, leading to a complex love triangle. Devadatta's insecurities about his physical shortcomings, compared to Kapila's physical prowess, add depth to the conflict.

Inciting Incident:

Devadatta, consumed by his insecurity, decides to offer his head to the goddess Kali in exchange for physical perfection. This drastic decision sets the events of the play in motion.

Transformation:

Devadatta's wish is granted, but with a twist - his head is replaced with that of a horse (Hayavadana), while his human head is attached to a horse's body. This transformation is the pivotal moment that alters the dynamics between the characters. As Devadatta's physical appearance changes, the dynamics between the characters become increasingly complex. Padmini finds herself drawn to the physically perfect but intellectually deficient Devadatta, while Kapila struggles with his own desires.

Exploration of Themes:

Throughout the play, Karnad delves into various themes such as identity, desire, societal expectations, and the pursuit of perfection. The characters grapple with their desires and the consequences of their choices, leading to introspection and conflict.

Climax: The climax occurs when the tensions between the characters reach a breaking point. Their conflicting desires and societal pressures culminate in a dramatic confrontation or revelation that propels the narrative towards its resolution.

Resolution:

The play concludes with a resolution that may not offer clear answers but leaves room for contemplation. The characters may or may not find closure, but they undergo transformations - both physical and emotional - that leave a lasting impact.

In conclusion, "Hayavadana" is constructed with a multi-layered plot that explores complex themes through the interactions and transformations of its characters, ultimately offering a thought-provoking narrative experience.

11.5. Art of Characterisation in "Hayavadana"

The story of the play revolves around three main characters: Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadatta and Kapila are childhood friends who become adults and find themselves in love with the same woman, Padmini. Devadatta, a scholarly and intellectual man, marries Padmini, but he feels insecure about his physical inadequacies, particularly in comparison to Kapila, who is known for his physical prowess. Padmini, despite being married to Devadatta, finds herself drawn to Kapila's physicality. The art of characterization is intricate and nuanced, with each character embodying complex traits and motivations. Here's how Karnad achieves effective characterization in the play:

Devadatta: Devadatta is portrayed as a learned and intellectual man, but he is plagued by insecurities about his physical inadequacies. Karnad skillfully depicts Devadatta's internal struggle between his intellect and his desire for physical perfection. After his transformation, Devadatta's character undergoes a significant change as he grapples with his newfound physicality and the loss of his intellect.

Kapila: Kapila is depicted as a strong and honorable warrior, contrasting with Devadatta's intellectualism. Despite his feelings for Padmini, Kapila respects Devadatta's marriage and suppresses his desires. Karnad highlights Kapila's internal conflict as he struggles to reconcile his emotions with societal expectations and moral values.

Padmini: Padmini is portrayed as a complex and conflicted character torn between her love for Devadatta and her attraction to Kapila's physicality. Karnad depicts Padmini's emotional turmoil with sensitivity, exploring her desires, societal pressures, and ultimately her quest for fulfillment.

Hayavadana: The character of Hayavadana, with the head of a horse and the body of a man, is a symbolic representation of the play's themes of identity and completeness. Karnad uses Hayavadana to explore the duality of human nature and the search for wholeness.

Other Characters: Karnad also introduces secondary characters who contribute to the richness of the play's tapestry. These characters, such as Sharmishtha and the villagers, provide insight into the cultural and societal context of the story, enhancing the depth of the narrative.

In conclusion, Karnad brings his characters to life through dialogue, actions, and interactions and allowing the audience to empathize with their struggles and dilemmas. The art of characterization in "Hayavadana" lies in its ability to portray the complexity of human nature and the universal themes of love, desire, and identity in a compelling and thought-provoking manner.

11.6 Major Character in “Hayavadana”

Since, the story revolves around three main characters: Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini , these three character are important to discuss. The detail description of their character are as follow:

11.6.1 Devadatta

In Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana," Devadatta plays a central role as one of the main characters. Devadatta is a learned and virtuous Brahmin who is deeply in love with Padmini, but his relationship with her is complicated by his friend, Kapila, who is also in love with Padmini. Devadatta's desire for completeness and perfection leads him to make a fateful wish to exchange his imperfect body with that of the horse-headed deity, Hayavadana. This wish sets off a series of events exploring themes of identity, desire, and the search for wholeness. Devadatta's character is pivotal in driving the narrative forward and in exploring the complexities of human relationships and aspirations. The character of Devadatta in "Hayavadana" can be summarized through several key points:

Intellectualism and Virtue: Devadatta is portrayed as a learned Brahmin who values knowledge and moral righteousness. He represents traditional ideals of virtue and righteousness.

Love and Conflicts: Devadatta's love for Padmini is central to the plot. His romantic entanglement with Padmini and his friend Kapila creates internal and external conflicts that drive the narrative forward.

Desire for Perfection: Devadatta's desire for completeness and perfection leads him to make the fateful wish to exchange his imperfect body with that of the horse-headed deity, Hayavadana. This desire reflects his yearning for wholeness and fulfillment.

Identity Crisis: After the exchange, Devadatta struggles with his altered identity and the consequences of his wish. He grapples with questions of selfhood, belonging, and the true nature of completeness.

Tragic Fate: Devadatta's character embodies the tragic element of the play. His pursuit of perfection ultimately leads to his downfall, highlighting themes of fate, choice, and the limitations of human desire.

In conclusion, Devadatta's character in "Hayavadana" serves as a vehicle for exploring complex themes such as love, identity, and the human quest for fulfillment, while also embodying the tragic consequences of pursuing perfection at any cost.

11.6.2 Kapila

In Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana," Kapila is a crucial character who plays a significant role. The play is based on a tale from the ancient Indian text, the Kathasaritsagara. Kapila is a wise sage and a pivotal figure in the story due to his role in the central conflict. Devadatta and Padmini are married, but they lack completeness in their relationship. Devadatta is intellectually inclined and seeks intellectual companionship, which he finds in Kapila. Padmini, on the other hand, desires physical completeness and turns to Kapila, hoping he can provide a solution. He listens to their woes and suggests a solution involving exchanging their respective desired qualities: Devadatta will gain physical prowess, while Padmini will gain intellectual capacity. However, the consequences of this exchange become the crux of the play's plot. His character can be summarized through several key points:

Wisdom and Guidance: Kapila is portrayed as a wise sage who provides guidance to the other characters, particularly Devadatta and Padmini. They approach him seeking solutions to their problems, indicating his respected position in the community and his reputation for wisdom.

Role in the Central Conflict: Kapila's suggestion of exchanging desired qualities between Devadatta and Padmini sets off the central conflict of the play. His proposition serves as the catalyst for the events that unfold, leading to a series of complications and dramatic developments.

Complexity of Relationships: Kapila's character contributes to the exploration of the complexities within human relationships. His involvement in the love triangle with Devadatta and Padmini adds depth to the narrative, highlighting themes of desire, jealousy, and the intricacies of emotional connections.

Symbolism and Allegory: Kapila's character also serves symbolic and allegorical purposes within the play. He represents various aspects of human nature, including intellect, desire, and spiritual guidance. His actions and interactions with other characters reflect deeper philosophical themes explored by the playwright.

Moral Ambiguity: While Kapila is a wise sage, his actions and solutions to the characters' problems may also be seen as morally ambiguous. The consequences of his advice lead to turmoil and suffering for the characters involved, raising questions about the nature of wisdom and the responsibility of those who possess it.

In short, Kapila's character is multifaceted, embodying wisdom, complexity, and moral ambiguity. His role extends beyond that of a mere advisor, influencing the course of the narrative and contributing to its thematic richness. He leads to a series of complications, including a love triangle involving Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila himself. Through his actions and advice, Kapila drives the characters towards their destinies, ultimately exploring themes of identity, desire, and the complexities of human relationships.

11.6.3 Padmini

"Padmini" is a significant character in Girish Karnad's play "Hayavadana," which is a modern Indian play that draws upon themes from Indian mythology, particularly the Kathasaritsagara, a medieval collection of Indian legends and folktales. She plays a crucial role in the plot, as she is torn between two men: Devadatta and Kapila. Devadatta is her husband, a scholar who is more intellectually inclined, while Kapila is a warrior, known for his physical prowess. Padmini is initially married to Devadatta, but she feels dissatisfied in her marriage due to his lack of passion and physical strength. She is drawn to Kapila's masculinity and vigor.

Padmini's character explores themes of desire, love, and identity. She represents the conflict between the mind and the body, intellect and passion. Her struggle reflects the broader existential themes explored in the play, such as the search for completeness and the limitations of human nature. She plays several crucial roles in the narrative. Here are some chief points about her character:

Conflict of Desire: Padmini is torn between two men, Devadatta and Kapila. Devadatta, her husband, represents intellect and wisdom, while Kapila embodies physical strength and passion. Padmini's internal conflict revolves around her desire for both intellectual companionship and physical intimacy.

Quest for Completeness: Padmini's character reflects the human quest for completeness and fulfillment. She seeks a partner who can satisfy both her intellectual and physical needs. Her inability to find such completeness within a single individual leads to inner turmoil.

Identity and Self-Perception: Padmini's perception of herself is influenced by societal norms and expectations. She struggles with her identity as a woman and the roles imposed on her by society. Her desire for Kapila challenges traditional notions of marriage and femininity.

Symbol of Female Agency: Padmini's character embodies female agency and autonomy. Despite societal pressures and expectations, she actively pursues her desires and challenges the constraints placed upon her by societal norms. Her actions drive the narrative forward and shape the destiny of the other characters.

Tragic Figure: Padmini's character arc is tragic, as she ultimately cannot reconcile her conflicting desires and ends up suffering the consequences of her choices. Her story serves as a commentary on the complexities of human relationships and the limitations of societal constructs.

In short, the character Padmini in "Hayavadana" is central to the exploration of themes such as desire, identity, and the human quest for completeness. She is a nuanced and complex figure whose struggles and conflicts drive the narrative and resonate with audiences. Her fate becomes entangled with the central conflict of the play, which involves a complex love triangle between her, Devadatta, and Kapila. Through her character, Karnad delves into questions of identity, desire, and the quest for fulfillment, making her a pivotal figure in "Hayavadana."

11.7 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian poet Girish Karnad.
- Interpreted a remarkable play Hayavadana and art of plot construction and characterization.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in play.
- Discussed the important character in the play.
- told about the style and technique of the poet Girish Karnad.

11.8 Questions

Discuss Girish Karnad use traditional folk elements in the plot construction of "Hayavadana"?

"Hayavadana" by Girish Karnad can indeed be discussed in the context of a folk play due to its incorporation of folk elements, themes, and narrative structures. The play draws heavily from

Hindu mythology, particularly the story of Hayavadana. This mythological element adds a layer of cultural richness and connects the play to traditional folk tales and beliefs.

Symbolism and Allegory:

Folk plays often use symbolism and allegory to convey deeper meanings. In "Hayavadana," the transformation of characters and the mixing of human and animal traits (like the horse's head) symbolize the complexity of human nature, desires, and identity.

Use of Music and Dance:

Traditional folk plays incorporate music, dance, and ritualistic elements. While "Hayavadana" is primarily a dramatic work, Karnad uses poetic language and rhythmic dialogues that echo the cadences of folk performances. The songs and chants in the play also evoke a folk-like atmosphere. Folk plays often use straightforward language and storytelling techniques that are accessible to a wide audience. Karnad's use of colloquial language and vivid imagery in "Hayavadana" reflects this simplicity, making complex themes relatable through familiar narrative structures.

Themes Explored in "Hayavadana" as a Folk Play:

Identity and Transformation:

Folk plays frequently explore themes of identity and transformation. In "Hayavadana," Devadatta's quest to achieve completeness by obtaining the horse's head mirrors folk tales where characters undergo physical or spiritual transformations to achieve their goals.

Love and Relationships:

Love triangles and complicated relationships are common in folk tales and plays. The love triangle between Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila in "Hayavadana" reflects the timeless theme of love, desire, and the consequences of choices made in the pursuit of emotional fulfillment.

Social Hierarchies and Castes:

Folk plays often critique social norms and hierarchies. Kapila's character, a wrestler from a lower caste, challenges traditional Brahminical values represented by Devadatta. The play explores caste dynamics subtly through the interactions and conflicts between these characters.

Narrative Structure and Folk Influence:

Episodic Structure: Folk plays often have an episodic structure, with distinct episodes or acts that contribute to the overall narrative. "Hayavadana" follows a similar pattern with its three-act structure, each contributing to the development of characters and themes.

Oral Tradition Influence: Folk plays are often rooted in oral traditions, where stories are passed down through generations. While "Hayavadana" is a written play, Karnad's incorporation of mythical elements and folk motifs resonates with the oral storytelling traditions of India.

In short, "Hayavadana" can be appreciated as a folk play due to its deep engagement with mythological themes, its use of symbolism and allegory, and its exploration of universal human concerns such as identity, love, and social hierarchies. Girish Karnad's skillful blend of traditional elements with modern theatrical techniques creates a compelling narrative that not only entertains but also provokes thought and introspection, much like traditional folk performances do within their cultural contexts.

1. What are the key conflicts driving the plot of "Hayavadana" and how are they resolved?
2. Discuss the significance of the dual narrative structure employed by Karnad in "Hayavadana" and its impact on plot development.
3. How does Karnad weave themes of identity and self-realization into the plot through character development in "Hayavadana"?
4. Analyze the role of foreshadowing in the plot construction of "Hayavadana". How does it contribute to the overall narrative?
5. How does Karnad use dramatic irony in "Hayavadana" to engage the audience and enhance the plot?
6. Explore the theme of fate versus free will as it pertains to the plot and characters of "Hayavadana".
7. Analyze the role of humor in the plot construction of "Hayavadana". How does it shape the overall narrative?
8. Discuss the significance of the resolution in "Hayavadana". Does it effectively tie up the various plot threads?
9. Compare and contrast the plot construction and characterization techniques used by Karnad in "Hayavadana" with those in his other works?

Short Answer Types Questions.

1. **What is the central conflict in "Hayavadana"?**

- The central conflict revolves around identity and the struggle to attain completeness.
2. **How does Karnad employ folk elements in the plot construction?**
Karnad weaves elements of folk tales and mythology into the plot, particularly through the characters of Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila.
 3. **Discuss the significance of the play's structure in conveying its themes.**
The play's structure, with its blend of realistic and folk elements, mirrors the complexity of identity and the quest for wholeness.
 4. **How does Karnad use the concept of "head transplant" to explore the theme of identity?**
The head transplant between Hayavadana and Devadatta's bodies symbolizes the fragmentation and search for completeness within the characters.
 5. **Describe the characterization of Padmini.**
Padmini is portrayed as a strong, independent woman who grapples with conflicting desires and societal expectations.
 6. **What role does Hayavadana play in the plot, and how is his character depicted?**
Hayavadana represents the incomplete aspect of human nature, embodying the struggle between intellect and emotion.
 7. **Discuss the significance of the character Kapila in "Hayavadana."**
Kapila serves as a narrator and commentator, bridging the gap between the audience and the events of the play.
 8. **How does Karnad explore the theme of love and desire through the characters?**
Karnad examines the complexities of love and desire through the relationships between Padmini, Devadatta, and Kapila, highlighting the inadequacy of purely physical or intellectual connections.
 9. **Explain the resolution of the play and its implications for the characters.**
The resolution suggests that true completeness and fulfillment may lie beyond the physical realm, emphasizing the importance of acceptance and self-awareness.
 10. **In what ways does Karnad challenge traditional notions of identity and selfhood in "Hayavadana"?**

Karnad challenges traditional notions of identity by presenting characters who defy easy categorization and grapple with internal contradictions, ultimately suggesting that true fulfillment transcends societal norms.

11.9 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature* .Chetana Publications. New Delhi.1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher.Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013

Unit 12 Narrative Technique in Hayavadan

12.1. Objectives

12.2. Introduction

12.3. Language and Style in “ Hayavadana”

12.4. Narrative Technique in “ Hayavadana ”

12.5 Let us Sum up

12.6 Questions

12.7 Further Readings

12.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss Narrative Technique of the play Hayavadana. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Describe the whole story of *Hayavadan*.
- Understand the art of plot construction and characterization.
- Know the art of narrative technique.
- Discuss the historical background of the plays.

11.2. Introduction

In previous unit, we have discussed Indian English drama and the impact of folk tradition on the play *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad. In this unit, we will try best to elaborate the art of narrative technique used in Hayavadana. The play deals a story of two friends *Devdutta* and *Kapila*; and their love interest *Padmini*. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

12.3. Language and Style in “Hayavadana”

"Hayavadana" is a renowned play by the Indian playwright Girish Karnad, known for its complex themes, rich characters, and innovative narrative techniques. When examining the language and style of "Hayavadana," several aspects stand out:

Multilingualism:

Karnad often incorporates multiple languages and dialects into his plays, reflecting the linguistic diversity of India. In "Hayavadana," the characters speak in various languages such as Sanskrit, Kannada, and Hindi, reflecting the cultural milieu of the setting.

Verse and Prose:

The play seamlessly blends both verse and prose. While the dialogue is predominantly in prose, there are instances of poetic verses, especially during intense emotional moments or philosophical discussions. This interplay between verse and prose adds depth and texture to the language.

Symbolism and Metaphor:

Karnad employs rich symbolism and metaphor throughout the play. For example, the motif of the horse's head represents the theme of fragmented identity, while the characters themselves symbolize different aspects of human nature and societal roles.

Folklore and Mythology:

"Hayavadana" draws heavily from Indian folklore and mythology. The narrative is inspired by the ancient Sanskrit play "Kathasaritsagara" and the myth of Yayati, which Karnad reinterprets to explore contemporary themes such as identity, love, and desire.

Humor and Satire:

Despite its serious themes, the play contains elements of humor and satire. Karnad infuses wit and irony into the dialogue, particularly through the character of Bhagavata, who serves as both narrator and commentator, offering insightful observations on human nature and society.

Experimental Structure:

Karnad experiments with structure and narrative technique in "Hayavadana," employing techniques such as nonlinear storytelling, meta-theatrical devices, and the use of traditional Indian performance forms like Yakshagana. These innovations challenge conventional notions of dramatic form and invite the audience to engage with the play on multiple levels.

In conclusion, the language and style of "Hayavadana" reflect Karnad's mastery of dramatic craft, his deep engagement with Indian culture and tradition, and his exploration of universal themes that resonate across time and space

12.4. Narrative Technique in “Hayavadana”

Kannada Girish Karnad, India's best living playwright, has evolved a dramatic technique which suits a wide variety of themes consisting of myth, history and folklore he writes drama influenced him in his formative years and he deftly assimilated the best tradition of Kannada dramatists T.P.Kailasm, Huyilgol, Garuda, Samsa and Adya. But these Kannada dramatists were not satisfied with the state of theatres and had to work in isolation from it. Hence the plays of these dramatists lack in the tone and effectiveness of great drama. Drama cannot develop properly without theatre. Both are interrelated. Karnad's dramatic technique occupies a prominent place in Indian drama in English. "Hayavadana" employs several narrative techniques that contribute to its richness and complexity:

Frame Narrative: The play begins with a frame narrative in which a group of actors prepares to perform a story. This meta-theatrical device sets the stage for the main narrative and blurs the lines between fiction and reality.

Flashbacks: Karnad utilizes flashbacks to provide background information about the characters and their relationships. These flashbacks help to deepen the audience's understanding of the characters' motivations and actions.

Nonlinear Structure:

The narrative of "Hayavadana" is non-linear, with events unfolding in a fragmented manner. This structure mirrors the fragmented nature of identity and memory explored in the play, as well as the cyclical patterns of desire and fulfillment.

Multiple Perspectives:

Karnad presents the story from multiple perspectives, allowing the audience to see events through the eyes of different characters. This technique adds depth to the narrative and highlights the subjective nature of truth and reality.

Interplay of Myth and Reality:

The play interweaves elements of Indian mythology with the everyday lives of its characters. Mythic motifs such as the horse's head and the love triangle between Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila are juxtaposed with the mundane struggles of human existence, creating a rich tapestry of meaning.

Meta-theatrical Elements:

"Hayavadana" contains meta-theatrical elements, including the character of Bhagavata, who serves as both narrator and commentator on the action. Through Bhagavata's interventions,

Karnad draws attention to the theatricality of the play and invites the audience to reflect on the nature of performance and storytelling.

Symbolism and Allegory:

The play is rich in symbolism and allegory, with characters and events often representing larger thematic concepts. For example, the horse's head symbolizes the fragmented nature of identity, while the love triangle reflects the complexities of desire and fulfillment.

Overall, these narrative techniques contribute to the depth and complexity of "Hayavadana,". He explores profound existential questions while engaging the audience in a captivating theatrical experience.

12.5 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian poet Girish Karnad.
- Interpreted his remarkable play Hayavadana and its art of narrative technique.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in play.
- Discussed the important character in the play.
- Told about the style and technique of the poet Girish Karnad.

12.6 Questions

1. How does Girish Karnad employ traditional storytelling elements in "Hayavadana"?
2. What role does narrative structure play in conveying the themes of identity and self-realization in the play?
3. Analyze the significance of the framing device in "Hayavadana" and its function within the narrative.
4. Discuss the role of folklore and mythology in shaping the narrative style of "Hayavadana."
5. Explore the use of meta-theatrical elements in the play and how they influence the narrative structure.
6. Analyze the impact of cultural and historical context on the narrative technique employed by Karnad in "Hayavadana."

7. How does Karnad challenge conventional notions of identity and selfhood through his narrative approach in the play?
8. Discuss the role of language and dialogue in shaping the narrative dynamics of "Hayavadana."

Short Answer types Questions.

1. What are some narrative techniques used by Girish Karnad in "Hayavadana"?

Karnad employs a non-linear narrative structure, shifting between past and present seamlessly.

2. How does Karnad utilize the technique of meta-theatre in "Hayavadana"?

He incorporates elements of traditional Indian theatre like Yakshagana, blending them with modern storytelling to create a meta-theatrical experience.

3. What role does the use of folk tales play in the narrative of "Hayavadana"?

Karnad interweaves folk tales within the main narrative to add depth and cultural context, enriching the storyline.

4. In what ways does Karnad employ symbolism in "Hayavadana"?

Symbolism is utilized to represent complex themes such as identity, desire, and the human condition, adding layers of meaning to the narrative.

5. How does Karnad use multiple perspectives to tell the story in "Hayavadana"?

By presenting the narrative from various viewpoints, Karnad offers a nuanced exploration of the characters' motivations and struggles.

6. What is the significance of the play's structure in "Hayavadana"?

The fragmented structure mirrors the fragmented nature of identity and human relationships, highlighting the theme of incompleteness.

7. How does Karnad use humor as a narrative technique in "Hayavadana"?

Humor serves as a tool to juxtapose serious themes with light-hearted moments, creating a dynamic and engaging narrative.

8. What role do the characters' internal conflicts play in driving the narrative of "Hayavadana"?

The characters' inner struggles with identity, love, and societal expectations propel the story forward, adding depth and complexity to the narrative.

9. How does Karnad explore the theme of destiny through narrative techniques in "Hayavadana"?

Karnad uses elements of fate and destiny to drive the plot forward, questioning whether individuals have control over their own lives or are subject to higher forces.

10. What impact do the cultural and historical contexts have on Karnad's narrative techniques in "Hayavadana"?

The cultural and historical backdrop influences the storytelling, infusing the narrative with rich cultural references and traditions, making it resonate with audiences familiar with Indian folklore and theatre

12.7 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013



Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj

MAEN-113 (N)

INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (POETRY AND DRAMA)

Block IV Drama: Mahesh Dattani - Tara

Unit 13 An Introduction to The Modern Drama in English

Unit 14 Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist

Unit 15 Plot Construction and Characterization

Unit 16 Narrative Techniques in Tara

Block Introduction IV

Dear learners! This block is aimed at making you aware of modern drama and its major trends. This block is also divided into four units from the 13th to the 16th. Unit 13th focuses on the forms of modern drama in English written by Indian dramatists. The 14th unit aimed to discuss Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist. His modernist works reflect modernity, social alienation, vitality, and psycho-analytical instinct. The 15th Unit deals with the plot construction and characterization of the play *Tara* by Mahesh Dattani. The 16th and last unit of the block focuses on Mahesh Dattani's Narrative Techniques in *Tara*. This play questions the role of a society that treats the children of the same womb in two different ways. It is a ripping play about a boy and a girl who are joined together at the hip and have to be separated surgically, which means the death of either of the two. It is a play of gender discrimination. In this play, injustice is perpetuated by the victims' mother whose preference for the male child shows that it is a woman who continues the chain of injustice. In short, after studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical, psychological, and realist ways of thinking about human life and religious and ethical beliefs in India.

Unit 13 An Introduction to The Modern Drama in English

Structure

13.1. Objectives

13.2. Introduction

13.3. Introduction of Modern Indian English Drama

13.4 Chief Characteristics of Modern Indian English Drama

13.4.1 Cultural Synthesis

13.4.2 Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

13.4.3 Colonial and Postcolonial Themes

13.4.4 Social Realism and Political Commentry

13.4.5 Identity and Diaspora

13.4.6 Feminism and Gender Dynamics

13.4.7 Urbanization and Globlization

13.4.8 Experimentation and Innovation

13.5 Major Writers of Modern Indian English Drama

13.5.1 Mahesh Dattani

13.5.2 Vijay Tendulkar

13.5.3 Badal Sarkar

13.5.4 Girish Karnad

13.5.5 Anita Desai

13.5.6 Manjula Padmanabhan

13.5.7 Alyque Padamsee

13.5.8 Tara Patel

13.5.9 Savitri medhatul

13.5.10 Arun Kolatkar

13.6 Let us Sum up

13.7 Questions

13.8 Further Readings

13.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss the development of modern Indian English drama. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced Indian theatre after independence and gave a certain direction to its subsequent development.

After reading this Unit carefully, you will be able to:

- . Understand the main trends in Indian drama;
- . Describe the development of modern Indian English Drama;
- . Discuss the historical background of the modern plays in English.

13.2. Introduction

In this unit, we are going to study modern Indian English drama from its initial point of development with historical background. All these aspects will help us in understanding the play better.

Modern dramas are discussed with their themes through dialogue, action, music, song and dance. It is only then that we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this Unit.

13.3. Introduction of Modern Indian English Drama

Modern Indian drama refers to the diverse body of theatrical works produced in India from the late 19th century onwards, characterized by its engagement with contemporary social, cultural, and political issues. Influenced by both Western theatrical traditions and indigenous performance forms, modern Indian drama reflects the evolving dynamics of Indian society and its complex interplay with globalization, colonialism, and postcolonial identity.

The introduction of Western theatrical techniques and ideologies during the colonial period laid the foundation for modern Indian drama. Early pioneers such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Girish Chandra Ghosh experimented with European dramatic forms, adapting them to Indian contexts and themes. However, it was during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the emergence of figures like Rabindranath Tagore that modern Indian drama began to flourish.

Tagore's plays, such as "Chitra" and "Chandalika," combined elements of Indian classical drama with contemporary themes reflecting his vision of a synthesis between East and

West. His works addressed issues such as social reform, nationalism, and the clash between tradition and modernity, setting the stage for future playwrights to explore similar themes.

The post-independence period witnessed a surge of creativity in Indian theater, as playwrights grappled with the challenges of nation-building, identity formation, and social change. Figures like Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, and Badal Sircar emerged as leading voices in modern Indian drama, producing works that confronted issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, political corruption, and the marginalization of the underprivileged. Theatre movements such as the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and the Theatre of the Absurd also made significant contributions to modern Indian drama, challenging conventional narratives and experimenting with avant-garde techniques. Meanwhile, regional theater traditions flourished, with playwrights from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds enriching the tapestry of Indian theater with their distinct voices and perspectives.

In recent decades, modern Indian drama has continued to evolve, responding to contemporary concerns while embracing new forms of storytelling and performance. Playwrights like Mahesh Dattani, Manjula Padmanabhan, and Anupama Chandrasekhar have gained international acclaim for their insightful explorations of globalization, urbanization, and the complexities of modern Indian life.

In conclusion, modern Indian drama reflects the dynamic and pluralistic nature of Indian society, serving as a platform for dialogue, critique, and artistic expression. Its rich tapestry of themes, styles, and voices continues to captivate audiences both in India and around the world, reaffirming the enduring relevance and vitality of Indian theater in the 21st century.

13.4 Chief Characteristics of Modern Indian English Drama

Modern Indian English drama refers to theatrical works produced in India primarily in the English language from the late 19th century to the present day. This period saw the emergence of a distinct body of dramatic literature that reflects the complex interplay of Indian and Western cultural influences, as well as the social, political, and economic realities of modern India. Here are some chief characteristics of modern Indian English drama:

13.4.1 Cultural Synthesis

Modern Indian English drama often embodies a synthesis of Indian and Western theatrical traditions. Playwrights draw from diverse sources, incorporating elements of Indian mythology,

folklore, music, dance, and storytelling techniques into their works, while also engaging with Western dramatic forms and ideologies.

13.4.2 Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

Reflecting India's linguistic and cultural diversity, modern Indian English drama frequently incorporates multiple languages and cultural references. Playwrights weave together English with regional languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, and others, reflecting the rich tapestry of Indian culture and identity.

13.4.3 Colonial and Postcolonial Themes

Many modern Indian English plays explore themes related to colonialism, imperialism, and postcolonial identity. Playwrights critically examine the legacies of British colonial rule, the impact of globalization, and the complexities of cultural hybridity and diaspora.

13.4.4 Social Realism and Political Commentary

Modern Indian English drama often engages with pressing social and political issues, offering incisive commentary on topics such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, religious tensions, corruption, poverty, and human rights abuses. Playwrights use the stage as a platform for social critique, activism, and advocacy for marginalized communities.

13.4.5 Identity and Diaspora

Themes of identity, belonging, and diaspora are central to many modern Indian English plays. Playwrights explore questions of cultural identity, assimilation, and the search for home and belonging in a globalized world, particularly for individuals and communities living in diaspora.

13.4.6 Feminism and Gender Dynamics

Modern Indian English drama often addresses issues of gender inequality, women's rights, and feminism. Playwrights challenge patriarchal norms and stereotypes, portraying female characters with agency, resilience, and complexity, while also interrogating the intersections of gender, class, and caste.

13.4.7 Urbanization and Globalization

With the rapid urbanization and globalization of India in the 20th and 21st centuries, modern Indian English drama reflects the changing dynamics of urban life and the impact of globalization on Indian society. Playwrights explore themes of urban alienation, consumerism, social stratification, and cultural dislocation.

13.4.8 Experimentation and Innovation

Modern Indian English drama is marked by experimentation and innovation in form, structure, and content. Playwrights employ diverse theatrical techniques, such as non-linear narratives, meta-theatricality, and multimedia elements, to create dynamic and engaging theatrical experiences.

In short, Modern Indian English drama reflects the vibrancy, diversity, and complexity of Indian society, offering a rich tapestry of narratives, voices, and perspectives that resonate both locally and globally. It continues to evolve and adapt to changing cultural, social, and political landscapes, remaining a vital and dynamic form of artistic expression in contemporary Indian theater.

13.5 Major Writers of Modern Indian English Drama

Indian English drama has been enriched by the contributions of numerous talented playwrights who have explored a wide range of themes and styles. Here are some major writers of Indian English drama:

13.5.1 Mahesh Dattani

Mahesh Dattani is known for his insightful and socially relevant plays. He is one of the most prominent playwrights in Indian English drama. His works often explore themes such as gender, sexuality, identity, and societal norms, set against the backdrop of contemporary Indian society.

13.5.2 Vijay Tendulkar

Vijay Tendulkar is regarded as one of India's greatest playwrights. His works are known for their bold and unflinching portrayal of social issues. Tendulkar's plays often address themes such as caste discrimination, gender violence, political corruption, and the struggles of the marginalized.

13.5.3 Badal Sircar

A leading figure in Indian theater, Badal Sircar is known for his experimental and politically charged plays. Sircar's works often challenge conventional theatrical forms and explore themes of social justice, oppression, and human rights.

13.5.4 Girish Karnad

Renowned playwright, actor, and director, Girish Karnad made significant contributions to Indian English drama. His plays often blend myth, history, and contemporary social issues, reflecting the complexities of Indian culture and identity.

13.5.5 Anita Desai

Anita Desai is primarily known as a novelist. She has also written plays that explore themes of family, identity, and cultural dislocation. Her works offer insights into the human condition and the challenges of navigating cultural and generational differences. Anita Desai is primarily known as a novelist, but she has also written a few works for the stage, though they are not as numerous as her novels. Here are some of her works in drama:

1. "The Peacock Garden" (1974): "The Peacock Garden" is a one-act play written by Anita Desai. It explores themes of love, loss, and memory. The play centers around the character of a young girl named Rehana, who reminisces about her childhood and her family's struggles. "The Peacock Garden" is known for its lyrical language and poignant portrayal of human emotions.

2. "Imran" (1980):

"Imran" is another one-act play by Anita Desai. It tells the story of a young boy named Imran who dreams of becoming a great poet. The play delves into Imran's struggles with his identity and his aspirations amidst the backdrop of a changing society. Through Imran's journey, Desai explores themes of ambition, creativity, and cultural heritage.

3. "Translator Translated" (2006)

While not a traditional play, "Translator Translated" is a novella by Anita Desai that touches upon themes relevant to drama. The novella revolves around the character of Prema Joshi, a translator who becomes entangled in the world of literature and language. Desai's exploration of the complexities of translation and communication can resonate with the dramatic elements of language and interpretation. Though Anita Desai is best known for her novels, her forays into drama showcase her versatility as a writer and her ability to craft compelling narratives across different forms of literature.

13.5.6 Manjula Padmanabhan

A versatile writer, Manjula Padmanabhan's plays often tackle themes of globalization, technology, and the impact of capitalism on society. Her works are known for their sharp wit, incisive social commentary, and thought-provoking narratives. Manjula Padmanabhan is a talented and multifaceted Indian author, playwright, and artist known for her thought-provoking

works that explore themes such as power, identity, and societal norms. Here's an introduction to her life and contributions: Manjula Padmanabhan was born on March 15, 1953, in Delhi, India. She spent her childhood in various parts of India due to her father's job in the Indian Army. Padmanabhan's writing career spans across various mediums, including novels, short stories, plays, and essays. She gained international recognition with her dystopian science fiction novel "Escape" (also known as "The Escape"), which won the 1997 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Overall). Another notable work is her play "Harvest," which won the Onassis Award for Theatre in 1997 and has been staged internationally. Padmanabhan's works often delve into complex social, political, and ethical issues, challenging readers and audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about contemporary society. Her writing is characterized by its imaginative storytelling, sharp wit, and incisive critique of power structures and human behavior. Her dynamic and diverse body of work reflects her deep engagement with the world around her and her commitment to using art as a tool for social commentary and change.

13.5.7 Alyque Padamsee

A prominent figure in Indian theater, Alyque Padamsee's (1931–2018) plays often explore themes of power, politics, and social change. He was known for his innovative productions and his efforts to bring theater to a wider audience through commercial productions and advertising. He was an Indian theater personality, advertising professional, and cultural icon known for his multifaceted contributions to the arts and advertising industry in India. Alyque Padamsee was born on March 18, 1928, in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, into a family of theatre enthusiasts. He attended St. Xavier's College in Mumbai. Padamsee's career in theatre began in the late 1940s, where he initially worked as a stagehand. He went on to become one of India's most renowned theatre directors and producers. He founded the iconic Theatre Group in Mumbai, which became a pioneering force in Indian theatre. He played a pivotal role in establishing Lintas, one of India's leading advertising agencies, and served as its CEO for over 14 years. He was known for his innovative and impactful advertising campaigns, including the iconic "Lalitaji" campaign for Surf detergent. Alyque Padamsee's life and work remain influential and continue to be celebrated in India and beyond.

13.5.8 Tara Patel

Tara Patel's plays often focus on the experiences of Indian women and their struggles for independence and self-empowerment. Her works offer nuanced portrayals of female characters grappling with societal expectations and personal desires.

13.5.9 Savitri Medhatul

A pioneering playwright, Savitri Medhatul's works often focus on the experiences of women in Indian society. Her plays address issues such as gender inequality, domestic violence, and the quest for autonomy and self-expression.

13.5.10 Arun Kolatkar

Primarily known as a poet, Arun Kolatkar also wrote plays that reflect his keen observations of urban life and human relationships. His works are characterized by their evocative language, vivid imagery, and existential themes.

These are just a few of the major writers who have contributed to the rich tapestry of Indian English drama. Their works continue to inspire and provoke audiences, offering insights into the complexities of Indian society and the human condition.

13.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have discussed certain topics that will be helpful in approaching the text of the play. We have given you:

- a brief introduction to modern Indian English Drama.
- an idea to understand the origin and development of Modern Indian English Drama
- an outline of chief characteristics of Modern Indian English Drama.
- a detail discussion on major writers of modern Indian English Drama. In this unit, we have given you brief guidelines on how to read a play.

13.7 Questions

1. How has modern Indian English drama evolved from its traditional roots?
2. What are some key themes explored in modern Indian English drama?
3. How do modern Indian playwrights use language and dialogue to convey cultural nuances and identity?
4. Discuss the influence of socio-political issues on modern Indian English drama.
5. How has the form and structure of Indian English drama evolved in recent years?

6. Discuss the reception of modern Indian English drama both within India and internationally.

Short Answer Types Questions.

1. **What is Modern Indian English Drama?**

Modern Indian English Drama refers to theatrical works written and performed in English by Indian playwrights from the late 19th century to the present day.

2. **Who are some prominent playwrights in Modern Indian English Drama?**

Prominent playwrights include Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani, and Badal Sircar.

3. **What themes are often explored in Modern Indian English Drama?**

Themes include identity, social justice, political turmoil, cultural clashes, and the human condition in contemporary India.

4. **What is the significance of Modern Indian English Drama in literature?**

It provides a platform for Indian voices to address social issues, cultural changes, and national identity, contributing to the rich tapestry of world literature.

5. **What are some notable works in Modern Indian English Drama?**

Examples include "Tughlaq" by Girish Karnad, "Ghashiram Kotwal" by Vijay Tendulkar, "Bravely Fought the Queen" by Mahesh Dattani, and "Evam Indrajit" by Badal Sircar.

6. **How does Modern Indian English Drama reflect societal changes?**

It mirrors the evolving socio-political landscape of India, grappling with issues such as caste, gender roles, globalization, and urbanization.

7. **What role does language play in Modern Indian English Drama?**

Language serves as a tool for cultural expression and negotiation, blending Indian vernaculars with English to capture the nuances of Indian experience.

8. **How has Modern Indian English Drama evolved over time?**

It has transitioned from colonial influences to a more indigenous and diverse form, embracing regional languages, experimental styles, and global perspectives.

9. **What are some challenges faced by playwrights in Modern Indian English Drama?**

Challenges include balancing tradition with innovation, addressing sensitive topics, navigating censorship, and reaching diverse audiences.

10. **What impact has Modern Indian English Drama had on Indian society?**

It has fostered dialogue, raised awareness, challenged stereotypes, and empowered marginalized voices, contributing to social change and cultural enrichment.

13.8 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature* .Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher.Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013

Unit 14 Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist

Structure

14.1. Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Mahesh Dattani: Life and Works

14.4 Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist

14.5 Themes in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani

14.6 Let us Sum up

14.7 Questions

14.8 Further Readings

14.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall discuss the Indian English dramatist Mahesh Dattani. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and mythological impact that influenced the playwright in the creation of the play. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Understand the main trends in Indian drama;
- Describe modern Indian English drama and its theme.
- Know life and important works of Mahesh Dattani.
- Discuss the historical background of the plays.
- Explain dramatic Tradition in Mahesh Dattani.

14.2. Introduction

In previous unit, we have discussed modern Indian English drama and development with historical background. In this unit, we will discuss a well known dramatist Mahesh Dattani. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. This unit will help you to give some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this Unit.

14.3. Mahesh Dattani: Life and Works

Mahesh Dattani (born 7 August 1958) is an Indian director, actor, playwright and writer. He is renowned for his significant contributions to Indian theatre. He was born on August 7, 1958, in Bangalore, India. He grew up in a culturally rich environment, which greatly influenced his artistic inclinations. He pursued his education at Baldwin Boys' High School and St. Joseph's College in Bangalore. Later, he moved to Mumbai to study at St. Xavier's College.

Dattani initially started his career as a copywriter in advertising. However, his passion for theatre led him to explore playwriting and eventually directing. His plays often explore themes such as gender dynamics, sexuality, family relationships, societal norms, and identity. Some of his notable works include:

"Tara" (1990): This play, which deals with gender and sexual identity, won the Sahitya Akademi Award.

"Bravely Fought the Queen" (1991): It critically examines the societal constructs around gender roles and patriarchy.

"Final Solutions" (1993): The play explores communal tensions and religious conflicts in India.

"Dance Like a Man" (1997): This play delves into the complexities of traditional Indian dance and the conflicts arising from familial and societal pressures.

"On a Muggy Night in Mumbai" (1998): It highlights the struggles and aspirations of individuals living in a bustling city.

"Where There's a Will" (2005): This play revolves around family dynamics and inheritance issues.

"30 Days in September" (2001): Addressing the sensitive subject of child sexual abuse, this play received widespread acclaim.

"The Big Fat City" (2013): It explores the urban milieu and the aspirations and struggles of individuals in a metropolitan city.

His works have made a significant impact on Indian theatre, addressing taboo subjects and challenging societal norms. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his contributions, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. In conclusion, Mahesh Dattani continues to be an influential figure in Indian theatre, inspiring

audiences and artists alike with his thought-provoking narratives and insightful explorations of the human condition.

14.4. Mahesh Dattani as a Dramatist

Mahesh Dattani is a prominent Indian playwright known for his insightful and socially relevant dramas. His works often explore themes such as gender, sexuality, identity, and societal norms, set against the backdrop of contemporary Indian society. Dattani's plays are characterized by their poignant storytelling, nuanced character development, and exploration of complex human emotions. Mahesh Dattani's plays typically address various social, cultural, and psychological issues prevalent in contemporary Indian society. Here are some chief points that are commonly found in his works:

Exploration of Identity: Dattani often delves into the complexities of identity, including gender, sexuality, religion, and cultural heritage. His characters grapple with questions of self-discovery and acceptance in the face of societal expectations and norms.

Family Dynamics: Family relationships and dynamics play a central role in Dattani's plays. He explores the tensions and conflicts within families, as well as the impact of tradition, patriarchy, and generational differences on familial bonds.

Social Commentary: Dattani's works serve as a platform for social commentary, addressing issues such as communalism, religious intolerance, caste discrimination, gender inequality, and the clash between tradition and modernity in Indian society.

Individual vs. Society: Dattani often examines the struggle of individuals against societal pressures and constraints. His characters confront societal norms and conventions, challenging them in their pursuit of personal freedom, fulfillment, and self-expression.

Human Emotions and Relationships: Dattani's plays are known for their exploration of human emotions and relationships. He portrays characters with depth and complexity, depicting their joys, sorrows, desires, and conflicts with sensitivity and insight.

Intersectionality: Dattani's works often explore the intersectionality of identity, highlighting how factors such as gender, sexuality, religion, and socioeconomic status intersect to shape individuals' experiences and perspectives.

Urban Life and Alienation: Many of Dattani's plays are set in urban environments, depicting the hustle and bustle of city life as well as the alienation and isolation experienced by individuals amidst the crowd.

Cultural Context: Dattani's plays are deeply rooted in the cultural context of India, incorporating elements of Indian mythology, folklore, music, dance, and language. He juxtaposes traditional Indian values with modern sensibilities, reflecting the complexities of a rapidly changing society.

In conclusion, Mahesh Dattani's plays offer a nuanced exploration of the human condition, presenting audiences with thought-provoking narratives that resonate on both personal and societal levels. His works are celebrated for their thought-provoking narratives, rich characterizations, and ability to provoke introspection and dialogue on pressing social issues. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his contributions to Indian theatre, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honors. Mahesh Dattani's plays continue to be performed and studied both in India and internationally, cementing his legacy as a leading figure in contemporary Indian drama.

14.5. Themes in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani

The themes in Dattani's plays are contemporary, radical, social and unconventional. The concerns of urban middle class society passing through a transitional phase are focused in his plays with 'the realism on the lines of Ibsen and Shaw. For him man is an integral part of society and consciously or unconsciously the creeping influences of societal set up, determine the fabric of relationship around him'. He exposes 'mean, ugly and unhappy aspects of human life'. His plays mirror contemporary society and deal with various issues like homosexuality, gender discrimination, communalism, child sexual abuse, depraved condition of hijras, patriarchal authority crushing women, problems of HIV positives, loss of sanctity etc. His plays encompass a wide range of themes, reflecting the complexities of contemporary Indian society and the human condition. Some of the prominent themes found in his works include:

14.5.1 Identity and Self-Discovery

Dattani often explores the quest for identity and self-discovery among his characters, who grapple with questions of personal authenticity, cultural heritage, and societal expectations.

14.5.2 Gender and Sexuality

Many of Dattani's plays address issues of gender inequality, sexual identity, and the societal constraints placed on individuals based on their gender. He delves into the struggles of women and LGBTQ+ individuals in patriarchal societies.

14.5.2 Family and Relationships

Family dynamics and relationships are central to Dattani's works. He examines the complexities of familial bonds, the tensions between generations, and the impact of tradition on interpersonal relationships.

14.5.3 Societal Norms and Expectations

Dattani critiques societal norms and expectations, challenging conventions related to gender roles, marriage, religion, and caste. His plays often highlight the hypocrisy and injustices perpetuated by societal structures.

14.5.4 Communalism and Religious Tension

Dattani addresses the divisive forces of communalism and religious intolerance in Indian society. He explores the consequences of sectarian violence and the need for tolerance and understanding among different religious communities.

14.5.5 Urbanization and Alienation

Many of Dattani's plays are set in urban environments, depicting the alienation and disconnection experienced by individuals in bustling cities. He explores the anonymity of urban life and the search for human connection amidst the chaos.

14.5.6 Power Dynamics and Oppression

Dattani examines power dynamics and oppression within various contexts, including family, workplace, and society at large. He sheds light on the abuse of power and the struggles of marginalized communities.

14.5.7 Social Justice and Activism

Dattani's works advocate for social justice and activism, encouraging audiences to confront social injustices and work towards positive change. He highlights the importance of empathy, compassion, and solidarity in building a more equitable society.

In conclusion, Mahesh Dattani's plays offer a multifaceted exploration of the human experience, confronting audiences with thought-provoking themes that resonate across cultural and geographical boundaries.

14.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a well known Indian dramatist Mahesh Dattani.
- Interpreted a remarkable play *Tara* and Impact of Folk Tradition in it.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in play.
- told about the style and technique of Mahesh Dattani

14.7 Questions

1. How did Mahesh Dattani's upbringing and early life influence his career as a playwright and director?
2. What are the key themes and motifs present in Mahesh Dattani's plays, and how do they reflect broader societal issues?
3. Can you provide an in-depth analysis of Dattani's portrayal of gender dynamics and sexuality in his works?
4. Discuss the impact of Mahesh Dattani's plays on the Indian theatre scene, both nationally and internationally.
5. Explore the influence of Mahesh Dattani's background in psychology on his portrayal of human behavior and psychological depth in his characters.
6. Analyze the theatrical aesthetics and staging techniques employed by Dattani to enhance the dramatic impact of his plays.
7. Reflect on Mahesh Dattani's legacy and his ongoing relevance in contemporary Indian theatre and cultural discourse.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Who is Mahesh Dattani?

Mahesh Dattani is an Indian playwright, director, and actor.

2. What are some notable works by Mahesh Dattani?

Some notable works include "Final Solutions," "Tara," "Bravely Fought the Queen," and "30 Days in September."

3. When did Mahesh Dattani receive the Sahitya Akademi Award?

He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998 for his play "Final Solutions."

4. What themes does Mahesh Dattani often explore in his plays?

He often explores themes such as gender identity, sexuality, familial relationships, social norms, and the complexities of Indian society.

5. How does Mahesh Dattani's background influence his work?

Dattani's background as a member of the LGBTQ+ community and his experiences growing up in India significantly influence the themes and characters in his plays.

6. What is Mahesh Dattani's writing style known for?

His writing style is known for its depth, subtlety, and ability to provoke thought on social issues without being preachy.

7. How has Mahesh Dattani contributed to Indian theatre?

Dattani's works have enriched Indian theatre by challenging conventional narratives and shedding light on marginalized voices.

8. What awards and recognition has Mahesh Dattani received?

Apart from the Sahitya Akademi Award, he has received numerous other awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the Padma Shri.

9. How does Mahesh Dattani use his plays to address societal taboos?

Dattani's plays often confront societal taboos head-on, bringing them into the spotlight for discussion and reflection.

10. What impact has Mahesh Dattani had on contemporary Indian theatre?

Dattani has played a significant role in shaping contemporary Indian theatre by introducing new perspectives and fostering a more inclusive environment for playwrights and performers.

14.8 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013

These are only suggested as additional reading and are in no way compulsory.

Unit 15 Plot Construction and Characterization

15.1. Objectives

15.2. Introduction

15.3. Summary of the Play “Tara”

15.4. Plot Construction of the Play “Tara”

15.5. Art of Characterisation in Play “Tara”

11.5.1 Major Character in Play “Tara”

15.6 Let us Sum up

15.7 Questions

15.8 Further Readings

15.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall discuss the Indian English dramatist Mahesh Dattani and his art of plot construction and characterization in the Play “Tara”. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and mythological impact that influenced the playwright in the creation of the play. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- . Understand the art of plot construction and characterization in the Play “Tara”.
- . Describe modern Indian English drama and its theme.
- . Know life and important works of Mahesh Dattani.
- . Discuss the historical background of the plays.
- . Explain dramatic Tradition in Mahesh Dattani.

15.2. Introduction

In previous unit, we have discussed modern Indian English drama and development with historical background. In this unit, we will discuss a well known a well known dramatist Mahesh Dattani and his art of plot construction and characterization in the Play “Tara”. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre'. This unit will be helpful you to give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

15.3. Summary of the Play “Tara”

"Tara" is a play written by Mahesh Dattani, one of India's foremost playwrights. Set in contemporary urban India, the play revolves around the lives of two women, Tara and Chandan,

who are linked by the bonds of friendship and the complexities of their intertwined pasts. It is a three act play. Here is a summary of the play

Act 1:

The play opens with Tara, a middle-aged woman who is recovering from a failed marriage, returning to her childhood home in Delhi. Tara's former friend Chandan, now a successful doctor, visits her after years of estrangement. As they reconnect, the past resurfaces, revealing the secrets and traumas that have shaped their lives. Tara struggles with feelings of resentment towards Chandan, who she believes betrayed her in the past. **Act 2:**

The tension between Tara and Chandan escalates as they confront their shared history. It is revealed that Chandan had an affair with Tara's husband years ago, leading to the breakdown of their marriage. Tara's daughter, Avani, becomes embroiled in the conflict, further complicating the relationship dynamics. The play delves into themes of betrayal, forgiveness, and the complexities of female friendship.

Act 3:

In the final act, Tara and Chandan come to terms with their past and reconcile. They acknowledge the mistakes they have made and the wounds they have inflicted on each other. The play ends on a note of resolution and hope as Tara and Chandan embrace the possibility of healing and moving forward.

In conclusion, "Tara" is a compelling exploration of human relationships and the complexities of the human psyche, with Dattani's signature blend of drama, emotion, and psychological insight.

15.4. Plot Construction of the Play “Tara”

The plot of "Tara" by Mahesh Dattani is constructed intricately, weaving together past and present, secrets and revelations, to create a compelling narrative that explores the complexities of human relationships. Here's a breakdown of the plot construction:

Act 1:

Introduction and Flashback Memories The play opens with Tara, a middle-aged woman, returning to her childhood home in Delhi after her marriage has ended. Tara's former friend Chandan, now a successful doctor, visits her after years of estrangement. Their reunion sets the stage for the unfolding drama. Through flashbacks and memories, the audience is introduced to the history and complexities of Tara and Chandan's friendship, as well as the events that led to their estrangement.

Act 2:

Conflict and Resolution:

The tension between Tara and Chandan escalates as they confront their shared history and unresolved issues. It is revealed that Chandan had an affair with Tara's husband years ago, leading to the breakdown of their marriage. This revelation deepens the conflict and adds layers to the characters' motivations and emotions. Tara's daughter, Avani, becomes embroiled in the conflict between Tara and Chandan, further complicating the relationship dynamics and adding additional tension to the plot. The act builds towards a climax as Tara and Chandan confront each other and the truths of their past, leading to a moment of reckoning and reflection.

Act 3:

Reconciliation:

In the final act, Tara and Chandan come to terms with their past and reconcile. They acknowledge the mistakes they have made and the wounds they have inflicted on each other. The play ends on a note of resolution and hope as Tara and Chandan embrace the possibility of healing and moving forward, with the audience left to contemplate the complexities of forgiveness and redemption.

In conclusion, the plot construction of "Tara" is characterized by its nonlinear narrative structure, with the past interwoven with the present to create a rich tapestry of storytelling. The plot unfolds gradually, revealing secrets and revelations that drive the conflict forward and ultimately lead to moments of reconciliation and resolution."

15.5. Art of Characterisation in Play "Tara"

What makes the play Tara highly enjoyable is characterisation. Dattani characters are convincing and real. In Mahesh Dattani's play "Tara," the characters are intricately crafted, each with their own distinct personalities, motivations, and complexities. Here's an exploration of the characterizations in the play. Though not directly present in the play, Tara's husband plays a significant role in shaping the events and emotions of the characters. His affair with Chandan serves as a catalyst for the conflict. While Tara, Chandan, and Avani are the primary focus of the play, there are other supporting characters who contribute to the overall narrative, providing context and depth to the story. In characterization, he illuminates the complexities and nuances of the main characters in "Tara," highlighting their struggles, motivations, and transformations throughout the play. The characters are richly contributing to the thematic exploration of

friendship, betrayal, and forgiveness. Their interactions drive the narrative forward, culminating in moments of revelation and reconciliation that shape the trajectory of the play.

In conclusion, the characterizations in "Tara" are rich and nuanced, reflecting the complexities of human emotions and relationships. Each character adds depth and dimension to the play, contributing to its exploration of themes such as betrayal, forgiveness, and redemption.

11.5.1 Major Character in Play “Tara”

The play revolves around the lives of two women, Tara and Chandan, and Tara’s daughter, Avani who are linked by the bonds of friendship and the complexities in main plot of the story.

Tara:

Tara is the central character of the play, a middle-aged woman struggling failed marriage and the betrayal of her former friend Chandan. She is portrayed as a multi-dimensional character, with layers of vulnerability, resentment, and strength. She struggles with feelings of betrayal and abandonment but also demonstrates resilience and a desire for closure. Throughout the play, Tara undergoes a significant emotional journey, confronting her past and coming to terms with her present. Her character arc is marked by moments of introspection, anger, and ultimately, forgiveness. Her character serves as a symbol of resilience and the capacity for growth and healing in the face of betrayal and adversity. She embodies several significant traits throughout the play:

Traditional vs. Modern Identity: Tara struggles with her identity, torn between traditional expectations and modern desires. She represents the conflict many women face in patriarchal societies where societal norms clash with personal aspirations.

Repression and Liberation: Tara's character reflects the theme of repression and liberation. Initially confined within the boundaries of her marriage and societal expectations, she gradually seeks liberation from these constraints to assert her individuality and autonomy.

Search for Self-Realization: Throughout the play, Tara embarks on a journey of self-discovery and self-realization. She questions her role as a wife and mother, seeking fulfillment beyond societal expectations and conventional gender roles.

Conflicted Relationships: Tara's relationships with her husband, her lover, and her son are characterized by conflict and tension. These relationships mirror the complexities of human interactions and the challenges individuals face in maintaining authenticity amidst societal pressures.

Courage and Resilience: Despite facing numerous challenges and societal judgment, Tara exhibits courage and resilience in pursuing her desires and asserting her identity. Her journey symbolizes the strength required to challenge societal norms and pursue personal fulfillment.

Symbol of Change: Tara can also be interpreted as a symbol of societal change. Her defiance of traditional norms and pursuit of personal fulfillment challenge the status quo, highlighting the evolving nature of gender dynamics and societal expectations.

In conclusion, Tara's character in Dattani's play embodies themes of identity, liberation, self-realization, resilience, and societal change, making her a complex and compelling figure in the narrative.

Chandan:

Chandan is portrayed as Tara's former friend and the catalyst for much of the conflict in the play. As a successful doctor, she represents a stark contrast to Tara's life. Her character is shrouded in ambiguity, with her motivations and actions often veiled in secrecy. Her affair with Tara's husband and subsequent estrangement add layers of complexity to her character. Throughout the play, Chandan grapples with feelings of guilt and remorse over her past actions. Her attempts to reconcile with Tara reflect a desire for redemption and forgiveness. Chandan serves as a foil to Tara, highlighting the differences in their personalities and life choices. While Tara is more emotional and introspective, Chandan is portrayed as more pragmatic and detached. She is second most significant character in play "Tara." Here are some chief points regarding his character:

Traditional Patriarchal Figure:

Chandan embodies the traditional patriarchal values prevalent in society. As Tara's husband, he expects her to conform to traditional gender roles and fulfill her duties as a wife and mother without questioning.

Control and Dominance:

Chandan exerts control and dominance over Tara, dictating her behavior and decisions according to his expectations. His character reflects the power dynamics typical of patriarchal relationships.

Insecurity and Jealousy:

Chandan's character is marked by insecurity and jealousy, particularly regarding Tara's interactions with other men. His possessiveness and suspicion highlight his fear of losing control over Tara and his desire to maintain dominance in their relationship.

Resistance to Change:

Chandan represents resistance to change and traditionalism in the face of evolving societal norms. He struggles to accept Tara's desire for independence and self-expression, clinging to traditional values and gender roles.

Flawed Human Nature: Despite his flaws and negative traits, Chandan is depicted as a complex human character with his own vulnerabilities and insecurities. His actions and behavior stem from societal conditioning and personal fears rather than outright malice.

Foiling Tara's Journey:

Chandan's character serves as a foil to Tara's journey of self-discovery and liberation. His opposition and attempts to control Tara's choices act as obstacles to her quest for personal fulfillment and autonomy.

Symbol of Patriarchal Oppression:

Chandan can be interpreted as a symbol of patriarchal oppression and the constraints imposed by traditional gender roles. His character highlights the challenges women face in asserting their autonomy and breaking free from societal expectations.

In conclusion, Chandan's character in "Tara" adds depth to the exploration of gender dynamics and societal norms in the play, serving as a contrast to Tara's quest for independence and self-realization.

Avani:

Avani, Tara's daughter, represents innocence and vulnerability amidst the turmoil of her mother's past. She becomes unwittingly entangled in the conflict between Tara and Chandan. Her character provides a youthful perspective on the events unfolding around her, often serving as a mirror for the emotions and tensions of the adult characters. Despite her challenges, she remains in hope and resilience. She is another significant character in play "Tara." Here are some chief points regarding her character:

Friendship and Support: Avani serves as Tara's close friend and confidante throughout the play. She provides emotional support and companionship to Tara, offering a listening ear and understanding during her moments of struggle.

Modern Outlook: Avani embodies a modern outlook on life, contrasting with the traditional values represented by characters like Chandan. She encourages Tara to pursue her own happiness and fulfillment, advocating for independence and self-expression.

Voice of Reason: Avani often acts as the voice of reason in Tara's life, offering perspective and advice to help her navigate difficult situations. Her rationality and pragmatism provide a counterbalance to Tara's emotional turmoil.

Empowerment Advocate: Avani advocates for women's empowerment and autonomy, encouraging Tara to assert herself and challenge societal norms that restrict her freedom. She embodies the idea of female solidarity and empowerment.

Symbol of Modernity: Avani's character symbolizes modernity and progressiveness in contrast to the conservative values upheld by characters like Chandan. She represents the changing attitudes towards gender roles and relationships in contemporary society.

Supportive Figure: Avani's unwavering support for Tara underscores the importance of friendship and solidarity in overcoming adversity. She stands by Tara's side through her journey of self-discovery and liberation, demonstrating the power of supportive relationships.

Realism and Relatability: Avani's character adds an element of realism and relatability to the play, representing a contemporary woman navigating the complexities of modern life. Her experiences and interactions with Tara reflect the challenges and triumphs of women in society. In conclusion, Avani's character in "Tara" contributes to the exploration of themes such as friendship, empowerment, and societal change, serving as a supportive ally to Tara in her quest for personal fulfillment and autonomy.

15.6 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you a Mahesh Dattani's art of plot construction and characterization in the play *Tara*.
- Interpreted a play *Tara* and important character in it.
- Pick out the various characteristic elements present in play.
- told about the style and technique of Mahesh Dattani

15.7 Questions

Long answer type Questions

1. Explore the complexities of the character Tara in Mahesh Dattani's play. How does Dattani use her character to depict societal expectations, familial obligations, and personal desires?
2. Discuss the evolution of Chandan's character throughout the play "Tara". How does Dattani utilize Chandan to convey themes of identity, self-discovery, and societal norms?
3. Analyze the role of the character Dev in "Tara". How does Dev's presence contribute to the conflict within the narrative, particularly regarding traditional values versus personal aspirations?
4. Examine the character of Siddharth in "Tara". How does Dattani portray Siddharth's struggle with cultural identity and the pressure to conform to societal expectations?
5. Discuss the significance of the character of Maya in "Tara". How does Maya's relationship with Tara and Chandan highlight themes of friendship, loyalty, and betrayal?
6. Explore the character dynamics and interactions within "Tara". How do these interactions shape the overall thematic exploration of identity, societal pressure, and personal freedom in the play?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. How does Dattani establish the central conflict in "Tara"?

Dattani introduces the central conflict early in the play, primarily through the interactions between the characters. The tension between Bhagirathi and Devinder, Tara's parents, regarding Tara's identity and upbringing sets the stage for the unfolding drama. Additionally, the arrival of Maya, Tara's birth mother, further complicates the situation, adding layers to the conflict.

2. Discuss the significance of the title "Tara" in relation to the plot construction.

The title "Tara" holds symbolic significance, representing not only the name of the central character but also the various layers of identity and self-discovery explored throughout the play. The constellation of relationships and conflicts revolving around Tara forms the crux of the narrative, making the title a fitting representation of the interconnected themes of identity, belonging, and familial ties.

3. How does Dattani utilize flashback sequences to deepen the audience's understanding of the characters and their motivations?

Dattani employs flashback sequences strategically to provide insights into the characters' past experiences and relationships. By revisiting key moments in Tara's upbringing and her interactions with Bhagirathi, Devinder, and Maya, the audience gains a deeper understanding of the complexities that shape the characters' present-day dynamics. These flashbacks add depth to the narrative, illuminating the underlying motivations driving the characters' actions and decisions.

4. Examine the role of cultural and societal norms in shaping the characters' behaviors and relationships in "Tara".

Dattani intricately weaves themes of tradition, culture, and societal expectations into the fabric of "Tara". The characters' struggles with societal norms regarding gender roles, family dynamics, and adoption are central to the plot construction. Bhagirathi and Devinder's conflicting approaches to parenting, rooted in their respective cultural backgrounds, highlight the tension between tradition and individual autonomy, ultimately driving the narrative forward.

5. Explore the significance of the climax and resolution in "Tara".

The climax of "Tara" marks a pivotal moment of confrontation and revelation, where long-held secrets and suppressed emotions come to the forefront. The resolution, while not offering easy answers, provides a sense of closure and catharsis as the characters come to terms with their pasts and chart a path forward. Dattani skillfully navigates the complexities of human relationships, offering a nuanced portrayal of forgiveness, acceptance, and the possibility of redemption.

15.8 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

Sinha, Birendra and Mishra, Dinesh. *Indian Writing in English*. Pacific Books International. New Delhi. 2013.

Unit 16 Narrative Techniques in Tara

16.1. Objectives

16.2. Introduction

16.3. Language and Style in “Tara”

16.4. Narrative Technique in “Tara ”

16.5 Let us Sum up

16.6 Questions

16.7 Further Readings

16.1. Objectives

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss narrative technique of the play Hayavadana. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Describe the whole story of Tara.
- Understand the art of narration of the story.
- Know the art of narration the past and present incidents simultaneously.
- Discuss the historical background of the plays.

16.2. Introduction

In previous unit, we have discussed modern Indian English drama and Mahesh Dattani’s art of plot construction and characterization in the Play “Tara”. In this unit, we will learn Dattani’s art of narration and its literary techniques. After reading this unit, we will be able to experience the play in its different dimensions: as 'literature' as well as 'theatre' and will also learn how through narrative techniques writers convey their stories effectively to the audience. In this unit we will also learn about flashback device that interrupts the chronological sequence of events to provide background information or reveal past experiences of characters. This unit will be helpful you to give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

16.3. Language and Style in “Tara”

"Tara" is an acclaimed play known for his exploration of complex interpersonal relationships, societal issues, and psychological dynamics. Dattani's style in "Tara" is characterized by its

intense emotional depth, nuanced characterizations, and exploration of themes such as identity, family dynamics, societal norms, and the struggle for self-expression.

The language in "Tara" is typically conversational, reflecting the natural rhythms of everyday speech, but it also contains moments of heightened emotion and poetic expression, particularly during moments of conflict or revelation. Dattani often uses dialogue to reveal the inner thoughts and motivations of his characters, allowing the audience to empathize with their struggles and dilemmas.

The style of "Tara" is marked by its realism, as Dattani draws upon his observations of contemporary Indian society to create authentic and relatable characters and situations. However, the play also incorporates elements of symbolism and metaphor, inviting audiences to interpret its deeper meanings and themes.

In conclusion, "Tara" is a compelling exploration of the complexities of human relationships and the search for personal identity, told through richly drawn characters and lyrical language.

16.4. Narrative Technique in “Tara”

Mahesh Dattani is an accomplished dramatic craftsman who has ingeniously fused the literary elements and those of the performing art into drama in order to make it one complete whole. So in his plays we find the perfect unison of the dramatic art and the performing art of the stagecraft. All these elements -dance, drama and music have been deftly coalesced in his plays. Besides in this interview he also emphasises the fact that 'theatre begins with the author' and we cannot have a vibrant contemporary theatre without new and original writing'. Dattani fulfils this condition also because his themes are contemporary, unconventional and original which have not been assayed by any other dramatist before him. Indeed Dattani is a skilled and original dramatic craftsman.

In the play "Tara", the narrative techniques of the play primarily revolve around the use of multiple perspectives and non-linear storytelling. It deals complexities of the characters and their relationships. Dattani employs a combination of flashback, introspection, and dialogue to reveal the layers of each character's personality, motivations, and conflicts.

Multiple Perspectives: The narrative often shifts between the perspectives of different characters, allowing the audience to gain insight into their individual experiences and perceptions of the events unfolding. This technique adds depth to the storytelling by presenting contrasting viewpoints and highlighting the subjective nature of truth and memory.

Flashbacks: Dattani frequently utilizes flashbacks to provide context and backstory for the characters and their relationships. These glimpses into the past help to elucidate the present circumstances and motivations of the characters, enriching the narrative with layers of history and emotion.

Introspection: Through introspective monologues and dialogues, the characters in "Tara" reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and inner conflicts. This narrative technique allows for a deeper exploration of the characters' internal struggles and motivations, shedding light on their psychological complexities.

Symbolism and Metaphor: Dattani employs symbolism and metaphor to convey deeper thematic resonances throughout the play. These symbolic elements add richness and depth to the narrative, inviting audiences to interpret the story on multiple levels and explore its broader implications.

Fragmentation and Non-linear Structure: The narrative structure of "Tara" is often fragmented and non-linear, with scenes unfolding out of chronological order. This fragmented structure mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and human experience, challenging audiences to piece together the story's puzzle and engage actively with the narrative. In conclusion, the narrative technique in "Tara" by Mahesh Dattani is characterized by its complexity, depth, and multi-layered exploration of characters and themes. Through a combination of multiple perspectives, flashback, introspection, symbolism, and non-linear structure, Dattani creates a compelling and immersive storytelling experience that invites audiences to contemplate the intricacies of human relationships and identity.

16.5 Let us Sum up

In this Unit we have

- Introduced you to Mahesh Dattani's art of narration in the play *Tara*.
- Interpreted a play *Tara* and its important characters.
- Picked out the various characteristic elements present in the play.
- Told about the style and language of Mahesh Dattani.

16.6 Questions

Long Answer Types Questions

1. Discuss the narrative Technique of Mahesh Dattani in his play "Tara." How do these flashbacks contribute to the development of the story and its themes?

Answer:

Mahesh Dattani, in his play "Tara," employs a nuanced narrative technique that intertwines past and present, reality and memory, to explore themes of identity, relationships, and the impact of secrets on individuals and families. Here's a detailed discussion of the narrative technique in "Tara":

Flashbacks and Memory: Dattani frequently uses flashbacks and memories to unveil the layers of his characters' pasts. The play shifts seamlessly between past and present, revealing key moments that shaped the characters' identities and relationships. For example, the audience learns about Tara's tragic past and her strained relationship with her husband through flashback sequences.

Fragmented Narratives: The narrative is deliberately fragmented, mirroring the fragmented lives and fractured relationships of the characters. This technique adds depth and complexity to the storytelling, inviting the audience to piece together the characters' motivations and emotional landscapes.

Subjectivity of Truth: Dattani explores the subjective nature of truth by presenting multiple perspectives on key events and relationships. Each character has their version of the truth, shaped by their memories, biases, and emotional investments. This technique challenges the audience to question their own assumptions and interpretations.

Unreliable Narrators: Characters in "Tara" often prove to be unreliable narrators, adding layers of ambiguity and intrigue to the narrative. Their conflicting accounts of events create tension and suspense, compelling the audience to engage actively in deciphering the truth behind the characters' actions and motivations.

Symbolic Imagery: Dattani uses symbolic imagery throughout the play to convey deeper meanings and themes. For instance, Tara's garden becomes a symbol of her lost dreams and aspirations, while the recurring motif of mirrors reflects the characters' search for self-identity and reflection on their past actions.

Allegorical Elements: The play can be seen as an allegory for the hidden traumas and secrets that define familial relationships. The revelation of Tara's secret past and its impact on her present life serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of buried truths and unresolved conflicts.

Blend of Realism and Theatrical Devices: Dattani blends elements of realism with theatrical devices to create a dynamic and engaging narrative. The dialogue is naturalistic, capturing the everyday cadences of speech, while moments of heightened drama and tension underscore the emotional stakes of the characters' conflicts.

Metatheatrical Moments: The play occasionally breaks the fourth wall, inviting self-reflection on the nature of storytelling and performance itself. These metatheatrical moments add layers of reflexivity and commentary on the role of memory and narrative in shaping our understanding of the past.

Psychological Depth: Dattani's narrative technique allows for deep psychological exploration of his characters. Through their interactions and internal monologues, the audience gains insight into their fears, desires, and vulnerabilities, revealing the human complexities beneath their outward personas.

Evolution of Relationships: The non-linear structure and multiple perspectives also highlight the evolving nature of relationships over time. The audience witnesses how past traumas and secrets continue to reverberate in the present, affecting the characters' interactions and emotional dynamics.

In short, Mahesh Dattani's narrative technique in "Tara" is characterized by its non-linear structure, use of multiple perspectives, and exploration of symbolism and allegory. Through these narrative devices, Dattani creates a rich and layered theatrical experience that challenges the audience to contemplate themes of memory, identity, and the enduring impact of secrets on personal and familial relationships. "Tara" stands as a compelling example of contemporary Indian drama that blends realism with theatricality to delve into the complexities of human experience.

2. How does Dattani use multiple perspectives in "Tara" to deepen the audience's understanding of the characters and their relationships?

3. In what ways does Dattani use introspection as a narrative technique in "Tara"? How does this technique shed light on the characters' inner conflicts and motivations?
4. Explore the use of symbolism and metaphor in "Tara." How do these literary devices enhance the narrative and add layers of meaning to the story?
5. Discuss the impact of the fragmented and non-linear structure of "Tara" on the audience's engagement with the narrative. How does this structure reflect the themes of memory and human experience in the play?
6. How does Dattani's narrative technique in "Tara" challenge traditional notions of storytelling? Discuss any innovative approaches or unconventional narrative devices used in the play.
7. Analyze the effectiveness of Dattani's narrative technique in conveying the play's central themes, such as identity, family dynamics, and societal expectations.
8. How does the narrative technique in "Tara" contribute to the overall emotional resonance of the play? Discuss any specific scenes or moments where the technique is particularly impactful.
9. Explore the role of ambiguity and interpretation in Dattani's narrative technique. How does he leave room for audience engagement and interpretation within the storytelling?
10. Reflect on the ways in which Dattani's narrative technique in "Tara" reflects broader trends or themes in contemporary Indian theatre and literature.

Short Answer Types Questions.

1. **What narrative technique does Mahesh Dattani employ in "Tara"?**
Mahesh Dattani uses a non-linear narrative technique in "Tara."
2. **How does the non-linear narrative technique affect the storytelling in "Tara"?**
It allows for the exploration of multiple perspectives and timelines, enriching the depth of the characters and themes.
3. **What is the significance of the non-linear structure in "Tara"?**
It mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and highlights the complexities of relationships and identity.
4. **How does Dattani use flashbacks in "Tara"?**

Dattani utilizes flashbacks to reveal crucial backstory elements and to provide insight into the characters' motivations and conflicts.

5. What role does the non-linear narrative play in character development?

It enables a layered portrayal of characters, showcasing their evolution over time and the influences that shape their identities.

6. How does Dattani create suspense through his narrative technique in "Tara"?

By strategically revealing information out of chronological order, Dattani keeps the audience engaged and intrigued, heightening the suspense.

7. Does the non-linear narrative make "Tara" difficult to follow?

While it may require some adjustment, the non-linear structure adds depth to the narrative and enhances the overall storytelling experience.

8. How does the non-linear narrative enhance the themes of "Tara"?

It allows for a nuanced exploration of themes such as memory, trauma, and the fluidity of identity, enriching the thematic depth of the play.

9. What are some examples of Dattani's use of non-linear storytelling techniques in "Tara"?

Examples include the juxtaposition of past and present scenes, the use of flashback sequences, and the interweaving of multiple character perspectives.

10. What is the audience's reaction to the non-linear narrative in "Tara"?

Audience reactions may vary, but many appreciate the complexity it adds to the storytelling and the insights it provides into the characters and themes.

16.7 Further Readings

If you would like to read more about Indian drama you may like to consult:

Balwant Gargi, *Theatre in India*. Theatre Arts Books, 1962.

Prabhakar Machwe, *Four Decades of Indian Literature*. Chetana Publications. New Delhi. 1976.

Siddiqui, Dr. Rubi. *A History of Indian Writing in English*. Educational Publisher. Agra

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