

1. Neighbours

Tim Winton

Tim Winton, full name Timothy John Winton, (b. 1960) is an Australian author of both adult and children's novels that deal with both the experience of life in and the landscape of his native country. He competed with 35 other novelists for The Australian Literary Award presented for the best-unpublished novel manuscript and won the prize in 1982 for his manuscript *An Open Swimmer*. His novels include *That Eye, the Sky* (1986), *Dirt Music* (2001), and *Breath* (2008). He also wrote several children's books, including *Lockie Leonard*, *Human Torpedo* (1990), *The Bugalugs Bum Thief* (1991), and *The Deep* (1998). This story 'Neighbours' has been taken from *Migrants of Australia* edited by Harwood Lawler.

Short Summary:

Tim Winton's short story "Neighbours" is about a young couple who have moved into a new home. They were initially uneasy because their neighbourhood was densely populated with immigrants.

On the right, a Macedonian family was yelling and a Polish widower was pounding nails into the wood. It seemed weird to the young couple. The Macedonians, on the other hand, thought it odd that the young man stayed at home to write his thesis while his wife worked. It began to alter in the autumn when the young couple began planting vegetables and the neighbours offered their assistance. The young man constructed a henhouse, but it failed.

Uninvited, the widower from Poland rebuilt it. In the winter, the young couple returned the smiles of their neighbours. The Macedonian family taught them how to slaughter in the spring, and the pair discovered that the woman was pregnant.

The young couple didn't inform each other about it, but it was noticed by the neighbours. They delighted as they gave them gifts. When the baby was delivered, the entire neighbourhood came out to greet the young couple and wish them well.

At this point, the man recognized that he had been harbouring prejudices all along and began to cry. He believed that writing his thesis had not adequately prepared him for real life.

Main Summary:

Neighbours is a story about a newly married couple living in a multicultural and multilingual suburb neighbourhood. It shows that cultural and linguistic barriers cannot stop people from bestowing love and compassion.

Tim Winton's short story "Neighbours" is about a young couple who have just relocated to a new neighbourhood with several European immigrants. Both the young couple and their neighbours have prejudices at first because they only see the strange and sometimes disgusting customs of their new neighbourhood, but after a while, they quickly adapt to their new surroundings, and the young couple begins to like their neighbours and notice that they aren't all bad.

They discover that they can be friends and that they can assist one another in their daily lives, resulting in everyone being content with their neighbourhood and their lives.

The author does not name the characters he mentions in the story. Hence, the characters are not defined, and as a result, they might be viewed as role models for everyone. Before moving, the young couple resided in the vast outer suburbs.

First, they act as though they are strangers and refuse to speak to anyone. The so-called "young man" stays at home and prepares his thesis on the evolution of the book in the twentieth century. The "young woman" is employed by a hospital.

After that, the entire neighbourhood begins to engage with them and offers their assistance. As a result, the young couple is proud of their neighbours. Even though the couple had not planned for a pregnancy, the young woman becomes pregnant in the spring, and their neighbours become aware of it after a short time. Everyone is willing to assist and is courteous.

All of their neighbours are ecstatic and wish them well after the birth of their child. For the young man, the birth is a marvel, and he learns at the end that the twentieth-century book had not prepared him for this.

Hence, The story "Neighbours" by Tim Winston demonstrates how immigrants may contribute to Australia's social fabric. Their strong sense of community aids the couple in seeing that intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination all comes from a lack of knowledge.

Understanding the text

a. Describe how was the young couple's house looked like.

Even though their home was tiny, it had the appearance of an beautiful cottage due to the high ceilings and paned windows that were on the walls. Their house was not that luxurious or of High-standard but was perfectly cosy to live a life as a normal people.

b. How did the young couple recognize their neighbours in the beginning of their arrival?

The young couple recognized their neighbours as uncivilized and annoying people in the beginning of their arrival from various odd activities that they witnessed. People in their surrounding used to scream, quarrel, make unnecessary noises. They also lack proper sanitation. They used to complain them about their dog. They used to interfere them in their household activities.

All these things, made them have a negative impression about their neighbourhood in the beginning of their arrival.

c. How did the neighbours assist the young couple in the kitchen garden?

Neighbours helped them both orally and physically in their kitchen garden. Orally, they gave them some advices that were required to have proper benefits from gardening. They approached the work area and offered and advised them the ideas for spacing, hilling and mulching the vegetables they had planted. They provided them some seeds and plants of vegetables as well. Thus they, assisted the young couple in kitchen garden.

d. Why were the people in the neighbourhood shocked at the role of the young man and his wife in their family?

The people in the neighbors were shocked by the actions of young couple which was new to them. They were astonished to see that the young guy stayed at home and took care of domestic chores, while his wife worked at a hospital. It was frowned upon in the neighborhood for men to sit at home while women worked outside.

e. How did the neighbours respond when they learn about the woman's pregnancy?

The neighbors reacted to the woman's pregnancy with grace and politeness. They began smiling at the young couple all the time and showing a lot of concern for the young lady. They did all they could to help her in different ways. Her neighbors all reacted in a reasonable manner. They gave her numerous presents, counsel, and attention in connection with her pregnancy.

Neighbours showed their joy and happiness by various activities. Some people started offering them presents, hand-knitted sweaters, gloves, caps, some women started advising them baby names, some started guessing the child whether it will be a boy or a girl.

From all these, we can infer that the people in neighbourhood were very happy to learn about the woman's pregnancy.

f. Why did the young man begin to cry at the end of the story?

At the conclusion of the story, the young guy started to cry as he realized his neighbors' concern, care, and love. He couldn't hide his emotions when he discovered them gathered in his gate, cheering for his new newborn son. In his nice time, he cried with pleasure to discover his neighbours' happiness. His perspective on his neighbors shifted. He grasped the idea of human relationships.

The young couple had hated and irritated by the neighbourhood activities and their interference in their personal activities. However, They didn't realise there was a love and care for them behind all of the activities of the people in their neighbourhood. But, their relation started to get reshaped when the Young Lady gets pregnant and their neighbourhood starts admiring and well wishing them. The young man's tears at the conclusion of the story represent the gratefulness to the love and care of their neighbours.

g. Why did the author not characterize the persons in the story with proper names?

The irony of this story is that the characters have not been given a definitive names or identity. It's possible that the characters will be regarded as role models for everyone since they're not defined. Author wants the reader to get influenced or inspired from the story by characterizing the persons of the story without finite names.

Since the author intended to portray individuals of diverse groups with different languages and cultures living together in harmony, he didn't give them appropriate names, in my opinion. He wanted ethnic affiliations to be more important than individualities. To illustrate the idea that individuals from various ethnicities and backgrounds may live peacefully together, despite their differences in language, culture, and way of life, he used this method in the story. Above everything else, the human connection is a very essential element.

Tim may not want his readers to get too involved in the characters, rather feel the way people interact with each other in a diversified community.

Reference to the context

a. The story depicts that linguistic and cultural barriers do not create any obstacle in human relationship. Explain with some examples from this story where the neighbours have transcended such barriers.

Their neighbours give the young couple advise on the kitchen garden, despite the fact that they don't speak their language. A Macedonian family teaches them how to scream, even though they don't even know how to speak Macedonian. An elderly Polish man's aid in rebuilding their chicken house may be seen as selfless assistance from a person. Their care, love, and respect for the young pregnant lady and their joy at the baby's birth offer a wonderful example of a human connection. Relationships between people transcend language and cultural differences.

Through the symbolism of pregnancy, Winton is able to examine how a shift may have a variety of impacts for the young couple and the whole neighbourhood. Because of its universality, pregnancy serves as a stimulus for the formation of new bonds and connections across cultural boundaries. A lot of the time in this story, the neighbours manage to get along with each other despite the language and cultural hurdles. Human interactions have shattered these walls.

When the couple finds out they are pregnant, cultural boundaries are broken through, and they are able to pursue a new chapter of their lives because of their transformation. They didn't speak each other's languages and shared a similar culture. After a time of adaptation, the couple was able to successfully blend in. Indeed, the story demonstrates that language and cultural boundaries do not pose a barrier to human interactions in the first place.

b. The last sentence of the story says "The twentieth-century novel had not prepared him for this." In your view, what differences did the young man find between twentieth-century novels and human relations?

The birth is a wonder for the young guy, and Young man discovers at the conclusion of the story that the twentieth-century fiction had not adequately prepared him for it.

The subject of judgment is prominent in this short story; the newlyweds were fast to form a bad opinion of the neighbourhood, which was soon disproved by the events of the narrative; yet, the concept of forgiveness is also prominent. It surprised him to learn that there were significant contrasts between twentieth-century fiction and real relationships. While working on his thesis on a book set in the 20th century, he had an opinion on the way of life of migrants. Sick with all the immigrants he had to deal with in his new neighbourhood, he decided to move away from the city altogether. In the end, it turns out that his conception of twentieth-century novels was incorrect.

He had never anticipated his neighbours to come together in such a way before. The actions of migrants made him cry, and he finally understood the importance of the idea of humanity. It dawned on him how important human connections are. Human relationships are much more realistic than the things that are put down in books, which are more abstract.

There were a lot of surprising things that happened to the young guy in his life. He became a parent, his neighbours expressed their concern for him and his family, they were ecstatic at his pleasure, he wept when he saw such wonderful neighbours, etc. Due to their excellent connection with their neighbours, all of these things were feasible. Because of it he was unprepared for this. As a result of the human connection, he began to understand the importance of living in a community with other people.

This is a symbol that is used throughout the short tale to represent the characters. It has something to do with the subject of judgment. It relates to the views of the general public about migrants, such as those who live in the neighbourhood. A statement from the short story's conclusion, "The twentieth-century book had not prepared him for this," indicates that he has come to believe that the twentieth-century viewpoint on immigration was incorrect.

c. A Nepali proverb says "Neighbors are the companions for wedding procession as well as for the funeral procession." Does this proverb apply in the story? Justify.

This proverb defines the social harmony and relationship that the people in the Nepali community have with each other.

If someone has a marriage, people go there to help with arrangements, not only to celebrate. We can say it is almost impossible to conduct such ceremonies without the help of neighbours in our society. (Unless they go to some Party Palaces or hotels for arrangement). Similarly, if something unexpected or sad happens in one family, every family in society becomes ready to share the grief.

This proverb is also applicable in this story. When they were gardening, neighbours come there to help them with various suggestions, including giving them various materials and seeds for planting different vegetables. Similarly, they also give them an idea of how they can grow more and well. This thing proves that Neighbours helped them when there was a time they required.

On the other hand, They are also assisted by their neighbours when they had a happy and pleasant moment. Having a baby is a good moment, where every of their neighbour come there to celebrate and be the participant of their happiness. This complies with the Nepali proverb of “Neighbours are the companions for wedding procession as well as for the funeral procession”.

d. The author has dealt with an issue of multiculturalism in the story. Why do you think multiculturalism has become a major issue in the present world?

Multiculturalism is simply the condition of the existence of multiple cultures. Major problems with it are a language barrier and lack of communication which becomes an obstacle in adaptation in a new environment or to create healthy relations with different cultured people.

Cultural prejudice between individuals of various ethnic groups has become an important concern for me as a result of multiculturalism, and I believe that it will continue to be so in the future. As a result of cultural prejudice, there is a gulf between individuals. When the idea of diversity is introduced into a community, it creates chaos.

Various factors, such as the way people live, their various languages, and many more, keep people apart. Cultural diversity has put an end to concepts such as “humanity” and “human connections”. Violence, conflict, and other bad elements are a consequence of the multiculturalism idea in the modern world today. This idea of diversity has a negative impact on people and leads to discrimination in every field. There have been a lot of terrible things that have come out of this idea in the past. As a consequence of this idea, the planet will undoubtedly suffer in the future.

To sum up, the following are the major problems with multiculturalism.

- Language Barriers
- Lack of social harmony
- Civic dis-engagement
- Workplace Issues.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on Celebration of Childbirth in my Community.

Childbirth (especially the Nwaran) or the ninth day of the birth of a newborn baby is the ceremony or ritual that is performed to commemorate the birth of a child with pleasure and gladness, which is shared among family and community members.

Around the globe, childbirth day is widely observed. Children’s birth in my culture is a ceremony. The birth of a child is a joyous occasion for the whole family, as well as close friends. The news of a baby’s birth makes everyone in the family joyful. Newlyweds are greeted with jubilation by their family members and friends. They are ecstatic to applaud and greet the mother and her freshly born baby, and they do so with great enthusiasm.

The naming of the baby is also done on the same day. The community plays an essential part in each event or rite. People used to congregate at the place of the delivery to congratulate the parents and other family members. Moreover, they mark this important event by singing, dancing, and consuming delectable delicacies.

The new trend of celebrating the baby shower that is celebrated before the birth of baby is also evolving in our society but I'm against this ritual as it is not our traditional ritual. People in our community has been influenced from the foreign cultures of celebrating this type of thing which is actually against the things that we do in our typical cultures.

Every year, the birth of a child is greeted with pleasure and the bestowing of blessings by an older member or member of the wider community celebration of birthday. People and relatives offer them various presents and well wishes. This has helped to strengthen the relations in a society.

b. Do the people in your community respond with similar reactions upon the pregnancy and childbirth as depicted in the story? Give a couple of examples.

Yes, they do. People in our society are very responsive and cooperative. Not only do they respond to some neighbour's happy moments but all are ready to help all people in the community. This has helped people to strengthen the relations.

Pregnancy and childbirth are both well-recognized events in our culture. Every member of the family, as well as the neighbours, take part in this rite to commemorate the event. Females are treated with considerably more respect throughout pregnancy and delivery. She receives the attention and affection she deserves.

Every member of the family wishes a pregnant lady well. In the ceremonies like childbirth, people offer the family and mother various food and clothing items and wish sound health of both mother and infant. That is why I like my society very much. She receives a lot of health-related advice from her friends and family. Her family members take great care of her. As a result, she receives a number of benefits and presents. She is well taken care of, liked, and respected by everyone around her. Her pregnancy is likewise a cause for celebration, as is the fact that she is expecting.

The news of a baby's birth is eagerly awaited by the whole family and the entire neighbourhood. When the baby's first cry is heard, family and friends congratulate the parents. All of them clap for the newborn child as he or she is brought into the world. When a kid is born, it is a big deal. The baby's mother is warmly embraced by the whole family.

2. A Respectable Woman

Kate Chopin

Short Summary

Mrs Baroda finds that Gouvernail, her husband's friend, is staying with them on their plantation. She is dissatisfied by this because they had been having a lot of fun and she had hoped for a break. She'd never met the man but had heard a lot of good things about him. Upon seeing him, she develops a fancy for him right away. However, she notices that he has a mystery about him that she can't describe and

that she attempts to solve regularly. She assures her husband that she would be better once the man has left because he is different from other visits, which puzzles her. She makes the decision to depart till he has left.

She sits on a bench outside that night, pondering why he makes her feel so uncomfortable. Gouvernail runs into her late at night and tells her that her husband gave him a scarf to gift her while she's gone. The two sat in silence after exchanging a few words. He starts talking, but she doesn't pay attention because her body is drawn to him. She wants to hug him, but her reputation as "a respectable woman" prevents her from doing so. She begins to pull away from him as a result of this sensation. She eventually departs and returns home, debating whether or not to notify her husband. She also refuses and retires to her bed. She has left before the others have even gotten out of bed the next morning.

She returns after Gouvernail has left and initially objects to his reappearance. However, she champions his visit within a year, much to her husband's surprise. She simply states that she has overcome all obstacles and will treat him with respect.

Main Summary:

The short story "A Respectable Woman" is structured around the character of Mrs Baroda and her inner conflict as she finds herself attracted to her husband's friend. The conflict follows the pattern of classical fiction and moves from exposition to rising action and then to climax and resolution.

In the beginning, Mrs Baroda is upset to find that her husband's friend Gouvernail is intending to spend a week or two at their plantation, as she had planned a period of rest and talk with her husband Gaston Baroda after they had been busy all winter. She has never met Gouvernail, despite being aware that he and her husband were college buddies and that he is now a journalist.

At first, She has a mental image of him as a tall, slim, cynical man, which she dislikes, but when she meets Gouvernail, who is slim but neither tall nor cynical, she discovers that she likes him. Mrs Baroda is unsure why she likes Gouvernail because she does not see all of Gouvernail's positive characteristics. He doesn't appear intelligent, but in reaction to her excitement to welcome him and her husband's hospitality, he appears quiet and kind. He makes no effort to impress her in any way, and he enjoys sitting on the portico and listening to Gaston describe sugar plantation, although he dislikes fishing and hunting.

She finds Gouvernail puzzling, yet charming and unoffensive. She initially leaves him alone with her husband, but as she works to overcome his nervousness, she begins to accompany him on walks. Her husband informs her that he will be staying another week and inquires as to why she does not want him to. Gaston is delighted when she says that she prefers him to be more demanding.

Mrs Baroda claims that she expected Gouvernail to be more interesting. Gaston tells her that he does not expect a commotion over his visit and that he just wants a break from his busy life. She sits alone on a bench later that night, puzzled and desiring to leave the plantation, having told her husband that she might go to the city in the morning and stay with her aunt.

Gouvernail notices her and sits next to her, unaware of her discomfort with his presence. Gouvernail, on Gaston's behalf, hands her a scarf and speaks about the night, and his quietness fades as he talks for the first time. He tells her about his childhood and his wish for a peaceful existence. She is drawn to his

voice more than his words, and she considers drawing him closer, despite her resistance because she is “a respectable woman.” She eventually leaves, but Gouvernail stays behind to conclude his talk for the evening. She wants to tell Gaston about her peculiar foolishness, but she understands that she must deal with this emotion on her own.

Mrs Baroda goes for the city the next morning and does not return until Gouvernail has left. Gaston requests that Gouvernail return the next summer, but she rejects. She subsequently changes her mind, much to her husband’s surprise, who assures her that Gouvernail did not deserve her disapproval. She kisses her husband and vows that she has “overcome everything” and will now treat him with more respect.

Understanding the text

a. Why was Mrs Baroda unhappy with the information about Gouvernail’s visit to their farm?

→ Mrs Baroda was unhappy with the information about Gouvernail’s visit to their farm because he was a man she’d heard a lot about but had never met. She was unhappy also because she had planned a period of rest and conversation with her husband, Gaston Baroda from their busy life throughout all winter.

b. How was Gouvernail different from Mrs Baroda’s expectation?

→ Gouvernail was different from Mrs Baroda’s expectation as Mrs Baroda initially thought Gouvernail was confusing and boring, and that he was not the witty man that her husband had told her about. She imagined him to be tall, thin, and cynical, wearing eyeglasses and holding his hands in his pockets, and she disliked him. But one night on her plantation, she had a chat with him that transformed her dislike for him into a wish for connection with him.

c. How does Mrs Baroda compare Gouvernail with her husband?

→ Mrs Baroda finds Gouvernail attractive, but she does not perceive the same traits in him as her husband. She couldn’t find any of the brilliant and promising qualities that Gaston, her husband, had often informed her he possessed in him.

Despite his courtesy, Mrs Baroda considers him unsociable in comparison to her husband because he does not appear to be paying attention to her.

d. Why and how did Mrs Baroda try to change Gouvernail’s solitary habits?

→ Mrs Baroda tried to change Gouvernail’s solitary habits because she didn’t expect a commotion over his presence and he was no more interested in facts. She expected him to be more interesting.

She attempted to change her solitary habits by assuring him to be more talkative and adaptable to the situation.

e. How does Gaston disagree with his wife on Gouvernail’s character?

→ Gaston disagrees with his wife’s on Gouvernail’s character as a less interesting and shy figure, indicating rather that he is a remarkable, friendly, interesting, and talkative figure.

f. Why is Gaston surprised with his wife's expression towards the end of the story?

→ Gaston is surprised with his wife's expression towards the end of the story because she proposes by herself to have Gouvernail visit them again before the year ended which he has not ever expected from her side.

Reference to the context

a. **What is the cause of conflict in Mrs Baroda's mind? What role does Mrs Baroda 'being a respectable woman' play in the story?**

→ Mrs Baroda's attraction to her husband's friend is the main cause of conflict in Mrs Baroda's mind. Mrs Baroda appears to be bound by society's perception of what makes a respectable woman. Mrs Baroda seems to be attracted to Gouvernail, but she controls her urge to touch his face since she believes she is a respectable woman and is probably afraid of what society might think of her.

b. **Sketch the character of Gouvernail and contrast it with Gaston.**

→ From the short story "A Respectable Woman", we can find that Gouvernail in the present is a journalist. He is not as social as his friend Gaston since he does not appear to pay enough attention to the people around him.

Gaston is the story's only supporting character. He highly appreciates his friend Gouvernail, describing him as "intelligent" and a "man of ideas" to his wife. Gaston also appears to love his wife, addressing her as "ma belle" or "chère amie."

c. **Why does Mrs Baroda not disclose her feelings towards Gouvernail to her husband?**

→ Mrs Baroda does not disclose her feelings towards Gouvernail to her husband because she appears to be restricted to society's opinion. Mrs Baroda is well aware that society would view her action as inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour for a married woman.

Her beliefs about what makes a woman respectable in society take priority over her feelings and desires. Her fear of what society might think of her and her perception that she is a respectable woman prevented Mrs Baroda from telling her husband about her emotions for Gouvernail.

d. **The last three sentences of the story bring a kind of twist. After reading these three sentences, how do you analyze Mrs Baroda's attitude towards Gouvernail?**

→ The last three sentences of the story bring a kind of twist in the story "A Respectable Woman". The story has presented a sudden change in Mrs Baroda's inner characterization and way of thinking in the last three sentences.

Mrs Baroda has not only changed her mind about Gouvernail but she may also no longer be bound by society's view of what makes a respectable woman. Mrs Baroda has achieved freedom outside of the boundaries of society. We can assume that Mrs Baroda has not only overcome her own and society's perceptions of what a respectable woman is, but she is also ready to pursue a relationship with Gouvernail by telling Gaston, "I shall be very nice to him (Gouvernail)."

Reference beyond the text

- a. **The entry of an outsider into a family has been a recurring subject in both literature and films. Narrate a story real or imaginative where an outsider's arrival destroys the intimate relationship between the husband and the wife and causes break up in marital relationship without direct fault of anyone. Anton's Chekhov's story 'About Love' is a story on this subject.**

→ Anton Chekhov's story "About Love" is an interesting story where the arrival of Alyohin in Mr Lukanovich's family destroys the intimate relationship between the husband and the wife and it causes terrible troubles and mental stress to his wife Anna Lukanovich.

Mr Lukanovich and Anna are husband-wife living together in the city. Though there is a wide gap of age differences between the husband and the wife, they are living happily. In fact, Anna is a young lady of about twenty-two. She is married to a judge, a man of over forty. She is a young woman, beautiful, kind, intelligent and fascinating. Her gaze, her beautiful and delicate hands, her way of walking, her voice, and her hairstyle are all impressive to anybody. As the story opens, she has a six month's baby and later she has another baby. She has been living with her husband in peace and harmony. But the arrival of another man in her life damages her life entirely. Ultimately, she has a neurotic problem and she has to leave Alyohin. The same thing happens in the story "A Respectable Woman" with the arrival of Gouvernail in Baroda's family. In the former story, Anna leaves the city for Crimea to feel relaxed and refreshed and here in this story, Mrs Baroda leaves the plantation for her Aunt Octavie's so that she can get relaxed and refreshed from her mental stress.

- b. **Mrs Baroda makes an expectation about Gouvernail even before meeting him. Suppose you are a mature girl/boy and your family members are giving you pressure for getting married. Write in about 200 words describing what qualities you would like to get in your future husband/wife.**

→ Marriage is a lifetime decision. That's why one should never rush to this stage until he/she is fully sure about life partner. Otherwise, it may be the folly of a lifetime. It is a serious matter of life. One should put a lot of thought into intellect before deciding to marry someone. It is not as same as judging a book by its cover as there are many pages, paragraphs, sentences, and words in it. I hope to see the following qualities in my future wife/husband:

S/he has good manners to show his affection and care.

S/he admits his shortcomings and accepts my follies (Good Listener)

S/he enjoys my company and understands and respects my decision, too.

S/he knows my likes and dislikes, my birthday, and remembers to give me little gifts and surprises on different occasions.

S/he is sweet and has a good sense of humour.

S/he never places restrictions on me or the relationship.

S/he respects my family and friends and truly loves me.

S/he can balance his work and family and face challenges.

S/he is independent both financially and emotionally.

3. A Devoted Son

Anita Desai

Characters

Rakesh: He is the son of Varma who is a well behaved and dutious son. He is a brilliant student who becomes a doctor and has an opportunity to continue his practice and education in the USA. He is the son of a kerosene vendor Varma. In his father's old age, he supervises every bit of food his father eats and medicates him for every little complaint.

Veena: She is a simple and fat Indian girl married to Rakesh by the wish of his mother who is very loyal and dutiful by nature. She follows Rakesh's orders regarding his father's diet.

Varma: He works as an oil seller at Depoand he is the father of Rakesh who hardly educates his son and has pride over his son's achievement. But later he finds his son as a tyrant as he cuts his foodstuffs.

Bhatia: He is an old neighbour of Rakesh and a friend of Varma who participates in Rakesh's family conversation and activities. He lives next door and often joins Varma to sit outside and complain about the hardships that the two of them are facing.

Varma's wife: She is an unnamed lady who dies later, which leads to his unhappiness, and made him sick.

Rakesh's children: They are unnamed children who pass time and play with grandfather as well. Varma is briefly able to convince one of them to sneak him extra food.

Short Summary:

Anita Desai is a well-known Indian author. She has written several English-language novels. Almost every story she writes is about everyday Indian life and individuals. A Devoted Son is a short story about a father and son's bond.

The story revolves around Dr Rakesh. He's from a poor Indian village. Varma, his father, was a vegetable vendor. His father wished for a well-educated son. Rakesh is the first member of his family to attend college. Rakesh completed his medical exams with the highest marks in the country, which is a cause for celebration. Varma informs everyone who would listen about Rakesh's grades and how he can now go to medical school in America. Some people are frightened that Rakesh would forget his roots. Varma is unconcerned about this and is pleased that everyone knows his son's name.

Rakesh spends a significant amount of time in America to complete his degree; he successfully completes the degree and has job offers from major US hospitals. The awards he receives are returned to his family for them to admire and preserve. This allows him to stay in touch with his family. He adores America, but he adores his family more, and he has always intended to come home. He'll return as soon as he's gained enough experience and money. He intended to work in his hometown. His parents disagree with some of his life choices, such as why he wants to return home and why he marries a local girl with little schooling. Varma believes he should have higher ambitions.

Later, he begins working in a city hospital, which differs from the American hospitals he had previously worked in. He wants to work there because he wants to make a difference in his community. He rises quickly through the ranks and eventually becomes director. When his mother dies, his father, Varma, is heartbroken. Rakesh no longer has as much time to devote to Varma now that he has his own family. He does not want to lose his father any time soon, so he applies his medical expertise.

He forbids Varma from eating sweets to help him with his stomach. Varma tries to get sweets from his grandson, which frustrates Rakesh. Rakesh wants his son to have a positive relationship with Varma, just like Rakesh does. Varma tells Rakesh and his wife that he dislikes them, but he still keeps an eye out for Varma. Rakesh finally lets Varma leave, knowing that he has done everything he can for Varma.

Main Summary:

Anita Desai's "A Devoted Son" is a story of complicated familial bonds which highlights the change of dynamics in the relationship between the father, Varma and his son, Dr Rakesh. It is all about the duty and devotion that the son, Rakesh has for his parents. The son is brought up by his father, starts earning his livelihood and then, dutifully looks after his father. However, a crisis develops as his father, whimsical due to age, starts misinterpreting his son's treatment.

Rakesh was a son born to illiterate parents. His father, Varma, worked as a kerosene vendor and spent many years dreaming of having an educated son. Rakesh was the first to receive education in his generation and he managed it very well. Villagers felt proud as Rakesh scored the highest rank (flying colours) in the country for his Medical Examination. His father had a party where presents flowed into Varmaji's house as garlands, halwa, party clothes and fountain pens, even a watch or two. Having won a scholarship, Rakesh went to the USA (Varmaji didn't know the difference between the USA and America), where he worked in some most prestigious hospitals in the USA. Although Rakesh loved America, he loves his family more and therefore, he returned to his village with much money, touched his father's feet which was a matter of pride for the kerosene vendor. He married an Indian girl and removed all the doubts of the villagers to marry a foreigner. But he married an uneducated girl of their choice. The girl too was good-natured and they were soon blessed with a son.

Rakesh's rise continued and he soon went to the top of the administrative organization, the position of the Director of the city hospital, bought a car and then, he opened a private clinic as well. It was the beginning of his fortune. However, he took good care of his parents. Though he was in top position with his name and fame, he obeyed his parents, humoured his wife, hosted his friends, and in addition, was an excellent doctor.

However, Rakesh's joyride was short-lived as his mother passed away which led his father physically and mentally weak and sick. The birthday party of his son was broken when he knew his father was on the verge of death. Then, he changes his schedule and he brought his father's morning tea, read the newspapers and visited his father after returning from the clinic. All these couldn't make the father happy and even the situation worsened as Rakesh started to supervise his father diet or food by cutting down on oily fried food and sweets which made his father worried as he took these all treatment of his son as disrespect, strictness, and mal-treatment. His father complained to his neighbours that Rakesh was strict regarding his health. The old man even bribed his grandson and took sweets of him.

The father-son relationship went haywire. The old man began to hate his son and his daughter-in-law. The wife of Rakesh stayed out of trouble tactfully and Rakesh also took everything incorrect way. His several attempts to improve his father's mental and physical health went into vain. Determined, Varmaji announced that he didn't need his son's medicines. All that he wished was death.

Above all, old age is cyclic and all of us would step into its shoes one day. It is also called the second childhood. Because of this, Rakesh's father behaved in such a way. The remembrance of this fact can wake us up to the reality of this life. Rakesh, despite everything else, understood this, which made him stand apart and above the rest.

Understanding the text

a. How did the morning papers bring an ambience of celebration to the Varma family?

→ The morning papers displayed the result of Varma's son, Rakesh who scored the highest rank in the country for his Medical Examination and brought ambience of celebration in the Varma family as it was a matter of pride for the family.

b. How did the community celebrate Rakesh's success?

→ The community people celebrated Rakesh's success by visiting his small yellow house, congratulating the parents, filling his house and garden with the sound and colour festivals and offering gifts like fountain pens and watches.

c. Why was Rakesh's success a special matter of discussion in the neighbourhood?

→ Rakesh's success was a special matter of discussion in the neighbourhood because he was the first son in the family to receive an education, and he further topped in the Medical examination as well.

d. How does the author make fun with the words 'America' and 'the USA'?

→ The author makes fun with the words "America" and "The USA" by associating them with Verma's nature of dealing with the words as he considered "the USA" as more prestigious than "America". He said that America is the term to be called by his ignorant neighbours.

e. How does the author characterize Rakesh's wife?

→ The author characterizes Rakesh's wife as an old fashioned, plump and uneducated girl. She was so placid, complaisant and lazy but too good-natured and pretty fat one.

f. Describe how Rakesh rises in his career.

→ Rakesh started his career as a doctor in the city hospital and quickly reached the top of administrative organization and was made a director. Then, he opened his own private clinic, bought a car and became known not only as of the best but also the richest doctor in town.

g. How does the author describe Rakesh's family background?

→ The author describes Rakesh's family background as a man born to illiterate as well as very poor parents. His father worked for a kerosene vendor and his mother spent her life in a kitchen and his grandparents worked as vegetable sellers.

h. What is the impact of Rakesh's mother's death on his father?

→ Rakesh's father was stricken with grief by the death of his wife as well as his retirement. The old father very quickly went to pieces and fell ill so frequently with such mysterious disease named a peevish whim (sudden irritation in mind) that even his son could no longer make it out.

i. What did Rakesh do to make his father's old age more comfortable?

→ Rakesh brought his father his morning tea in the old man's favourite brass tumbler, and sat at the edge of his bed, comfortable and relaxed his father's night-shirt, and read out the morning news to him to make even more comfortable in his old age.

j. Why did the old man try to bribe his grandchildren?

→ The old man tried to bribe his grandchildren by the trick so that he could get a chance to eat Jalebis because his oily fried food and sweets were prohibited by his son.

k. Are Mr Varma's complaints about his diets reasonable? How?

→ From the point of view of an old father, Mr Varma's complaints about his diets may be reasonable to some extent but in fact, Rakesh as a devoted and obedient son and by profession, a doctor is right in his performances and activities because he conducts such activities for the healthy and better life of his sick father.

Reference to the Context

a. How did the Varma couple make sacrifices for their son's higher education?

→ Varma couple was from a poor background and they were illiterate as well. His father worked for a kerosene dealer and his mother in the kitchen. Even his grandparents worked as vegetable vendors. His parents worked hard and sacrificed their life, time, money and everything they have for the higher education and medical college of his child, Rakesh.

b. Mr Varma suffers from diseases one after another after his wife's death. Would he have enjoyed better health if she had not died before him? Give reasons.

→ Mr Varma suffered from diseases one after another his wife's death. I think all this happen to him due to his wife's death as it makes him alone and scattered. He thinks most of the time about his life partner which leads him stricken with grief. The old father very quickly went to pieces and fell ill. Thus, if she had not died before him, he would have enjoyed better health for few more days.

c. Dr Rakesh is divided between a doctor and a son. As a son, he loves his father and worries about his weakening health but as a doctor, he is strict on his father's diet and medicine. In your view, what else could Rakesh have done to make his father's final years more comfortable?

→ Dr Rakesh is divided between a doctor and a son. As a son, he loves his father and worries about his weakening health but as a doctor, he is strict on his father's diet and medicine. In my view, Rakesh could have done the following things to make his father's final years more comfortable:

Rakesh would have been more polite and respectful in his behaviour with his father in the final years.

He wouldn't have been so strict and miserable while regulating his father's diet and food.

His loud-speaking towards his father- "No butter?", "No oil", "No more bread?" makes the old man very troublesome and miserable.

d. What does the story say about the relationship between grandfather and grandchildren?

→ Desai's story "A Devoted Son" shows loving companionship between grandfather and grandchildren. They have good bonding. But in the story, grandfather is attracted towards his grandchildren to get some sweets like 'Jalebis' from them by using the trick as his oily fried food, and sweets were prohibited by his son, Rakesh. Anyway, we find innocent, tricky, trusty and bonding relationships between grandfather and his grandchildren in the story.

e. Do you call Rakesh a devoted son? Give reasons.

→ Yes, I call Rakesh a devoted son because of the following reasons:

He shows a great degree of tender regard for his mother.

He touches his father's on every good occasion.

Even though he studies in America, Rakesh does not bring back a foreign bride to his parents' home.

He marries an uneducated, old-fashioned village girl of his mother's choosing.

Though he treats his father as a medical professional, he does this for the better health and life of his father.

Thus, he is a perfect son, a loving father and husband, and a good physician.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on The Parents' Ambition for their Children in Nepali Society. You must give at least five examples.

→ Family refers to a wide network of extended relationships. Parents have great ambition for their children in Nepali Society. Most of the parents of the children are predetermined and preoccupied with the prejudices that their children to be the best person in the society such as the best doctor, the best engineer, the best teacher, and many more. Some instances provoke such ideas:

Due to parents' ambition for their children, some children labour hard to achieve their destination and got succeed in the end.

Parents are the facilitator and guides who can lead their children to the right path of success and help them to obtain achievement in life.

Every parent wishes their child to become the brightest star in the group. In some cases, their pushing to their kids leads them to succeed and help them to be better in life.

Sometimes, parent's determining the future of their children do not prove how good their parents are and it leads destruction of life as well. Thus, parents should listen to the voice and aim of their children as well for their better in future.

Anyway, the duty of parents is to stay close to their children, spend time together, playing and relaxing which will provide them with a sense of security and build a positive bond for their future.

b. Medicines replace our diets in old age. What can be done to make old ageless dependent on medicine?

→ Medicines replace our diets in old age. With age, the number of calories you need begins to ' decline. "As we get older, the body becomes less efficient at absorbing some key nutrients," says Katherine Tucker. In addition, the ability to taste food declines, blunting appetite. Some foods become difficult to chew or digest. Thus, medicines become the best option to replace our diets in old age. To make old ageless dependent on medicine, they should do the following things:

Eat plenty of colourful fruits and vegetables such as fruits like pineapples, oranges and vegetables such as carrots, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes.

Eat cereals, bread, crackers, rice or pasta every day mostly high fibre varieties.

Have low-fat or fat-free dairy (milk, or cheese) that are fortified with vitamin D to help keep your bones healthy.

Use of mustard oil or olive oil as a cooking medium as both prevent high cholesterol and improve good cholesterol in the blood.

Egg whites are a good source of protein to repair worn-out cells and tissues.

Vegetable soups without cream and thickening agents are a healthy meal to be taken as a supper.

Drink about 10-15 glasses of water a day to prevent dehydration especially in summer.

Also, exercise regularly, stretch and do yoga to ensure absorption of nutrients well.

Balancing physical activity and a healthful diet s the best recipe for health and fitness.

Set a goal to be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.

c. Write an essay on "Care of Elderly Citizens" in about 300 words.

→ Care of Elderly Citizens

Elderly citizens refer to old people who have crossed middle age. Old age is the final period of human life. During this time a person needs love and affection and proper elderly care. An old man doesn't have

many requirements. He/she only need a little affection, care, and a homely environment to spend his/her final stage of life.

Elderly people spend a major part of their lives in the building and shaping of our life and carrier, and thus it is our responsibility to repay them in their old age. Unfortunately, in today's world, some youth ignore their responsibility towards their parents. They are seen forgetting their moral duties towards elders. They aren't ready to understand the importance of elderly care and instead of caring for their parents during their old age, they prefer to send them to old age homes. They prefer to live an independent life rather than living with their parents. This is not a good sign for our society. Being social animals we need to know how to take care of old people. They should know how to take care of their elderly parents.

In fact, getting old is a natural process. During old age, people need utmost love and care. Caring for the elderly is not only a responsibility but also a moral duty. Old people are the backbone of a family. They are well experienced with the hardships of life. It is said that life teaches us lessons. Old people teach us how to grow, how to survive in this world and how to shape our carrier as well. They establish us in this world with their immense effort. It is our responsibility to pay them back during their old age.

Summary of The Treasure in the Forest by HG Wells | Class 12 English

The Treasure in the Forest Summary

4.The Treasure in the Forest

HG Wells

Characters

Evans and Hooker: two friends who make an adventurous journey to a Tropical island for hunting treasures.

Chang-hi- a Chinese man who has a map of the treasures.

Two other Chinese men- Chang-hi's co-workers

Short Summary:

"The Treasure in the Forest" is an ominous adventure story in which two men search for Spanish treasure, letting greed get the better of their awareness. As the story moves ahead to show how power and greed corrupt human beings.

The fundamental message of The Treasure in the Forest is to not take risks when we are unprepared. The two Englishmen took risks in an unfamiliar wilderness and were killed soon. This story was about two Englishmen who heard about gold on an island and obtained a map from a Chinese. So they paddled a canoe to the island, having fallen asleep aboard the boat. They drove their boat into a lagoon and up a

river in the forest, following the chart and successfully arriving at their destination. When they discovered the death of the Chinese they had spoken with, they were terrified and began to worry about their safety, but nothing occurred. They were packing the gold when Evans received a puncture from the gold. Evans tried to forget about it, but the deadly puncture caused him to die for a short time. Evans urged the other man, Hooker, to discard the bad gold. Hooker, on the other hand, was afraid and didn't even understand what his friend told him, and Hooker accidentally touched the gold. Finally, both of the men died.

This story succeeds in depicting the dreadful scenario when they confronted the danger, and the outcome of taking the risk will draw attention to others.

Main Summary:

The Treasure in the Forest is a suspense story, depicted as a third-person narrative, relating the fate of two treasure hunters, Evans and Hooker who murder a Chinese man and steal his treasure map, which locates a buried stash of gold ingots (blocks of several valuable things).

The story begins with two characters Evans and Hooker who were heading towards a coral island in the heat of the noon sun, after having paddled all night from the mainland through the sea in a canoe in search of Spanish treasure.

Hooker is studying a map of the treasures, which the narrator reveals they have stolen from a Chinaman, Chang-hi, whom they murdered during the theft. Chang-hi had by chance discovered the treasure left behind by a shipwrecked A Spanish galleon (ship), and had decided to rebury it elsewhere, at a location revealed by his map. They are very much tired and hungry as if they had no food to eat. They see the map and gets puzzled by the dashes shown on the map. Evans and Hooker identify the spot indicated on the map, and after beaching their canoe they strike into the interior of the island, through the forest.

As Hooker is sailing the boat, Evans falls asleep and sees a little fire with three Chinese people sitting around it in his dream. They were talking about the Spanish treasure which a Chinese man Chang-hi had got on an Island after being shipwrecked and he wanted to take those treasures away from there. They murder Chang-hi, a Chinese man, brutally and steal the treasure map. When Chang-hi gets murdered he grins at them. They travel by canoe sailing towards the coral island. However, neither of them understands the intention behind it. They follow the map and soon discover a forest, then a pile of stones just like the map. But then they find a man corpse full of bruises laid beside the purple and swollen body, which they assume is Chang-hi's worker who decided to take advantage by himself seeing the dug hole and some gold.

The two men load as much of the gold as they can drag back to the canoe in Evans's jacket and set off, but after about a hundred yards Evans's arms start to ache and eventually faints. Hooker, in rearranging the ingots on the jacket after Evans's collapse, himself feels a thorn prick, and at last, Hooker then realizes the true meaning that Chang-hi had behind his grin. Chang-hi had covered his treasure with thorns "similar to those the Dyaks poison (native groups of Borneo-blow pipe with lethal poison at its tip) and use in their blowing tubes. The story ends as Hooker lies dying alongside the "still quivering" body of his companion.

Understanding the text

a. Describe the expository scene of the story.

→ The story opens with the canoe approaching the land, by two treasure hunters, Evans and Hooker, a little river flowing to the sea, the thicker and deeper green forest, sloppy hill, and the sea.

b. What does the map look like and how do Evan and Hooker interpret it?

→ The map looks like a rough map, creased and worn to the pitch of separation. Evan interprets twisting lines in the map as the river and the star as the place and Hooker interprets the dotted line and straight line and the way to the lagoon in the map.

c. How did Evan and Hooker know about the treasure?

→ Evan and Hooker knew about the treasure by the conversation of the Chinese man and the map he has.

d. Describe Evan's dream.

→ Evan had a dream about the treasure and Chang-hi. In the dream, they were in the forest and saw a little fire where three Chinamen sat around it and talked in quiet voices in English. Evans went closer and he knew that Chang-hi took the gold from a Spanish galleon after shipwrecked and hid it carefully on the island. He worked alone and it was his secret, but now he wanted help to get the gold back. There was a battle and Chang-hi was brutally killed by them.

e. What do the two treasure hunters see when they walk towards the island?

→ The two treasure hunters see three palm trees in line with a clump of bushes at the mouth of the stream when they walk towards the island.

f. In what condition did the treasure hunters find the dead man?

→ The treasure hunters found the dead man lying in a clear space among the trees with a puffed and purple neck and swollen hands and ankles.

g. How did the treasure hunters try to carry gold ingots to the canoe?

→ The treasure hunters tried to carry gold ingots to the canoe with the help of the Coat of which one end of the collar catching by the hand of Hooker and the other collar by Evan.

h. How were Evan and Hooker poisoned?

→ Evan and Hooker were poisoned as a slender (thin) thorn nearly of two inches length pricked in Hooker's thumb and Evan rolled over him and both of them crumpled together on the ground which made them suffered a lot.

Reference to the Context

a. How do you know the story is set on a tropical island?

→ The story “The Treasures in the Forest” has been set on a tropical island. It begins with two men, Evans and Hooker, heading in a canoe towards a coral island in the heat of the noon sun, after having paddled all night from the mainland.

Here, Tropical islands are known to have uniquely naturally variable ecosystems, including tropical rainforests, open woodlands and grass savannahs, freshwater lakes and streams, salt marshes and mudflats (wetland), mangrove and coastal forests, seifs, fringing and offshore coral reefs, and deep sea.

As we go through the story, it opens with a canoe approaching land, and the setting of the bay, the white surf of the reef, the litter river, running to the sea, the virgin forest, sloppy hill, and so on. Its atmosphere, ecosystems, thicker and green forest, freshwater stream coastal forest, palm trees, thorny bushes, seagrass and depth sea illustrate the reader to know that the story is set on a tropical island.

b. Why do you think Evan and Hooker took such a risk of finding the buried treasure on a desert island?

→ I think Evan and Hooker took such a risk of finding the buried treasure on a desert island because of the following reasons:

Treasure Hunts help people develop new skills and strengthen and reinforce other skills such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving.

This is of equal benefit to employees and employers combined.

It develops the ability to tackle any difficult circumstances.

They think of risks as rewarding.

It is said that “Gold makes people crazy” to do something new.

It also reveals their greed for wealth.

c. Do you think the narrator of the story is racist? If yes, what made him feel superior to other races?

→ Yes, I find some sort of racist feelings in the narrator of the story when he presents. Evan and Hooker as superior to that of the Chinese man in the story. In fact, a racist is a person who is prejudiced against or antagonistic towards people based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. In the story, we find the Chinese man was brutally killed by Evans and Hooker. When Hooker said to Evans, “Have you lost your wit?”, It also reflects dominating nature of Hooker over Ivan. Thus, many instances in the story state that the narrator of the story looks like a racist.

d. What do you think is the moral of the story?

→ “The more they desire for greed and power, the more they become selfish” is the moral of the story “The Treasure in the Forest”. Evans and Hooker’s greed increase as they come to know about the treasures. They murdered the Chinese man Chiang-hi brutally and they went in search of treasures with the help of the map.

It is Greed that is the disordered desire for more than is decent, not for the greater good but one's own selfish interest, and at the detriment of others and society at large. Greed can be for anything but is most commonly for money or treasures and power is much more dangerous and it can lead to someone's death as well which we find in the story.

Reference beyond the text

a. Interpret the story as a mystery story.

→ H.G. Wells' "The Treasures in the Forest" is a mystery story involving two wastrels (neglected situation), the dead body of a Chinese man and thorns that draw blood in Hooker's thumb. It carries many suspenseful instances such as:

The story is about two treasure hunters, Evans and Hooker who seek to find the hidden treasures in the forest.

Hooker murder Chang-hi, a Chinese man to steal the treasure map. Chang-hi grins at them when he gets murdered.

They travel by canoe sailing towards the coral island. However, neither of them understands the intention behind it.

They follow the map and soon discover a forest, then a pile of stones just like the map. But then they find a man corpse of the Chinese man.

As soon as they see the gold Evans starts to pick them up back in the canoe, however, both of them suffer a lot.

Hooker then realizes the true meaning behind the grin of Chang-hi. Understanding the Text. Thus, it is a mystery story.

b. Treasure hunting is a favorable subject of children's story. Remember a treasure hunting story you read in your childhood and compare and contrast it with 'The Treasure in the Forest.'

→ I have read a treasure hunting story named "The Gold Bug" by Edgar Allan Poe.

Both "The Treasures in the Forest" and "The Gold Bug" are suspense stories.

In "The Gold Bug", William Legrand goes on treasure hunting on a remote island in South Carolina while in "The Treasure in the Forest", Evans and Hooker head to an unnamed tropical island in search of treasures.

The narrator in both of the stories is unnamed.

The island is found marshy with thick myrtle shrubs etc. in both of the stories.

The characters estimate the total value of the treasure at about one and a half million dollars in The Gold Bug but in The Treasures in the Forest, they carry treasures in a canoe.

The pet dog is used in The Gold Bug and the map is used in The Treasures in the Forest.

The Gold Bug deals with the themes like wealth and fortune and The Treasures in the Forest projects the themes like greed and power.

The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun

5. My old home

Lu Xun

About the Author:

Lu Xun or Lu Hsun (1881-1936) is the pen name of the writer born Zhou Shuren. He was born to a family with a strong Confucian background. His grandfather served as a high official in Beijing, and his father was also a scholar. Lu Xun has been considered China's greatest writer in the 20th century. He was a short story writer, essayist, and translator who is commonly considered the 'father of modern Chinese literature.' Known for his satirical observations of early 20th-century Chinese society, he is celebrated as a pioneer of modern vernacular Chinese literature and was one of the most important thinkers of his time. His popular novels and short story collections include A Madman's Diary (1918), Kong Yiji (1918), Medicine (1919), Tomorrow (1920), An Incident (1920), The Story of Hair (1920), A Storm in a Teacup (1920), Hometown (1921). The story 'My Old Home' is taken from the short story collection Hometown.

"My Old Home" is a story about Xun's memories, from youth to middle age that depicts the conflict between memories and realities. The story describes how Xun feels while being away from home for many years. Upon arriving at his long-past home, his memories are forced to come to confront the realities. His prior conceptions and understandings of the world come into conflict with his realities.

Characters

Lu Xun: He is the young Master and the narrator. He is considered a miser in the sense he does not want to give away the furniture to the poor rather wants to sell them.

Runtu: He is the former temporary servant of Lu Xun. He is a shy in nature but "high in spirit"

Hong'er: Lu Xun's eight-year-old timid and shy Nephew who soon be friends with Shu Sheng, the son of Runtu

Shu Sheng: He is the 5" son of Runtu who is also very shy and converses only during social ceremonies.

Lu Xun's mother: who greets him at his arrival in the Old House.

Lu Xun's father

Elder brother Shun: The one who wants to keep some kitchen furniture.

Poor folks: They work in the field but there is no change in their lifestyles.

Mrs Yang: She is a neighbour who accuses the narrator of being miserly and people call her the "Beancurd Beauty" because she sits in a bean curd (milk products) shop opposite Lu Xun's home.

Short Summary:

The story "My Old Home" takes place in China, in the narrator's hometown of a little village. He returns to his childhood home. Although his hometown has not improved, it is not as sad as it once was. The major reason he is returning to his previous house is to send his home a final farewell and to shift his family to another location where he works. He has many flashbacks to his childhood while he is there. He reflects on a great bond he had with Runtu that did not endure long. He has fond memories of Runtu. Runtu was just over ten years old when the narrator first met him. That year, it was his family's time to oversee a large ancestral sacrifice. The sacrificial vessels had to be guarded. Runtu was given the task of looking after the sacrificial vessels after the narrator's father granted permission. He was thrilled because he had known Runtu for a long time and knew he was around his own age.

The narrator meets Mrs Yang, who used to spend practically the entire day in the beancurd shop. Everyone used to refer to her as Beancurd Beauty. Runtu then arrives to see the narrator. He has grown to twice his former size. He acts as if the narrator is his master and ranks higher than him. The narrator and his mother come across Runtu, who is suffering from poverty. Following his departure, his mother suggests that they should provide him whatever they are not going to take away, allowing him to choose for himself. He selects two long tables, four chairs, an incense burner and candlesticks, and one balance that afternoon. He also requests that all of the ashes from the stove be removed. The narrator, along with his nephew and mother, departs from his old home at the end of the storey. He learns that all of L memories, as well as his former home, are being abandoned.

Main Summary:

Lu Xun's "My Old Home" is an autobiographical novel about the authors' persona, Lu Xun, as the narrator and his memories which he is recalling of his childhood in his brilliant home. He can't describe how much he loved it and how proud he was to grow up in the home. The story projects the conflict between recollections and realities.

The narrator revisits his Old Home after twenty years in 1911 during the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty; he doesn't believe his eyes at first. Here, his Old House as a symbol represents his old recollections. He is greeted by his mother and nephew. So many changes have been made but not in positive tracks rather he finds his house in a ruined position, twenty years of weather, renovations and other families. Lu Xun reconciles with his relatives including Mrs Yang, a neighbour who accuses him of being miserly. Xun feels ashamed when the bean curd lady says he is being miserly for he does not want to give away his furniture. His prior conceptions come into conflict as he faces the realities of his Old Home town.

He comes to know that his old childhood friend Runtu will be reuniting with Lu at the home. He recalls his brief relationship with his childhood friend and a part-time labour boy, Runtu. Their friendship was lively, positive and brother-like. They enjoyed talking about catching animals like Badgers, Zha and Hedgehogs. They were not so worried about the outside world.

After 30 years, as time passes and people change, Runtu became much more mature as he experiences a rough life due to heavy taxes social responsibilities, famines, bandits, officials and landed gentry. These factors have influenced Runtu's attitude towards the narrator. Runtu does not act like a friend towards Xun, but rather an inferior acquaintance since Lu Xun ranks higher than him in society. When Runtu arrives the first thing he says is "Hello Master." This is when Lu realizes that Runtu wasn't really

his friend but more of a servant, their friendship was mutual but not the way Lu thought. Runtu behaves as if the narrator is his master and has a higher status than him.

Finally, Lu hopes his children don't come to realize the class differences in China and hopefully they won't drift apart that affect their friendship. Xun hopes that his nephew won't lose his friendship with Runtu's son. He hoped that both of them will not suffer from social responsibilities like Runtu.

To wrap up, the story forwards a message that as one leaves one destination for better opportunities and place, he/she recollects memories behind it. Xun highlights the importance of loyalty through the wary character of Runtu. A friendship won't last if one is only caring about himself and wealth. Their friendship changes because of the hardships they go through. Society dictates, disallowing them to be friends. People from different classes cannot interact and develop mutual relations. They have to fulfil their roles in certain positions.

Understanding the text

a. How does the narrator describe his feeling at the arrival of his old home?

→ The narrator has many exciting and happy feelings regarding his old home before his arrival but his exciting feelings convert into depressing ones as he sees surroundings and environment which have no progress as he arrives.

b. What were the three kinds of servants in China then? What does it indicate about contemporary Chinese society?

→ The then three kinds of servants in China were:

Yearlongs: Those who work the whole year long for one family.

Short-timers: Those who work in the daytime.

Busy-monthers: Those who plough their own land but work for a specific family just during the holidays or rents time.

It indicates that contemporary Chinese society had a slavery system and hierarchy.

c. What makes the narrator nostalgic? What did he do with Runtu in the teenage?

→ As the narrator's mother asks him to meet Runtu, he becomes nostalgic. He played with Runtu on the sandy ground among watermelons and stabbing at the Zha in the teenage.

d. How did Runtu hunt a Zha in his young age?

→ Runtu hunted a Zha by stabbing at it in his young age.

e. How does the narrator make a humorous picture of Mrs. Yang?

→ The narrator makes a humorous picture of Mrs Yang by associating her as a bean curd lady who accuses him of being miserly for he does not want to give away his furniture to her.

f. According to the narrator, what were different factors that made Runtu a poor man throughout his life?

→ According to the narrator, the different factors that made Runtu a poor man throughout his life were the heavy taxes, social responsibilities, famines, bandits, officials, landed gentry and class differences that he went through.

g. How does the narrator help Runtu before leaving the old home?

→ The narrator helps Runtu by providing him with two long tables, an incense burner, some candlesticks, and a set of scales before leaving the old home.

h. How does the author differentiate two kinds of idols?

→ The author differentiates two kinds of idols saying that a “superstitious idol” is worshipping for a while for something immediate but “hope” as not an idol that he wants somewhere far off in the murky distance.

Reference to the Context

a. While reading the friendship between the narrator and Runtu, Hindu readers remember the friendship between Krishna and Sudama. Which particular description reminds you of the mythological example?

→ While reading the friendship between the narrator and Runtu, Hindu readers remember the friendship between Krishna and Sudama. Following descriptions of the story “My Old Home” remind us of the mythological connections:

Sudama was Lord Krishna’s classmate and a very intimate friend. Lord Krishna was a King. Sudama was an impoverished poor Brahmin. The same case is found in the friendship and relationship between Lu Xun and Runtu the former is from the rich and upper class as master and the latter one is very poor.

Sudama felt very shy when he visited Krishna same as Runtu felt ashamed and nervous as he meet his friend and master Lu Xun

Sudama was helped by Krishna at the end and in the same way, Runtu was helped by Lu Xun by providing several kitchen things at the end.

Both of the stories teach us the message that we should never expect anything free in life and a friend in need is a friend indeed.

b. How does the story support the proposition that the relationships of childhood are innocent, impartial and disinterested?

→ The story “My Old Home” supports the proposition that relationships of childhood are innocent, impartial and disinterested. As we go through the story, we come to know that the narrator, Lu Xun and Runtu had a childhood friendship when there were no class differences rather an innocent relationship found between them.

The notion of innocence refers to children’s simplicity, their lack of knowledge, and their purity not yet spoiled by mundane (boring) affairs. Such innocence is taken as the promise of a renewal of the world by the children. The same innocence can be realised as they were children and they used to pass the time together by stabbing Zha, badger and porcupines. They run here and there in the field of

watermelon. They had a master and part-time worker relationships. They had no any selfishness behaviour. Their friendship and relation were pure, impartial and disinterested. The same relations the narrator hopes to see in his nephew and Runtu's son.

c. After reading the story, what inferences can you make about contemporary Chinese economic and social system?

→ After reading the story "My Old Home", we can make the following inferences about contemporary Chinese economic and social system:

The story portrays the complex relationships in the peasant community in China's society at the time.

It mentions about the real physical sufferings of the peasants resulted from economic exploitation and exposes the root causes of their miserable lives.

It exposes how miserable the peasants' mentality was after they have been long poisoned by feudal ideas.

For instance, Runtu is an unforgettable and pathetic person who suffered much from hard work and sub-marginal living.

It makes people clear about the class system, slavery system and hierarchy in China presenting three kinds of servants in China such as Yearlongs: those who work the whole year long for one family, Short-timers: those who work by the day time and Busy-monthers: those who plough their own land but work for a specific family just during the holidays or rents time.

Above all, society dictates, disallowing them to be friend. People from different classes cannot interact and develop mutual relations. They have to fulfil their roles at certain positions.

d. What does the story indicate about the geographical features of the narrator's hometown?

→ Geographically, the story "My Old Home" has been set in 1911 during the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in the hometown of the narrator. It was in the depth of winter when the story opens and the clouded sky over with the cold wind. The narrator peeps through the window in a distant horizon, towns and villages under a vast and greying sky. The area the narrator remembered was far more lovely. His hometown was probably nothing more than what lay before him. Then, the narrator talks about his visit to his farm which was under a blue-black sky, beneath it a stretch of sandy ground planted with emerald green watermelons stretching as far as the eye could see, and standing in the midst of all those melons and then about New Year Celebrations. He also talks about collecting shells near the beach, visiting the seashore just before spring tides and nighttime guarding the farm along with his father and catching birds and stabbing animals like badgers, porcupines etc.

Reference beyond the text

a. **Human beings are on the road from time immemorial, always migrating to new places. Write an essay on The Trend of Migration in Nepal in about 300 words.**

→ The Trend of Migration in Nepal

Nepal is a country where developments, employments and industrial growth are limited, making land the most economic asset.

The population in the mountain regions of Nepal has exceeded the carrying capacity of the land. Therefore, people are moving to the more arable lands of the Terai. It is estimated that 40% of Nepal's population is concentrated in the hill and mountain regions, while 60% of farmland is in the Terai

There are basically two factors for rural to urban migration in Nepal, the Pull factor and the Push factor. Opportunities for employment, physical facilities, entertainment facilities, better future, secure life, social respect etc. are the pull factors. On the other hand, hardships, poverty, unemployment, lack of facilities etc. are the push factors.

Besides, survival, resources, demand and supply, religion, and economy are the factors responsible for intellectual migration. In the context of Nepal, many people from Himalayan and hilly regions migrate to Terai for better opportunities, employment, and trades. Some people leave the for settlement as well. Internal migration is widely found in the country.

b. Find one of your relatives or friends, who has migrated to a new place leaving his/her old home. Talk to him/her and prepare a report on what he/she felt while leaving the old home.

→ My Uncle and Aunt along with her two children and his parents have recently migrated to the capital city Kathmandu from a remote village as he bought a beautiful house there.

According to my conversation with him, the Uncle returned home after ten years from the city. He collected things necessary and sold the furniture and donated something to his neighbours. Uncle distributed some kitchen things to his neighbours as well. He had nostalgia for his villagers. He missed his childhood days enjoyed with his friends and the places where he had fun with his near and dear ones. He found his relatives were standing at his gate at the time of departure. They looked sad. They were looking at Uncle and his family members curiously. All of them said 'farewell' to him. He said 'goodbye' to all of them and left his old home.

6. The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun

Shankar Lamichhane

Shankar Lamichhane (1928-1975) was born in Kathmandu but lived in Banaras with his uncle at a young age. After receiving a college education at Tri-Chandra College in Kathmandu, he took his first job at the age of twenty-two and worked for several governmental and cultural institutions in the capital. In his later years, he became the manager of a handicrafts store. Lamichhane was an admirer of modern American fiction and frequently mixed with foreign visitors to Nepal. His stories are heavy with symbolism, often lacking a conventional plot and more closely resembling essays, but his prose is rich and poetic. This story is taken from Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Nepali Literature translated and edited by Michael Hutt.

The story deals with the monologues of two characters a tourist guide in Kathmandu valley and a foreign tourist. The story is different from conventional stories and, instead of showing actions and events, the story records what the two characters think in a stream of consciousness technique.

Characters:

The tourist: A Westerner or a Guest who holds aesthetic vision regarding Nepal based on his study in history, culture and religion.

The Guide: A Nepalese person and a tourist guide having good knowledge about the Nepalese art, culture, geography and religion but has a feeling of inferiority in comparison to the westerners.

The farmer's family: The simple farmer's family living in a remote village having high faith, intimacy, kindness, and gratitude in themselves.

A paralyzed child: A boy who suffers from Polio disorder and he can't speak properly, nor he can move his body parts except his eyes indicating purity.

Main Summary:

"The Half-Closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun" by Shankar Lamichhane is a simple story being told through a discussion between two characters: a tourist and a guide. It was included in the anthology Himalayan Voice: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature, which was released in 1991. The story is set in and around Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city.

In the story, both of the characters act as narrators. The first is a Nepali guide, and the second is a foreign tourist. However, the western tourist pretends to be an expert, saying, "I could take you along your ancient ways." "You are my tour guide for today, but I feel I can help guide you as well," the Nepali guide replies, indicating that he understands more about the subject at hand.

The story begins with a pleasant atmospheric description of the Kathmandu valley, complete with visual beauty and various colours of homes, blue hills, and so on. The guest then remarks that the East has contributed so many things, such as the Purans, ancient tools, ivory ornaments, palm leaf manuscripts, and copperplate inscriptions. The tourist then tells the stories of Manjushri and how he stroked with his sword at Chobhar, allowing people to settle in Kathmandu Valley later on, as well as "the samyak gaze" of the shaven-headed monks and nuns who were receiving alms and spreading Buddhist preaching near the Kasthamandap, which represented purity.

They then discuss their passion for wooden figures, Nepalese folk music, various cultures such as Aryans, no-Aryans, Hindus, and Buddhists, and drinking wine. The tourist expresses gratitude to the guide for supplying him with Nepali and Newari cuisine. Following that, they examine the lives and histories of Princess Bhrikuti and King Amshuvarma, as well as how the King cultivated his relationships with his neighbouring countries, a story projected in the picture and related by an elderly man to his grandson. The tourist is overjoyed by the welcoming smiles he receives wherever he goes, comparing it to the farmer's son returning home from hard work and assuming himself and the people's hospitable behaviour. They have one more drink for the Nepalese people's beautiful smile.

Then they explore other types of eyes, such as the eyes in the windows, the eyes on the door panels, the eyes on the stupas, the eyes of the people, the eyes of the Himalaya, and the half-closed eyes of the

Lord Buddha, referring to the country as a land of eyes. These eyes reveal a new culture, a diversity of religions, civilisation, vivid memories, and a long trip.

The guide tells about the temple of Adinath, the Shiva shrine encircled by several other pictures of Buddha- a living example of Nepalese tolerance and coexistence- but the guide takes the guest to a house where he discovers the pulse of reality. It's a farmer's family with a paralysed youngster (polio-affected boy) whose entire body is worthless and he can't speak, move his hands, chew his food, or even spit, except for his eyes, which are just opposite his sister's. As the guide introduces the visitor as a doctor, the parents are overjoyed. In their eyes, there is a depth of faith, connection, kindness, and thankfulness.

At last, the guide adds that these are mountains' eyes, and their lashes are rows of fields where rice ripens in the rains and wheat ripens in the winter. They are as lovely as the setting sun's reflection in the Buddha's eyes.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. How does the tourist describe his initial impression of the Kathmandu valley?

→ The tourist describes his initial impression of the Kathmandu valley as green, with geometric fields, earthen buildings in red, yellow, and white, and the aroma of soil and mountains in the air.

b. According to the tourist, why is the West indebted to the East?

→ According to the tourist, the West is indebted to the East for the pleasant atmosphere, religious and cultural sculptures, the Purans, ivory ornaments, manuscripts of palm leaves, inscriptions on copperplate old tools, and many other things.

c. How does the tourist interpret the gaze of the monks and nuns?

→ The tourist interprets the gaze of the monks and nuns as 'the samyak gaze,' which denotes pure and uncontaminated perception; a sight that detects everything in its genuine form.

d. Why do the tourists think Nepali people are wonderful and exceptional?

→ The tourists think Nepali people are wonderful and exceptional because of their ability to create exceptional wooden images, as well as numerous ornamentations and beautiful images of deities, enchanting music from traditional musical instruments, and hospitable behaviour through diverse cultural and religious ceremonies.

e. What are the different kinds of communities in the Kathmandu valley and how do they co-exist with each other?

→ The different kinds of communities found in the Kathmandu valley are Aryans, non-Aryans, Hindus, and Buddhists and they co-exist with each other in harmony.

f. What does the tourist feel about the temple of Adinath?

→ The tourist feels the Adinath temple is a live example of Nepalese tolerance and coexistence.

g. Why does the guide take the tourist to the remote village?

→ The guide takes the tourist to a remote village to show the tourist the pulse of reality through the eyes of a farmer's family, their hard labour, clean environment, and miserable living.

h. What does the innocent village couple think of the doctor?

→ The innocent village couple thinks of the doctor as the rays of hope for life.

i. What are the differences between the paralyzed child and his sister?

→ The difference between the paralyzed child and his sister is that the paralyzed child's entire body is worthless; he can't speak or crawl, and just his eyes are living parts of his body, but the sister's entire body operates normally. She can speak, crawl, and move her body freely.

j. Why does the guide show the instances of poverty to the tourist?

→ The guide shows the instances of poverty to the tourist so that he understands the really terrible poverty of people living in remote locations, as well as their lack of security and modern conveniences despite their hospitable behaviour.

Reference to the Context

a. Which narrative technique is used by the author to tell the story? How is this story different from other stories you have read?

→ Shankar Lamichhane, the author, uses the stream of consciousness as a narrative technique to narrate the story "The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun."

This story differs from others I've read since most other stories are told in the first person, with the narrator or persona describing the events in his own words, however, this story is told through the monologues of two characters, a tourist guide in Kathmandu Valley and a foreign tourist. Furthermore, unlike traditional stories, the story uses a stream of consciousness technique to capture what the two protagonists think rather than portraying actions and events. In this context, stream of consciousness is a writing style or storytelling approach that reflects the natural flow of a character's extended mental process, frequently by including sensory experiences, recollections, unfinished thoughts, unique syntax, and sloppy grammar. This approach of stream of consciousness, on the other hand, is not found in any of the prior stories I've read.

b. How is the author able to integrate two fragments of the narration into a unified whole?

→ The author of the story "The Half-Closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun" attempts to integrate two pieces of narration into a unified whole by connecting them with instances of eyes and associating them with two separate universes. The author is detailing events that are happening in the community as well as the activities that people do for a living. On the other hand, he ties it to the world of farmers, where people are uninformed of the real world and suffer from a variety of traditional beliefs and diseases.

Thus, by connecting two separate worlds or conceptions of the East and the West, he conveys the message that one should picture things deeply through their deeper eyes and comprehend the true

meaning of the circumstance. He associates the guide's journey with the tourist and watching the thing on the one hand, and the guide explaining the meaning of the places and activities on the other through examples of eyes and his narrative techniques of stream of consciousness on the other.

c. The author brings some historical and legendary references in the story. Collect these references and show their significance in the story.

→ In the story "The Half-Closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun," the author Shankar Lamichhane brings some historical and legendary references. The following are the references and their significance:

The mention of Manjushri and his sword stroke at Chobhar, which caused the Bagmati River to overflow, represents her contribution to allowing people to live in the valley.

The Puranas, depictions of brass and ivory ornaments, palm leaf manuscripts, and copperplate inscriptions all demonstrate that the Nepalese people are rich in culture, traditions, religions, and art crafts.

The eyes of the shaven-headed monks and nuns represent 'the samyak gaze,' which implies pure and uncontaminated perception; a sight that perceives everything in its genuine form.

The mentions of Princess Bhrikuti and King Amshuvarma illustrate historical ties or relationships with neighbouring countries such as Tibet.

The beautiful light of the sunset reflected in the Buddha's eyes shows Nepal as a country of Buddha with many more hopes and peaceful sentiments in the people.

The Adinath temple is a live example of Nepalese tolerance and togetherness.

d. The author talks about the eyes in many places: the eyes of the shaven monks and nuns, eyes in the window and door panels, the eyes of the Himalayas, the eyes of the paralyzed boy, the eyes of the welcoming villagers and above all the half-closed eyes of the Buddha. Explain how all the instances of eyes contribute to the overall unity of the story.

→ In the story "The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun" the author talks about the eyes in many places such as The eyes of shaven monks and nuns indicating 'the samyak gaze' which means the sight that perceives everything in its true form. The eyes of the carved lattice windows, the eyes painted on the door panels. The eyes on the stupas, the eyes of the people, the eyes of the Himalayas, the eyes of the paralyzed boy, the eyes of the welcoming villagers and above all the half-closed eyes of the Buddha. These all instances of eyes indicate that it is a land of eyes, a land guarded by the half-closed eyes of the Lord Buddha. Even if all of the world's history books were destroyed today, but it is these eyes which displays a new culture, civilization, religion, natural beauty and the land of Buddha. The journey becomes meaningful by the memories obtained by the eyes.

In this way, the author connects various instances of eyes to memories that people acquire and people's appetites that never come true as they imagine something with their inner eyes and hearts, and therefore unites the story as a whole.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on Living Proximity to Nature.

→ Nature is made up of everything we see around us, including trees, flowers, plants, animals, the sky, mountains, and forests. Humans rely on nature for a variety of reasons, the most important of which being survival. Nature provides us with oxygen, food, water, shelter, medicines, and clothing. Nature's various colours are what make the Earth appealing and appealing. Nature includes everything that surrounds us, such as air, water, animals, the sun, and the moon. Nature is vibrantly coloured, and it contains both living and non-living organisms. Nature provides food and shelter to animals, fish, and insects as well. Nature is critical to the growth and balance of life on Earth.

People are inextricably linked to nature because it is the finest place for them to live, and it is nearly impossible to live in the world without it. It offers various sources of energy, organic agriculture, and so on. It goes without saying that we should assist people in reducing natural damage, reusing items, and recycling used elements to create fresh ones. People from all over the world should work together to reduce the strain on the environment and restore its balance.

b. The story talks about the ethnic/religious co-existence of different communities in Nepal, where the Buddhists and the Hindus and the Aryans and non-Aryans have lived in communal harmony for ages. In your view, how have the Nepali people been able to live in such harmony?

→ In the story "The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Sinking Sun" the author talks about the ethnic/religious co-existence of different communities in Nepal, where the Buddhists and the Hindus and the Aryans and non-Aryans have lived in communal harmony for ages.

In my view, the Nepali people have been able to live in such harmony as people from many ethnic and religious origins worship some common deities in addition to their clan or family deities. This is due to historical, cultural, political, and geographical factors. Nepal's various ethnic groups arrived in the country from various directions, bringing their religious traditions with them. However, there was no single majority group, and no one community could entirely force the other to abandon its spiritual system. The fact that the East's faith systems are not dictatorial like the Abrahamic faiths made it simpler for people to embrace the deities and customs of others.

7. A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

About the Author: Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1927-2014) was a Colombian-born Spanish American novelist, short storey writer, and journalist. He is known as the literary volcano of the 1960s and a proponent of a new storytelling style known as magical realism. One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967), his novel, is regarded as a classic example of magical realism. Marquez is one of the best novelists in the world, and possibly the best in Spanish literature. Gabriel Garcia Marquez and magical realism are synonymous for many readers. Magical Realism is a narrative mode in which the

real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are represented in equivalence. *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961), *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985), and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) are among Marquez's other best-known novels. In 1955, the story 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings' was published for the first time.

Characters:

The Angel/The Old Man: Pelayo discovers an elderly guy with gigantic wings resting in the mud of the courtyard, and he and his wife imprison him in a chicken coop. Not only does the old guy have wings, but he also talks in a dialect that no one understands.

Pelayo: Pelayo, Elisenda's husband, discovers the old guy with wings lying in the mud. He makes a lot of money by exhibiting the old guy, and then he constructs a big building with a rabbit warren.

Elisenda: Pelayo's wife is the one who comes up with the idea of charging an entry fee to visit him to make a lot of money after seeing the crowd.

The Child: Pelayo's child is sick when Pelayo finds the old guy, but his fever comes down through the night. When the angel is no longer a carnival attraction, the child occasionally plays with him in the chicken coop.

Neighbour Woman: The neighbors woman knows everything there is to know about life and death, and she claims that the elderly guy is an angel who was probably on his way to save their ill kid when he was pushed down from the sky by the rain.

Father Gonzaga: Before becoming a priest, Father Gonzaga worked as a woodcutter. His perspective on the old man differs from that of the neighbour woman. He advises the crowd to treat the angel kindly and with dignity, even if he doubts him.

The Spider-Girl: The spider girl is the woman that transforms into a spider. She's a carnival attraction. She was once a young maid, but one night she fled from her house to dance, and when she returned home, a lightning bolt of brimstone transformed her into a large spider known as a giant tarantula. She ate the meatballs thrown at her by the audience.

Main Summary:

A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings by Gabriel Garcia Marquez narrates the story of Pelayo and his wife Elisenda, who discover an old man with wings in their courtyard after killing crabs in a rainstorm.

Pelayo, a poor fisherman, discovers a homeless, disoriented old man with incredibly huge wings in his courtyard. The old man speaks in an unfamiliar language. As a result, he and his wife speak with him in vain. Pelayo and his wife, Elisenda, believe after consulting a neighbour woman that the old guy must be an angel that attempted to come to take their sick child to heaven. The neighbour woman advises Pelayo to club the angel to death. And they lock the angel in the chicken coop, and their child's fever breaks in the middle of the night. As a result, Pelayo and Elisenda feel sorry for their visitor.

The local priest, Father Gonzaga, tells the people that the old man is most likely a fake angel because he is shabby and does not speak Latin. Father Gonzaga decides to seek advice from his bishop. He promises to obtain the true truth from the church's higher authorities. The news of the angel travels like wildfire, and the courtyard quickly takes on the appearance of a marketplace. Elisenda then comes up with the brilliant idea of charging a 5 cent entrance fee to visit the angel; they become rich very quickly. The old man mostly ignores the crowd, even when they pull his feathers and throw stones at him to get him to stand. When the visitors sear him with a branding iron to determine if he's still alive, he becomes angry. Rome takes its time determining whether or not the old guy is an angel, and while waiting for their decision, Father Gonzaga works tirelessly to keep the crowd under control.

When a travelling freak show featuring a Spider-Girl arrives in the village, the crowd begins to disperse. Spectators are permitted to question her, and she tells them how she was transformed into a tarantula one night for disrespecting her parents. This is more appealing to the general public than an old winged man who ignores the people around him. As a result, the curious crowds immediately ignore the angel in favour of the spider, leaving Pelayo's courtyard empty. The sad story of the spider woman is so well-known that people quickly forget about the old guy, who had only performed a few meaningless semi-miracles for his pilgrims.

Despite this, Pelayo and Elisenda have become very wealthy as a result of the admittance fees Elisenda has imposed. Pelayo quits his work and begins construction on a new, larger home. As the small boy grows older, the elderly man stays with them for several years, living in the chicken coop.

They ignore the angel and keep their kid away from the chicken coop. He quickly becomes a part of their lives, and they begin to accept him. The child pays him frequent visits. When the chicken coop falls, the old guy goes into the adjacent shed, but he frequently wanders from room to room inside the home, which annoys Elisenda.

He becomes increasingly weak and sick, and they believe he will die. But he quickly recovers. His feathers regrow, and he starts singing sea chanteys (sailors' songs) to himself at night. Elisenda watches as the elderly man extends his wings and flies off into the air, and to her relief, he disappears beyond the horizon.

To conclude, the old man appears as an eponymous (wrongly titled) persona who appears in a family's backyard on a stormy night. It also shows the combination of reality and illusion – a story that appears real yet contains elements of imagination.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. How does the narrator describe the weather and its effects in the exposition of the story?

→ It had been raining for three days in the exposition of the story, and Pelayo was dumping the crabs inside his house into the water. The sea and sky had become a single ash-grey entity, and the beach's sands, which had glinted like powdered light on March nights, had turned into a stew of mud and decaying shellfish.

b. Describe the strange old man as Pelayo and his wife first encounter within their courtyard.

→ When Pelayo and his wife Elisenda came across the unusual elderly man in their courtyard, they discovered him dressed as a rag picker (a person who collects and sells rags). Only a few faded hairs remained on his bald head, and he was in the terrible condition of a drenched great-grandfather, his large buzzard wings dirty and half-plucked entangled in the mud.

c. Why did Pelayo and Elisenda imprison the old man in the chicken coop?

→ Pelayo and Elisenda imprisoned the old man in the chicken coop after discovering that he was an angel who had come with a plan to take their child.

d. Why was Father Gonzaga not sure about the old man being a celestial messenger?

→ Father Gonzaga was not sure about the old man being a celestial messenger since he noticed that he didn't even understand God's language or how to greet his ministers.

e. Many people gathered at Palayo's house to see the strange old man. Why do you think the crowd assembled to see him?

→ Many people gathered at Pelayo's house to see the strange old man. I think the crowd assembled to see him as they found him inside the chicken coop and wanted to have fun with the angel as a circus animal.

f. Some miracles happened while the crowd gathers to see the strange man. What are these miracles?

→ Some miracles happened while the crowd gathers to see the strange man. These miracles are:

The blind man who didn't recover his sight but grew three new teeth,

The paralytic who didn't get to walk but almost won the lottery, and

The leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers.

g. State the irritating things that the people did with the strange old man.

→ The crowd began to irritate the strange old man since he was unable to impress them. They pulled his feathers and threw stones at him to get him to stand. They poked him with a branding iron and burned him. The old man did not react to them at first, but he eventually got aggressive due to unbearable pain.

h. How and why was the woman changed into a spider?

→ Because she had sneaked out of her parents' house without permission to dance and had disobeyed her parents, the lightning bolt of brimstone came through the crack of the tow of the fearful thunderclap in the sky, and the woman was changed into a spider.

i. Describe how Elisenda saw the strange man flying over the houses.

→ Elisenda was cutting some bunches of onions for lunch when she sensed a wind coming in from the high seas and ran to the window, where she observed an angel making his first attempts at flight. He kept his balance and made it through the last few houses, miraculously holding himself up with the risky flapping of a senile vulture. She kept looking at him until she couldn't see him anymore.

Reference to the Context

a. The arrival of a strange old man at Palayo's courtyard arouses many suspicions and explanations. Explain how the neighbour woman, Father Gonzaga and the doctor speak of the strange man. Why do you think these three people give three different kinds of interpretations?

→ The arrival of a strange old man at Pelayo's courtyard arouses many suspicions and explanations. He was an angel who must have come for the child, but he was knocked down by the rain due to his old age, according to the neighbour woman who understood all about life and death. When the old angel could not understand God's language or how to sense his ministers, Father Gonzaga, the parish priest,

doubted him. Because his weak feathers smelled of the outdoors, he warned others against being ingenuous to avoid the risks of being curious. The doctor discovered a whistling sound in his heart and kidneys, indicating the impossibility of his being alive, and he was shocked to see his natural wings and wondered why others didn't have them.

The strange old man is described differently by the neighbour woman, Father Gonzaga, and the doctor. These three persons, in my opinion, presented three separate explanations for the strange old man because his appearance and activities were utterly different from those of the actual world. He had wings, and his language was also not understandable.

b. This story belongs to the genre of 'magical realism', a genre perfected by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his novels and short stories. Magical realism is a narrative technique in which the story-teller narrates the common place things with magical colour and the events look both magical and real at the same time. Collect five magic realist happenings from the story and argue why they seem magical to you.

→ This story belongs to the genre of 'magical realism,' a genre perfected by Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his novels and short stories. For example, the title "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" portrays the old man as a magical character or a being from a mythical world. Five magic realist happenings from the story are listed below:

Pelayo was returning to the home after throwing away the crabs when he saw an old man lying face down in the mud, hindered by his enormous wings. It is magical in the sense that humans in this physical world do not have wings.

During the talk with Pelayo and his wife, the old strange man responded in an unfamiliar language with a strong sailor's voice, indicating that he was from another planet.

The old man, according to the neighbour woman, is an angel who has come to take the sick child to heaven. The word "angel" itself refers to a magical link in the story.

Father Gonzaga equated the strange old man with the devil and warned others about him. Capturing the old man and the description of Father Gonzaga is equally amazing and magical.

The transformation of the woman into a spider as a result of the brimstone lightning bolt, the doctor's prediction regarding the strange old man and his observation of a whistling sound in the old man's heart and kidneys, the old man's antiquarian eyes, his first attempt at flight and then his passing over the last houses, and many more are not normal events in this physical world. As a result, the story falls under the genre of 'Magical Realism.'

c. The author introduces the episode of a woman who became a spider for having disobeyed her parents. This episode at once shifts people's concentration from the strange old man to the spider woman. What do you think is the purpose of the author to bring this shift in the story?

→ The author introduces the episode of a woman who became a spider for having disobeyed her parents. This episode at once shifts people's concentration from the strange old man to the spider woman. I think the author's intention in introducing this change in the story is to demonstrate a magical connection between two separate events. Because the story has elements of magical realism, the

author intends to depict something strange or amazing happening in the world to tie the story to the world of magical realism.

The Strange old man is given a sense of “magic realism.” He portrays humanity’s blindness to beauty and mercy; he is a sort of Christ figure. The Spider-girl is a character in a travelling carnival show that visits the village. A spider-girl happens to be the main attraction. The villagers are shocked. Watching her is much less costly, and she entertains the audience, whereas the shy angel recoiled from the attention. This is more appealing to the general public than an old winged man who overlooks the people around him. The curious masses quickly depart from the angel in favour of the spider, leaving Palayo’s courtyard vacant. The morality story behind the spider girl of disrespecting her parents and God turning her into a spider was also well received by the audience. The crowd has almost completely forgotten about the angel. It also argues that people prefer interesting and entertaining activities to serious ones.

d. The story deals with the common people’s gullibility. How do Palayo and his wife take advantage of common people’s whim?

→ A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings is a short story about the common people’s gullibility. Palayo and his wife Elisenda discover an old guy with wings in their courtyard and attempt unsuccessfully to talk with him. Then they get their neighbour woman, who tells them that the old man is an angel and that it was on its way to take their sick child. They place the angel in the chicken coop, and their child’s fever breaks in the middle of the night. They decide to let him go, but when they return to the courtyard at dawn, the entire community has gathered to watch the angel’s appearance. Father Gonzaga arrives soon afterwards, saying that the old man is a fake.

He promises to obtain the truth from the church’s higher courts. The story of the angel travels like wildfire, and the courtyard quickly takes on the appearance of a marketplace. Elisenda then comes up with the brilliant idea of charging a 5 cent admission fee to visit the angel; they become wealthy very quickly. While they await their judgement, Father Gonzaga works tirelessly to keep the crowd under control. In this way, Palayo and his wife take advantage of the common people’s whim by charging visitors to see the old man.

Reference beyond the text

a. An irresistible crowd queues at Palayo’s house for many days simply to look at the strange old man. Narrate an episode from your experience or from another story where people assemble in crowds, not for any noble cause.

→ An irresistible crowd queue at Palayo’s house for many days simply to look at the strange old man. A similar scenario can be found in Nissim Ezekiel’s poem “Night of the Scorpion.” The poem is about a specific incident. When it had been raining steadily for 10 hours and a scorpion had gotten into their house and stung his mother before fleeing into the rain. All of the surrounding farmers gathered like swarms of bees. They uttered God’s names to reduce the Scorpion’s movement. They started looking for it with lights and lanterns. They were unable to locate the scorpion. They saw that the poison went through his mother’s veins with the scorpion’s motions. They claimed that it would wash away her sins from her previous birth and lessen the calamities of her next birth. Poison, they declared, would cleanse her physical and spiritual ambition. His mother was in distress as they spoke. His father was rational septic. He had been experimenting with powders, plants, and mixes. He even poured some paraffin on

the bitten toe and ignited a flame to it. However, the pain vanished after 24 hours. His mother thanked God that the Scorpion chose her and saved her children from being stung.

b. The taste of children is different from grown-ups. What are the elements in the story that make 'The Old Man with Enormous Wings' a children's story?

→ The taste of children is different from grown-ups. The elements in the story that make 'The Old Man with Enormous Wings' a children's story are:

Characters: The old man is presented as an angel who has unexpected wings who appears to be neither fully human nor fully surreal.

Conflict: The characters like the neighbour woman, Father Gonzaga, the doctor etc have conflict or tussle regarding the character of the old man.

Fun time: The situation becomes funny as the crowd gather in the yard to see the old man and even pay 5 cent admission fee for seeing the angel.

Setting: The weather location of the story is rainy and muddy outside with chicken coops, seaside, woods, yard etc.

Five senses: Among the five senses, some senses like the sight of the people to the old man, dirty smell of his body, and feelings of the different characters and crowd is found in the story.

Sentence structure and devices: The story contains simple sentence structure and devices like symbols. The old man represents Christ-figure comes o save people yet is spurned and humiliated by them

Wings: Wings represent power, speed, and limitless freedom of motion. In the Christian tradition, angels are often represented as beautiful winged figures.

The Spider-Girl: The spider girl represents the fickleness with which many self-interested people approach their faith.

Supernatural elements: The old man having wings, the woman changes into the spider, people's faith in angels etc.

1. A Day

Emily Dickinson

About the Poet: Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), one of the most eminent American poets of the nineteenth century, was heavily influenced by the Metaphysical poets of seventeenth-century England, as well as her reading of the Book of Revelation and her upbringing in a Puritan New England town. These upbringings inculcated in her Calvinist, orthodox, and conservative approach to Christianity. Dickinson and Walt Whitman are

regarded as the forefathers of a distinctively American poetic voice. Despite the fact that Dickinson was a prolific poet who frequently enclosed poems in letters to friends, she was not publicly recognised during her lifetime. However, she has steadily grown in fame as a result of her posthumously published poems.

Main Summary:

Emily Dickinson in her poem "A Day," describes a beautiful day that brings the children from innocence to experience using brilliant imagery and symbols.

Emily describes the sunset and sunrise as a village and the things in that village in this poem. However, the poem also portrays the difficulty in recognising the world and environment around us. In the Poem, the speaker of the poem clearly describes how the sun rises, what happens after the sun rises, and how the sun sets. When the Sun first rises, its ribbon-like rays fall over the steeple of the church, transforming its colour to amethyst. Sunrise's news spreads as fast as the Squirrels can run. In the early morning light, the dark hills are seen, and a small American bird, the bobolink, begins to sing. The warmth of the Sun makes all living things happy and pleasant. The speaker speaks to himself to be confirmed about the Sunrise with its lovely and magnificent beams. The poem is written in four different beautiful stanzas, each of them describing a beautiful day using various imagery and symbols. We can divide the poem into two parts: an eight-line segment describing the sunrise and an eight-line segment describing the speaker's misunderstanding of the sunset.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. How does the poet describe the morning sun in the first stanza?

→ In the first stanza of this poem, the speaker describes the rising sun in the early morning. The first beautiful golden rays of the sun extend like ribbons around it. It makes everything bright and visible. It changes the colour of the steeple into amethyst.

b. What does the line 'The news like squirrels ran' mean?

→ The line "The news like Squirrels ran" in the first stanza means that the news of the rising of the sun along with the casting its rays spreads as fast as squirrels run. The news of the arrival of the sun on the horizon is compared with the quick running of the squirrels using the word "like".

c. What do you understand by the line "The hills untied their bonnets"?

→ Before the sun rises, the hills are sunk in the bonnet of darkness. After the sun rises all the hills look beautiful in fine green colour. The hills throw away their bonnets when they are touched by the first rays of the sunlight. The hills are personified in this line as they untie their bonnets like women.

d. Is the speaker watching the morning sun? Why? Why not?

→ Yes, the speaker is watching the rising sun. The speaker is observing the change in colour of the steeple into amethyst, untied bonnets of the hills. He is also listening to the singing of the beautiful bobolinks and all these events confirm that the speaker is watching the morning sun.

e. How does the sun set?

→ Actually, the speaker is unknown to the setting sun. She doesn't know where the sun goes after it sets. The purple and yellow colours indicate the setting of the sun, but she doesn't know what happens after it because of the lack of knowledge about the sunset.

Reference to the Context

a. What, according to the speaker, is a day?

→ According to the speaker, a day is about the simplicity of life's ordinary things through his/her innocent eyes.

b. What purpose does the hyphen in the first line serve in the poem?

→ A hyphen (-) is a punctual mark used in writings to join words or parts of words. In poetry, a hyphen is used to show pause. Emily Dickinson uses punctuation marks in her poem in an innovative way. She uses hyphens if she doesn't find the suitable words to express deep emotions, to granting readers to imagine and complete the missing words and to show the power of silence in front of certain situations. It is also used to give a sudden emphasis.

c. What makes this poem lyrical and sonorous? Discuss.

→ The poem "A Day" by Emily Dickinson is both a lyrical and sonorous poem. The poem is lyrical in the sense that it expresses personal feelings or emotions in the first-person narration. The first pronoun "I" used in lyrical poems indicates the poetic persona. This poem is very short and the poetess is expressing her personal experience of observing sunrise. The word "Sonorous" means full of sound and rich in verse or language. Several things make a poem musical and melodious. Sound devices alliteration, assonance, rhyme and rhythm make a poem musical.

d. Who are the target audience of the speaker? Why?

→ The audience is the target people whom a writer writes or composes any poem. In the poem, the world is seen through the eyes of an innocent child. It looks beautiful and miraculous but mysterious at the end. The speaker is narrating the sunrise as the first line says "I'll tell you how the sun rose." From this perspective, we can say that the target audiences are those fellow children who have missed observing this beautiful sunrise as they awake late in the morning. When we analyze the poem philosophically, the entire humankind is also the target audience. The beautiful sunrise indicates the beginning of life,

the activities of the entire day is a journey of life and the setting of the sun represents death.

e. The poem seems to describe a day for children. How would the adult people respond to this poem? Discuss this poem with your parents/guardians and write the answer based on their responses.

→ The poem "A Day" in a literal sense describes the sunrise, phenomena after sunrise and sunset. But in a philosophical sense, the poem talks about the transition from life to death. The poem tells us about the excitement from the beginning of life and, a squirrel running like life and the mysterious ending of a life.

Reference beyond the text

a. Observe your surroundings of one fine morning and write a poem based on your own experience.

→ To write a poem according to this question, You can take a look around your surrounding by getting up early in the morning. You may see birds, fog, houses, sun and experience a peaceful environment in the morning time. To write a good poem, pick a specific theme or idea from the objects you see in the surrounding. You can also use simile, metaphor and other literary devices to give the best touch to your poem.

b. Write a personal essay on A Day in the School.

→ Do it yourself.

2. Every Morning I Wake

Dylan Thomas

Short Summary:

The poem "Every Morning I Wake" is an extract from Under the Milk Wood. In this poem, Thomas pleads with the majestic God to have mercy on the common people who live under the Milk Wood.

This poem is a prayer to the magnificent God made by a tiny creature known as a human being. The speaker of the poem is a representative of human kinds who are born to die but nothing. The speaker is a devotee of God and he knows

the real power of God, so every morning he wakes up he makes a pray to Him for having mercy on every creature. The speaker prays not only for his benefit but for the well-being of entire creatures. They are living on this planet but the remote control is at the hand of God. God is the creator and destroyer of everything on this planet. The speaker prays to Him to have mercy because He is immortal and Almighty.

As mortal beings, we have to die but the blessings of God make our life beautiful. The speaker is praying to God before he sleeps at night but is not certain if they will see him tomorrow morning so he is asking to bless them. We may be good or bad in the course of living our everyday lives, but it is only God who knows our best side. The blessings of God every night make us able to see them tomorrow morning. So, the speaker bows down and pray to God to keep them alive throughout the night. This time the speaker bides goodbye but not forever though it is not certain to be able to wake up the following morning.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. When does the speaker pray to the Lord?

→ The speaker prays to God every morning he wakes up and at night before he sleeps.

b. What does the speaker pray for?

→ The speaker prays for the grace and the blessings to the people Living at Milk Wood.

c. Who are the 'poor creatures'? Why does the speaker call them 'poor creatures'?

→ The "poor creatures" in particular are the individuals that live beneath Milk Wood, as well as humanity as a whole. The speaker refers to them as poor creatures because they are comprised of bone and flesh and are born to die.

d. What does Milk Wood sound like? A type of wood or a place? Why?

→ As there is no article before this term, Milk Wood sounds like a location. Because it is not a type of wood, a grammatical article such as 'a,' 'an,' or 'the'

must have been used. Articles are unnecessary before a solitary proper noun referring to a specific location.

e. Why do the inhabitants of Milk Wood bow to the setting sun ‘but just for now’?

→ The inhabitants of Milk Wood bow to the setting sun ‘but just for now’ only to say good-bye for the evening. They are hoping to see the sunshine the next morning. They wish to live another day with God’s grace and the warmth of the Sun.

Reference to the Context

a. Discuss “Every Morning When I Wake” as a prayer to the God.

→ Dylan Thomas’s “Every Morning When I Wake” is a prayer poem. “Dear Lord, a little prayer I make, O please do keep Thy loving eye On all poor creatures born to die,” the speaker prays to God. The speaker is pleading with God to keep his loving eyes on all needy creatures and to shower them with blessings. In a prayer poem, the speaker asks God for blessings and guidance throughout his life, as well as the lives of all humans and animals.

b. Why does the speaker make a prayer to the God, but not to a king, a billionaire or a scientist?

→ Because God is the supreme deity, the creator, and the primary object of faith, the speaker prays to Him. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present. Kings, billionaires, and scientists are all composed of bone and flesh and born to die. They are never compared to God, no matter how much authority they have, how wealthy they are, or how much knowledge they have. They, too, are under God’s control. He is a holy being who created us, saves us, loves us, trusts us, and leads us on the proper path. That is why we worship Him to receive His mercy and blessings. A monarch, a rich, or a scientist are all transient beings. They cannot safeguard us in the same way that God does. A king obtains his position as a result of God, a scientist obtains knowledge as a result of Him, and a billionaire obtains a large sum of money as a result of Him.

c. How does the poet highlight the magnificence of the God?

→ The poet highlights the magnificence of God via the speaker's daily prayers in the morning and at night. God knows the entire essence of the creature, hence it is god's blessings that see us through another day.

d. How does the rhyme scheme of the poem reinforce its message?

→ A rhyme scheme is the ordered pattern of rhyming words that appears at the end of each line of a poem. This poem employs linked rhyme, which means that every two lines of each stanza rhyme together. Line 1 rhymes with line 2, while line 3 rhymes with line 4 in the AABB rhyming scheme. The rhyme system for the entire poem is AABB, CCDD, EEFF, GGHH. These rhymes sound like catchy music. It portrays the innocence of nature due to its simplicity. In the eyes of God, the speaker is a helpless being. The majority of prayer-poems use this rhyme structure to express an innocent appeal to God.

Reference beyond the text

a. Does the God exist? Give your opinion.

→ "Does God exist?" is the most important topic that has been debated since the dawn of civilisation. There are two categories of people on the earth who believe in the existence of God. Some people, referred to as "atheists," do not think that God exists, whereas "theists" believe that God exists. Regardless of whether some individuals dispute the presence of God, God exists in my opinion. Some say that God does not exist because no one has seen Him physically or because our sensory perceptions do not feel and experience God's presence. However, this does not imply that objects do not exist if we do not feel or see them with our sense organs. Aside from our five sensory organs, we have a sixth sense that allows us to reach God. Unlike our five senses, it is a perceptual power. We are accustomed to feeling and experiencing the physical world through our five senses. Humans, on the other hand, have a sixth sense, which we do not use. People that use their sixth sense believe in God's existence. It is our religious sensibility. God's existence is analogous to the existence of radiation. We only witness the results of it. We don't see God, but we notice his presence in our lives. Unexpected and miraculous events are evidence of God's existence.

b. In his Epistle to the author of the book, *The Three Impostors* (1768), Voltaire says, "Even if the God didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent him." Write an essay highlighting the importance of the God in the society.

→ Importance of God in the Society

“Even if God didn’t exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” Voltaire, a French philosopher of the 18th century, conveyed this concept in his work “The Three Imposters (1768).” He highlights the need of mankind to believe in a divine being God. He is a supreme intelligence with enormous power, as well as the creator or rule of nature. Without God, the world is a shambles. If there is no

God, there are fatalities, damages, and destruction. The greatest creator has maintained the beauty of this planet. Every individual in every culture must have faith in Him. A civilised society must be well-functioning. God represents all of our society’s great aspects, while evil represents all of our society’s negative aspects.

God leads us down the righteous path. It teaches us moral qualities like humanity, kindness, love, and compassion, among other things. He teaches us to let go of vengeance, greed, passion, and wants, among other things. People with good qualities contribute to the civilization of any culture. People continue to live in peace and harmony. There is a sense of law and order. Before committing any crime, people have a fear of God. People do not conduct sinful acts because they are afraid of God. As a result, even if God does not exist, it is vital to create an ideal existence for Him.

The majority of those who believe in the presence of our souls after death believe in God. If they do not repent of the sins they do here, their souls will suffer in purgatory. After death, the souls of those who follow the path of upright and moral principles rest happily in heaven. This idea, people continue, stems from a sense of God’s existence. The beliefs and ideals of the individuals who live in any community contribute to society’s civilization. So, God is required for the betterment and health of civilization; else, He must be invented.

3. I Was My Own Route

Julia De Burgos

Summary

A precursor to the contemporary Latina/o writers, de Burgos, in her poem “I was my Own Route,” depicts how the women are burdened with the patriarchal ideologies from the past. Therefore, de Burgos urges the women to detach themselves from the past so as to locate their identity within. The poem focuses on the personal freedom and liberation of women. She is looking for fresh ways to navigate her journey, choosing her own path. This poem makes agenda of

gender discrimination as a response to the social inequality that existed at the time as articulated by Julia de Burgos (1938).

In her home nation, the United States, she tells about her life as an oppressed woman. A lady of African origin, she was interested in identifying her own individuality and her ambitions. She desired equal opportunities, privileges, and advantages, and also demanded that these equalities must be present in this sexist and unequal society.

This poem, proves that a woman should never feel less important than men or that her life should be subject to the beliefs of others, since she is not ruled by society. As the poem goes on to say, she shouldn't play "hide and seek" with her soul. Rather, she has to keep going, even if there are barriers.

This poem is thoughtful, with a rebellious nature, as the author expresses a dislike for traditional societal norms. She alone can choose who she is and what she must accomplish.

Conclusion

"I was my own my route" indicates dissatisfaction with the rules and limitations of society.

This poem encouraged the women of the 30-year-old who fought for their rights to be conscious of three extremely essential factors: their potential as women, their own life and their own feelings.

This poem teaches us about independence, freedom, to pursue our own path, even if we have trouble or others don't realize that we are leaving what is expected of us.

This poem is still relevant, since contrary to what we think, there is a cultural barrier in many women who cannot take over their life and don't have the freedom to choose.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. **Why did the speaker try to be the way men wanted her to be?**

→ The speaker tried to be the way men wanted her to be because she was curious to see what the males expected of her and how they would act as a result of their patriarchal male concept.

b. **What do you understand by her feet 'would not accept walking backwards'?**

→ By her feet 'would not accept walking backwards', We understand that she refused to accept males' inferior concept of females and instead desired to race like males with equal resources in order to achieve the ultimate objective of independence and equality.

c. Who are the old guards? Why did they grow desperate?

→ The old guards are traditionalists who are obsessed with the patriarchal system. They grow desperate when they see the poetess improving the lives of the poor and striving for their independence.

d. How did the speaker have 'a feeling of intimate liberation'?

→ As she crossed the patriarchal society's barrier and kissed a new path of liberation, rejecting the old one defined by males, the speaker had "a feeling of intimate liberation."

e. Why did the speaker's desire to follow men warp in her?

→ Because of the pre-established patriarchal society and its rules, the speaker's desire to follow men warped in her. She desired freedom and pleasure, but she was compelled to adapt to men's established concepts and ideas.

Reference to the Context

a) What does the speaker mean when she says she was playing a game of hide and seek with her being'?

→ When the speaker says she was playing a game of hide and seek with her being in the third line of the first stanza and again at the end of the poem, she means to demonstrate her rebellious character and rejection of masculine mentality that restricts women within four walls. It also suggests that she requires liberation in order to break free from the gender stereotype picture of females and pursue her own path.

b) Why, in your view, was her back ripped by the old guards as she was advancing forward?

→ In my view, her back was ripped by the old guards as she was advancing forward because as she progressed, the old guard created several obstacles, traditions, norms, and threats of patriarchal ideology. The old guards relate to ancient traditions, cultures, norms, and patriarchy-determined values in this context, yet she requires liberation and race in her desire for freedom. As a result of the limits, hindrances, barriers, problems, and blockades established by the society's old guard, her back was ripped and she suffered greatly.

c) What, according to the speaker, did it feel like to be free?

→ According to the speaker, to be free means being able to pursue her dreams and follow her own path without any societal or masculine restrictions. It means walking and feeling like a man, participating in society in every manner as a man, and receiving long-awaited liberation for what they desired. For her, it's the same as choosing her own path and carrying out her own duty, defying the patriarchal ideology imposed on women by the old guard.

d) Why does the speaker prefer the present to the past?

→ Because her past was unpleasant, difficult, and troublesome, the speaker prefers the present to the past. She had been through a lot in her life. Patriarchal mentality caused her a lot of pain. She was restricted by patriarchal boundaries. She was the one who was made to laugh and play with. She was unaware of her heart's freedom and emancipation. She was limited in what she could do based on her wishes. She was subjected to abuse, exploitation, and deprivation by her family. However, she currently feels released and free of patriarchal conceptions. Male ideology is collapsing at an alarming rate. Females have begun to reap the benefits of freedom, and strong male-dominated ideas are on the decline in today's culture. She believes she has complete freedom over her choices and decisions.

She is free to work and visit wherever she wants. Hence, the speaker prefers the present to the past.

e) John Donne, in his poem "No Man is an Island", says, "No man is an island entire of itself." Would Burgos agree with Donne? Do you agree with Donne or Burgos?

→ John Donne, in his poem "No Man is an Island", says, "No man is an island entire of itself." He is referring to the entire human race and their importance in the evolution of society. The expression "no man is an island" represents the belief that humans function poorly when they are isolated from others and must be a part of a society to survive. It signifies that no one is fully self-sufficient and in order to live, everyone must rely on the company and comfort of others. I agree with John Donne and support his concept of societal equality in every aspects. He talks about male and female equality, but Burgos appears angry and upset by the male-dominated culture, and she expresses her displeasure and rejection of male philosophy and ideas that limit women's liberties and chances in society. She appears to be a radical feminist who not only advocates for female freedom but also challenges male norms and beliefs. In any case, I admire Donne because he advocates for the development of society as a whole, including the advancement of both men and women.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on My Idea of Freedom.

→ My Idea of Freedom – An Essay

Everyone has heard of freedom, but when you ask what it means, everyone will have a different interpretation. This is due to the fact that everyone has a distinct perspective of freedom. For some, freedom is the ability to go wherever they want, for others it means the ability to speak up for themselves, and for still others, it means the ability to do anything they want.

The right to be free does not mean the freedom to violate and disregard other rights. Furthermore, freedom entails enjoying the beauty of nature and the environment in which we live. Only those who have earned or spent their lives for something can truly understand its true worth. Freedom from oppression is also synonymous with freedom. It also refers to freedom from racism, harm, hostility, and discrimination, among other things.

Furthermore, freedom allows for open debates, which aid in the exchange of important ideas and thoughts for the advancement of society. Moreover, this is the only right that is intimately linked to all other rights. More importantly, it is necessary to communicate one's thoughts about society and other topics.

To summarize, we might say that freedom is not what we believe it to be. It's a psychological construct that everyone has their own take on. Similarly, different people place a different value on it. However, there is a strong correlation between freedom and happiness.

- b. Not all people, however, seem to agree with the kind of freedom upheld by Burgos in this poem. For example, William Faulkner, in his novel *Requiem for a Nun*, says, "The past is never dead. It's not even past. All of us labour in webs spun long before we were born, webs of heredity and environment, of desire and consequence, of history and eternity." Do you agree with Faulkner? Why? Why not?**

→ Of course, not all people seem to agree with the kind of freedom upheld by Burgos in this poem. William Faulkner, in his novel *Requiem for a Nun*, says, "The past is never dead. It's not even past. All of us labour in webs spun long before we were born, webs of heredity and environment, of desire and consequence, of history and eternity."

Everything we do and experience in the future will become history. We're trapped in the crossfire of history and karma that began before we were ever born in the webs we've been creating since the dawn of time. Our existence, like time, moves in a straight path. We shall always be surrounded by the past. It's impossible to say something happened if we're still thinking about it and making decisions based on it. Whatever happened, it becomes a part of our history, but the memories it generates remain on in our minds, thus the past never truly ends. It implies that we are always locked in the past. It will be with us until the point of death.

We might assume from Julia Burgos' poem "I Was My Own Route" that she wishes to be fully free of her past because it was so unpleasant. However, this is difficult to achieve. Julia de Burgos' fight for independence absolutely disproves the idea that there was a past before her. She wishes to escape men's presence in order to establish her own identity by denying the past and rejecting men's existence. However, if males are disregarded, the world will come to an end. She is a radical feminist, which implies she is enraged by men's dominance of women. It is vital that both sexes be present for the sake of humanity's survival. The past shapes our identity and guides us through every decision we make. His perspective on the past is realistic unlike Burgos expresses in her poems. We cannot completely ignore our past as it assists us in every path of our life. Hence, I completely agree with Faulkner over Burgos as his perspectives and ideas are based on reality and truth.

4. The Awakening Age

Ben Okri

Summary

The poem "The Awakening Age" by Ben Okri is a poem of hope. Here in this poem, the poet has wished for all the miserable Nigerians who had been fragmented due to the devastating civil war that lasted for three crucial years.

Here In this poem, the poet is wishing for their well being after the outbreak of civil peace, a time for all to enter a new world of the awakening age.

The poet wishes for all these miserable and fragmented Nigerian people that they may have a vision of a new world, a world of hope, prosperity, unity, truth, wisdom and creativity. He also wishes for them that they may experience the glory of the awakening age beyond their poverty rage. Here, by the awakening age, he refers to the age of enlightenment where there is peace, prosperity, liberation, joy, unity and harmony among people.

The poet has presented a suitable new world in the awakening age for all of them. He makes a call for all the Nigerians' hope to move further. For him, Nigerians are quite rich in their hopes and these hopes have connected them firmly from history. Next, he makes a call for their unity as well as solidarity to reach a new height of prosperity with positivity in their hearts. He also makes a call for their change in perceptions with truthfulness in a new world to gain much in their lives away from problems and pains. He talks about the new world of the awakening age where all these people have a chance to get jobs, wisdom and creativity beyond their poverty. In this state, their life will be joyous and they will be able to gain better in the time and space of the new world.

BEFORE READING

Discuss the following questions:

a. Why do you think people from your country migrate to another country?

I think people from my country migrate to another country to find better opportunities especially in the matter of education, jobs, earnings and their better life.

b. Do people from other countries migrate to your country? Why?

No, people from other countries don't migrate to my country because there is no opportunity for people to uplift their living standards.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Answer the following questions:

a. Who are the people 'who travel the meridian line'?

The people 'who travel the meridian line' are those Nigerian people who have been divided into two sects as the south and the north due to the devastating civil war. These people have travelled a long path of hunger, poverty, unemployment and other aspects in their lives during their survival in fragmentations.

b. What does the poet mean by 'a new world'?

By 'a new world', the poet means a fine world which is a world of hope, prosperity, unity, truth, wisdom and creativity. This is the world of united Nigeria that people have experienced after the outbreak of civil peace in Nigeria.

c. How are people connected to each other?

People are connected to each other with hope from history. They are quite strong in their hopes. Due to this firm hope, they can rise to a new height of a prosperous and united nation with positivity and wisdom.

d. What can we gain after our perceptions are changed?

We can gain varieties of things after our perceptions are changed. Through changed perceptions, we can gain truthfulness away from problems and pains. When our perceptions are changed, we will be able to gain unity, truth, prosperity, work, wisdom and creativity.

e. How we benefited by new people?

We are benefited by new people by their support in various aspects. Our unity with them leads us towards a prosperous state. They support us to reach a new height where there is positivity in our hearts, truthfulness in our perceptions, work, wisdom and creativity.

f. Describe the rhyme scheme of this sonnet.

There are altogether seven different stanzas that contain fourteen lines. Every stanza has two lines (couplet). The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is so simple and sonorous which has provided a rhythmic tone. Every stanza has a rhyming couplet. For example AA BB CC DD EE FF and GG.

REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT

a. What does the poet mean by 'the awakening age'?

By 'the awakening age', the poet means an age of African people's recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of their condition, and the beginning of their new world. This age is the age of enlightenment where there is peace, prosperity, liberation, joy, unity and harmony among people. This age appears just after the bloody civil war of Nigeria.

b. Why, in your view, have these people 'lived with poverty's rage'?

In my view, these people have 'lived with poverty's rage' because they involved themselves in the bloody civil war for continuously three crucial years. During that time millions of people especially children died of starvation. They were concerned more in fighting for various internal issues regarding religion, culture, political ideology ethnicity etc ignoring the sufferings of common Nigerians.

c. Why does the poet appeal for solidarity among the people?

The poet appeals for solidarity among people because he wants to see all the miserable Nigerians to reach a new height of prosperity in a new world, a world of hope, prosperity, unity, truth, wisdom and creativity. He believes that solidarity among people can only lead them towards perfection and prosperity.

d. Does the poet present migration in a positive light? Why? Why not?

Yes, the poet presents migration in a positive light because he has presented this migration with immense positive hopes as well as good wishes. This isn't a physical migration of people but a migration of their state from one level to another through the mean of awakening. The poet wants to see them united, prosperous, truthful, wise, creative in a new world of awakening age away from the concept of miseries.

e. Nepal is also known for its economic as well as educational migrants. Have you noticed any change in the perceptions and behaviours of these migrants when they return home from abroad?

Yes, I have noticed various changes in the perceptions and behaviours of these migrants when they return home from abroad. Migrants return home with immense joy in their minds and hearts. They feel extremely happy to step their motherland. They have good financial status and knowledge related to their foreign life. They try to show their imposing attitude over others. They try to be a bit standard and civilised than others. They try to expose themselves as if they are of high social status. After spending some days in Nepal, they start talking rubbish about their own country regarding jobs and opportunities. But some people wish to stay in their motherland and do business in their own country. People's perceptions and behaviours change according to their own experiences of the time and situations which they have spent or faced. Most of them wish to go to foreign lands again and again. Some of them wish to stay in Nepal and try to apply their skills for the development of their nation as well as their people. Some migrants try to reveal their experiences of foreign lands to others. They try to work for the welfare as well as the development of people and the nation.

f. Relate the rhyme scheme of this sonnet to the kind of life idealized by the poet.

This poem "The Awakening Age" by Ben Okri is a poem of hope where we find the rhyme scheme of AA BB CC DD EE FF and GG. Every couplet of seven different stanzas is perfect in its rhyme as well as meaning. With the help of the rhyme scheme of the poem, the poet is able to present the idealized life of Nigerian people in a new world of the awakening age. All these rhyming words at the end of couplets have a direct connection with the Nigerian people's lives and their ideal way of living along with wisdom, realisation, hope, prosperity, truth, opportunities and joy. His wonderful rhyming scheme has perfectly presented his hopes as well as well wishes regarding the ideal life of Nigerian people in a new world.

REFERENCE BEYOND THE TEXT

Write an essay on 'The Impacts of Migration on Nepali Society'

The Impacts of Migration on Nepali Society

In recent days, migration in Nepal is a lot more in trend. Most Nepalese people are on the way to migration. People are seen migrating in both levels as internal migration and external migration. People are migrating to urban areas within the country and also to foreign lands. The sole cause behind their migration is to seek better living standards as well as opportunities. Nowadays, it is quite difficult to find out youth manpower in the country. Most of the youths of Nepal have moved to foreign lands in the name of education and jobs and settled their lives over there. The rural areas are facing a lack of youths. In most villages of Nepal, elderly people are living miserable lives. Most youths are spending their lives working in urban areas as well as foreign lands. Nepali societies are facing very bad impacts due to this concept of migration. Following are some of the bad impacts of migration on Nepali society:

1. The number of youths is decreasing rapidly.
2. Most Nepalese societies are facing a lack of youth manpower.
3. The relationship between people is becoming weaker
4. In most societies of Nepal, elderly people are spending their lonely life in a very miserable state.
5. Due to the lack of people in societies, people are experiencing loneliness during the time of festivals.
6. There is no sense of love, affection, care, co-operation, security, peace and harmony among 1people of societies.

7. Due to the lack of people, the development of societies even has decreased.
8. The prime concept of humanity itself is in a question mark.
9. People are seen away from relationships and selfishness among people is seen
10. Birth rate has also decreased dramatically.

5. Soft Storm

Abhi Subedi

In the present poem entitled “Soft Storm,” Subedi, with a touch of compassion, contemplates over the absurdities of tumultuous times.

Summary

The poem ‘Soft Storm’ is written by a popular poet Abhi Subedi. He is the most prominent personality in the academic field of Nepal. He has taught more than 44 years in different universities and equally contributed in the field of literature by writing several poems, essays, stories and dramas in both Nepali and English languages.

This poem presents the speaker of the poem as a rebel in the society. He doesn’t like the useless and cruel activities of the society. This poem indirectly attacks the mal-practices of Nepali society very minutely. The poem is a bit longer than other poems of this book. It is written in free verse. It has a beautiful combination of the description between nature and society.

The poet describes the environmental disorder in Nepali society using the words tumult, eerie, stillness, sky like crocuses, stones, skidded moon, tearing roof etc. in the first stanza. In the same way, he makes a correlation of those natural disorders with the practices of human society by using the words like politics, postures, rituals and reasons. In the last line of the first stanza, the poet uses a term seamless city that refers to the problem less or unified city of the past. It’s no more than the recall of the time where there were very fewer social problems in the society.

In the second stanza, he gives the reference of homeless children who are crying in Thamel. They are also crying because of hunger under the bat-bearing trees of Kesharmahal. He shows the bitter reality of a developing country through the lines. It is a serious social problem of the nation which should be solved at any cost. In the same stanza, he uses the term ‘unwedded gardens of history’ from which he wants to refer the past unflourished incidences of the society which literally means lawless, disturbed and chaos situation created by social and political domination in the Nepalese society.

Similarly, in the third stanza, he talks about a forlorn child carrying a transistor radio around his neck who is wailing to find his mother. This phrase indicates a painful condition of street children. There is also a reference of a man who was beaten mercilessly for no reason. Likewise, in the poem, he presents a reference of an injured man with a blood-stained shirt crying for humanity. When these words of agony are not heard, it reflects the situation of lawlessness, which ultimately makes the speaker become rebellious against the system.

In the remaining stanzas the speaker has also presented the disturbed courses of our society and the courses of our nature. Dominated person can't speak because his voice is locked. It is like the game of hide and seek. The references of crocuses have grown over the stone, rain tears, sun laughter, deforested land, rhododendron blooming in winter, songs of the sad birds etc. have shown the degradation of social values and environmental conditions. Indifferent, selfish and lawless activities of present people have disturbed and spoiled earth and the creatures of the earth. In the final stanza, the speaker concludes it by stating the desire for freedom for him as well as other creatures of the earth. He favours the beautiful, lovely and calm sky with sweet music of soft storm.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. When does the speaker grow soft? Enlist the occasions when he grows soft?

The speaker grows soft when

- He hears the tumult.
- The sky grew like crocuses.
- The moon skids down.
- The softness rises like a gale.
- The moon sang of lampposts and gutters in this seamless city and so on.

b. What do you understand by 'this seamless city'?

By 'this seamless city' I understand the place having no awkward transitions, interruptions or indications.

c. Describe the poor children portrayed in the poem.

In Thamel, the children who are poor and homeless are seen. They cry with hunger under the bat-bearing trees of Kesharmahal.

d. What do you understand by 'the unwedded gardens of history'?

By 'the unwedded gardens of history' I understand the ignored culture, history of the valley.

e. Why was the forlorn child wailing?

The forlorn child was wailing to find his mother in the corridors of violent history.

f. What do you understand by 'soft storm'?

By 'soft storm' I understand the speaker's disturbed feelings, but they are not disastrous.

g. Why does the speaker call our time 'mad time'?

The speaker calls our time 'mad time' because stone grows in flower, the moon hums melodies, history rushes under the lamppost and over deforested land, birds sing of bizarre journeys over the warming earth, rhododendron bloom in winter, mother earth tells of the tumults in the songs of the sad birds.

h. What does the speaker want to do in "hard times"?

The speaker wants to melt like a rainbow in "hard times".

Reference to the context

a. The poet uses the word 'soft' with the words like 'storm' and 'gale', which generally refer to disorder and violence. What effect does the poet achieve through the use of such anomalous expressions?

Analogous expressions are the expressions which are syntactically well formed but semantically meaningless. In the poem, the expressions 'soft storm' and 'softness rose like a gale' are unusual and paradoxical in nature. Through these expressions the poet achieves psychological effect. Connecting two contrasting ideas, he is able to express his disturbed inner experience.

b. What is the speaker's attitude towards the time he describes in the poem?

The speaker's attitude towards the time is not positive. He considers the time to be mad as he experiences several unusual things happening around him. Since the society is in complete disorder and out of control, he is having hard times.

c. What is the speaker like? Is he a rebel? Why? Why not?

The poet finds the society in complete disorder. People are suffering from poverty, hunger and corruption. He sees homeless children who cry with hunger. He witnesses people ignoring the history. They are treating one another inhumanely. He seems to challenge all these things. Though he is like a rebel, his rebellious nature is not directly presented in the poem.

d. Explain the stanza below in your own words:

I became soft

When I saw

A blood-stained shirt

Speaking in the earth's ears

With bruised human lips

In the far corner

Under the moon

Of history and dreams

Playing hide and seek

In open museums

In the given lines, the poet says that he suffers from uneasy feelings when he sees a person in a miserable condition during night.

The speaker experiences soft inner storm when he sees a person with a blood-stained shirt. The person is lying unconsciously on the ground. It is a moonlit night. The moon of history and dream referring to

the history of human dreams and achievement, is sometimes covered in clouds. When the moon appears, the moonlight falls on the place of cultural and historical importance. Though this natural interplay during night, it seems people are indifferent to the injured person who might be the victim of violence.

Unit Three: Essays

1. On Libraries

Oliver Sacks.

Main Summary:

Oliver Sacks grew up in an oak-panelled library inherited from his father, a Hebrew Scholar and a fan of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). The library was stacked high with Henrik Ibsen's plays, poems from his father's generation, and adventure and history books from his brothers. He read Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, written by an English short-story writer. He enjoyed the adventures of Mowgli, the book's fictional character.

His mother was likewise a literature enthusiast. She had collected a library of literature books by Emily Dickens (an American poet), Anthony Trollope (an English writer), George Bernard Shaw (an Irish playwright), Rudyard Kipling, William Shakespeare (an English dramatist), John Milton (an English poet), and poetry books as school awards. In a particular cabinet in his parents' surgery, there were also medical books. Along with the most magnificent library, he had a small lab where he could immerse himself in books for hours on end, even forgetting to eat his lunch or dinner. Since he was three or four years old, the library and books were his first memories.

Willesden Public Library in Willesden Green, London, was where he spent the happiest hours of his adult life. He obtained his formal schooling there. He disliked passive reading in formal schools because he was an active reader and self-learner. He was a good student in libraries and enjoyed reading whatever book he wanted in the company of other readers. When he got older, he began studying astronomy and chemistry. Because the Walker Library at St. Paul's School did not include chemistry books, he was able to visit the Science Museum's library with the help of his schoolmaster and learn chemistry books there.

When he was at university, he went to Radcliffe Science Library and the Bodleian Library. After reading Theodore Hook, he decided to create a biography of him. He gathered information from the British Museum Library and wrote about him in the Bodleian Library. The library of Queen's College, Oxford, was his most beloved library. He examined ancient texts such as Gesner's *Historiae Animalium* (1551), Agassiz's volumes, Charles Darwin, Sir Thomas Browne, and Jonathan Swift, as well as 17th and 18th-century writings of Samuel Johnson, David Hume, Alexander Pope, and John Dryden. .

In 1965, he moved to New York City and resided in a small apartment. It was difficult for him to read and write in the apartment, but he did write some of his book *Migraine*. He was accepted into Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he found it easy to read and write. He met with another friend who

was looking for the same old book, Volumes of Brain from 1890. He formed a good connection based on reading and knowledge exchange.

He continued to visit libraries, sitting at a table surrounded by mountains of books. During the 1990s, he discovered that students were ignoring bookshelves in favour of accessing material on their computers. Because the majority of students were not using the books, the college decided to get rid of them. That happened in the AECOM Library and other libraries throughout the world. The majority of the books had been discarded. To him, this was a murder or a crime. It was the destruction of centuries of wisdom. He was upset by the loss of books, but the important books had been digitalized. Digital literature may neither inspire nor delight in the same way. Some books are priceless. In the 1960s, most libraries had special spaces for old books. The book that prompted him to start writing was Megrim (1873) by Edward Living.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. Where could the author be found when he was late for lunch or dinner?

→ The author could be found in a little lab along with the oak-panelled library that belonged to his father when he was late for lunch or dinner.

b. What are his first memories?

→ The beautiful oak panel library and books were the first memory of the writer.

c. Why did he dislike school?

→ The author didn't like school because he had to listen to the teachers passively obeying their instructions. The author liked to learn himself in libraries being free to choose books of his own choice.

d. What did he feel about at the library?

→ At the library, he felt free to look out thousands of books, to roam around and to enjoy the special atmosphere and the quiet companionship of other readers all like him in the same quest.

e. Why was he so biased about sciences especially astronomy and chemistry?

→ He was so biased about science especially astronomy and chemistry because science was his study of interest. Any library could provide books on various subjects and faculties, and to read all of them is not possible. We must focus our study on a specific subject to get a wide range of knowledge on that subject so the writer, to get specific knowledge, focused himself in astronomy and chemistry

f. Why did he become so fascinated by Hook?

→ The writer became so fascinated by Theodore Hook because he was greatly admired in the 19th century for his wit and his genius for theatrical and musical improvisation. He was said to have composed more than 500 operas on the spot.

g. Describe library at the Queen's College.

→ The Queen's College is a constituent college of the University of Oxford, England. It has a magnificent library building which was designed by Christopher Wren, one of the most highly acclaimed English architects in history. Beneath the library building, there is the vast subterranean holding of the library.

h. Why did the students ignore the bookshelves in the 1990s?

→ The students ignored the bookshelves in the 1990s because they have access to computerized books.

i. Why was he horrified when he visited the library a couple of months ago?

→ He was horrified when he visited the library a couple of months ago because most of the shelves were sparsely occupied. Most of the books were had been thrown out or digitalized.

Reference to the Context

a. The author says, "I was not a good pupil, but I was a good listener." Justify it with the textual evidences.

→ In the essay, Oliver Sacks says, "I was not a good pupil, but I was a good listener." To be a good pupil, one has to be a good relation to teachers in a school. S/he has to attend classes regularly under the instructions provided by the teachers. S/he has to complete all the assignments given by the teacher after the lectures. But Oliver Sacks was not like that kind of pupil. He didn't like to learn passively. Instead, he likes to learn actively in libraries selecting books of his choice. He loves reading varieties of books in the library being free.

b. A proverb says, "Nothing is pleasanter than exploring a library." Does this proverb apply in the essay? Explain.

→ The beautiful quotation, "Nothing is pleasanter than exploring a library." Walter Savage Landor talks about the happiness, any studious person gets in a library. Any library provides enormous sources of information on a variety of topics. Nothing gives much satisfaction as reading books gives to a bookish fellow. Oliver Sacks is a bookworm who spends much of his time in different libraries in different places. His book reading started from his own library at home. All of his family members loved reading books and he was grown up in that environment. The oak-panelled library at his own home was his favourite room. Instead of attending formal schools, he preferred to read freely in libraries. Especially he enjoyed the library environment and the quiet companionship of other readers. He would love to sit at a table in libraries, with a mountain of books in front of him.

c. Are there any other services that you would like to see added to the library?

→ When we hear the term "Library", an image comes to our mind that is a room filled with several stocks of bookshelves and book lovers reading there. In the past, the shelves were full of paper-based books. I would like to see libraries offering an abundance of additional services which we can enjoy. I like to have access to audiobooks, E-books, large print and braille materials, CDs, DVDs, Internet access, community clubs, manuscripts and so on. They could provide access to reading to different readers. Even blind people can read books in a library if they provide braille materials. Internet users can read E-Books there.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on Libraries and its uses for students.

→ A library is a place where books and sources of information are stored. They make it easier for people to get access to them for various purposes. Libraries are very helpful and economical too. They include books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, manuscripts and more. In other words, they are an all-encompassing source of information. A public library is open to everyone for fulfilling the need for

information. They are run by the government, schools, colleges, and universities. The members of the society or community can visit these libraries to enhance their knowledge and complete their research.

Libraries play a vital role in providing people with reliable content. They encourage and promote the process of learning and grasping knowledge. The book worms can get loads of books to read from and enhance their knowledge. Moreover, the variety is so wide-ranging that one mostly gets what they are looking for. Furthermore, they help the people to get their hands on great educational material which they might not find otherwise in the market. When we read more, our social skills and academic performance improves. Most importantly, libraries are a great platform for making progress. When we get homework in class, the libraries help us with the reference material. This, in turn, progresses our learning capabilities and knowledge. It is also helpful in our overall development.

b. Do you have any public library in your locality? If so, do the people in your community use it? Give a couple of examples.

→ Try doing it yourself.

2. Marriage as a Social Institution

Stephen L. Nock

Summary

In 'Marriage as a Social Institution' by Stephen L. Nock essay, the author examines the national marriage debate by reviewing the social and demographic trends that have changed the role of marriage and the family. He views that marriage and parenthood are private matters, relevant only to the individuals directly involved. He points out the various programs that have strengthened marital relationships, lowered divorce rates, reduced out-of-wedlock births, and encouraged responsible fatherhood.

Marriage as a social institution is a politically and socially contentious topic in the essay, and it is examined carefully as a major social structure that impacts males. Writer asserts that the position of spouse has a special significance in men's life. The institution of traditional marriage helps men develop their manhood as they get older. In a marriage, a guy grows, maintains, and shows his masculine identity.

Marriage is the union of two people who are legally, morally, and socially linked by various personal and societal connections. Husbands as the household's leader, fidelity/monogamy, and parenting are all characteristics of a normal marriage. Couples react to each other, culture, society, and the rules and values that define them as a unit since they are life partners. Married males, in particular, had greater physical and mental health than married women.

In terms of fundamental aspects of accomplishment, involvement in public social life, well-being, comfort, luxury, and swagger, marriage transforms men. It's a framework modeled after other institutions like the family, education, economics, law, and politics, among others.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. According to the author, what is marriage?

→ According to the author, Marriage is the union of spouses who are tied by legal, moral, and traditional assumptions and have a variety of close personal relationships and associations.

b. How is marriage an institution?

→ Marriage is an institution because the relationship between the couples is recognised by law as a means of meeting social, economic, physical, and family requirements, and it is linked to other institutions such as education, the economy, and politics.

c. What are the rules that a marriage has?

→ Marriage has a large set of well-understood rules that help in the planning and maintenance of the spouses' life.

d. Why does marriage matter to men?

→ Marriage matters to men because it provides structure to their lives and organizes their goals and ambitions.

e. What is one of the central problems in modern society?

→ One of the central problems in modern society is putting various legitimate boundaries around modern individuals' seemingly limitless desires for well-being, comfort, luxury, and prestige.

f. What does social capital consist of?

→ Social capital consists of a large network of people who are linked by a bond of trustworthiness and trust.

g. What is normative marriage? Explain.

→ A normative marriage is one that is built on pre-established standards and values. For example, in the United States, the six elements that characterise normative marriage are: marriages are entered willingly by mature, heterosexual adults, husbands as primary earners, sexual faithfulness of partners, and parenthood.

Reference to the Context

a. Discuss six dimensions that define normative marriage in America.

→ Marriage exists everywhere, although the concept of marriage varies by location. Every civilization has its own set of marital traditions and values. Whatever it is, it allows two adults of opposite sexes the legal right to live as life partners, satisfying each other's desires. Every marriage, in every area, follows norms and patterns, and the same is true in the United States. In America, the structured marriage known as normative marriage has six dimensions. The first point to mention is that marriage is entirely voluntary. Nobody is putting any pressure on you to marry. It is up to individuals to make their own decisions. Adults are capable of managing their marriages. The marriage must be heterosexual (opposite sexes). The husband will be the primary earner after marriage. They must support their families. Both

spouses must be faithful to one another, especially when it comes to sexual behaviour. And it is only after they marry that they become parents to their children.

b. Do marriages differ according to culture? How is your marriage practice different from marriage in America?

→ Marriage practices differ from culture to culture as well as from one place to another. Not only are there disparities across the country, but there are also variations within a country. Even within our country, the marriage practises of one geographic place differ from those of others. However, the Hindu religion is practised by the vast majority of Nepalese people. Marriage, in our opinion, is a social, spiritual, cultural, and legal connection between a man and a woman as husband and wife. It is also the beginning of a relationship between two families.

Our marriage practises differing from those in the United States because we adhere to Hindu tradition, whereas the United States adheres to Christian tradition. The wedding ceremony is held in a religious place known as a church, and it is officiated by a religious leader. The bride and groom exchange church-provided vows declaring their love and commitment to one another. The officiant asks the attendees if they have any suggestions for why the couple should not be married. If no one objects, the couple swaps rings to represent their unending love and devotion to one another. With their first kiss, the pair declares themselves husband and wife in public for the first time.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on the marriage practice in your own culture.

→ **Marriage Practice in My Culture: An Essay**

Marriage is much more than two adult people of different sexes binding their sexual desires. Marriage is evolving on a daily basis. Gelation, which was once considered taboo, is now widely tolerated. Transgender marriage, for example, is already legal in our society. In our societies, different types of marriages exist, such as monogamy, which allows one person to have only one spouse; serial monogamy, which allows one spouse to remarry another after the death/divorce of the first spouse; polygamy, which allows one individual to have many spouses; polyandry, which allows one wife to have many husbands; polygyny, which allows one husband to have many wives; endogamy, which allows marriage within a group; and exogamy, marriage in another group.

I practise Hinduism, and we have our own set of marriage regulations. It is regarded as a religious sacrament rather than a social contract. It is a socially sanctioned union of a developed man and a woman for the sake of procreation, pleasure, and the fulfilment of certain social obligations. The pre-marriage event known as engagement is performed by a girl's and a boy's parties. Rings and garlands are exchanged by the would-be partners. A family priest performs rites and recites mantras to authorise this ceremony. The wedding date is set on that day.

On the day of the wedding, the bridegroom, along with his family, relatives, and neighbours, orates in the bridegroom's costume and departs for the groom's residence. The "Janti" party, which follows the bridegroom, is accompanied by a band of musicians. Janti is headed by a procession of ladies carrying trays filled with various food items and gifts known as 'Saipata.' On that day, the wedding ceremony is held at the bride's home with the assistance of family priests. The groom's residence is transformed into

a Mandap or Jagey, where the entire procession takes place. The most essential individual who performs the rites is the Pandit or Priest. A lavish feast is being planned for Janti and his neighbours.

Several actions are carried out according to the priest's instructions around the sacred fire in the centre of the Mandap: The primary actions include the bridegroom and groom circle the sacred fire seven times, the bridegroom applying vermillion powder to the bride's head, and putting a holy necklace around the bride's neck. The principal sign of a married woman is a vermillion powder called 'Sindur' and a sacred necklace called 'Pote.' The bride's father washes the bride and groom's feet, and all the family and friends wish them a happy married life. The bride's departure from her family home is scheduled for the end of the day. This is the most heartfelt scene. The majority of the bride's family members cry as they wish her farewell. Following welcoming culture, the newlywed couple is welcomed at the bridegroom's home. People assembled at the bridegroom's residence stopped singing and dancing to see the new bridegroom's face. As a result, the pair begins their newlywed life.

b. Is marriage a social institution? Discuss.

→ The concept of marriage varies depending on the individual, his philosophy and his way of thinking. Marriage is often defined as a legal partnership between two persons of different sexes who have a personal relationship, residential cohabitation, economic cooperation, the development of a nuclear family, the birth of children, and the satisfaction of sexual needs. It is considered an institution because it adheres to established law; customs, patterns, and norms that are significant to society. People establish such institutions to lawfully satisfy their wants from various people, places, and objects. People of all sexes fulfil their needs and goals through being accepted into society and adhering to social norms and values. Marriage is a worldwide occurrence. It has been practised in every country, society, and tribe since the dawn of human civilisation. It is eternal and will exist till the end of human civilization. Marriage is a dynamic term since the marriage system of the past is not the same as the marriage system of today. Child marriage was once lawful, but it is no longer; widow marriage is now legal, and transgender marriage is also legal. It grants legal privileges such as birth certificates and citizenship to children born outside of a married couple, and it is recognised by religion, government, and other social organisations.

3. Knowledge and Wisdom

Bertrand Russell

Summary

The essay 'Knowledge and Wisdom' is written by a British essayist Bertrand Arthur William Russell. In this essay, Russell differentiates between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom are different things. According to him, knowledge is defined as the acquisition of data and information whereas wisdom is defined as the practical application and use of the knowledge to create value. Wisdom is gained through learning and practical experience, not just memorization.

According to Russel, knowledge is defined as the acquisition of data and information. It is like a generating theory. While wisdom is defined as the practical application and use of knowledge to create

value. Wisdom is gained through learning and practical experience, not just memorization. A sense of proportion is very much necessary for wisdom. By inventing medicine, a scientist may reduce the infant death rate. Apparently, it leads to population explosion and shortage of food. The standard of life comes down. If misused, knowledge of atoms can lead humans to destruction by manufacturing nuclear weapons. Knowledge and Wisdom have a relation like theory and practice.

In this essay, the essayist talks about several factors that contribute to wisdom. According to him, the factors that contribute to wisdom are:

A sense of proportion,

Aware comprehensiveness and feeling

Emancipation from personal prejudices

Impartiality and

Intellectual element

Only Knowledge or Wisdom can't be sufficient. Both are equally important. Knowledge without wisdom can be harmful. Even complete knowledge is not enough. For example, Hegel wrote with great knowledge about history but made the Germans believe that they were a master race. It led to war. It is necessary, therefore to combine knowledge with feelings. We need wisdom both in public and private life. We need the wisdom to decide the goal of our life. We need it to free ourselves from personal prejudices.

Wisdom is needed to avoid dislike for one another. Two persons may remain enemies because of their prejudice. If they can be told that we all have flaws then they may become friends. In this essay, Russell defines what wisdom is in the first part and in the second part he talks about how it can be attained.

Without knowledge, wisdom cannot go forward. He says that wisdom and knowledge must go ahead simultaneously. Thus, knowledge and wisdom are remarkable gifts of the clear exposition of Russell. It shows Russell as a great master of lucid style. His intellect is brilliant and his vision is comprehensive

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a What are the factors that contribute to wisdom?

→ The factors that contribute to wisdom are:

Comprehensiveness

A sense of proportion

Emancipation

Impartiality

Awareness of human needs and understanding.

b. What message does the writer try to convey with the example of technicians?

→ With the example of technicians, the writer tries to convey a message about harm. He believes that if technical knowledge is implemented without wisdom, it can be destructive to humanity. For example, technologists may be pleased that the world's infant mortality rate has been reduced, but this leads to a lack of food supply and a lower level of living. Similarly, knowledge of atomic theory can be used to create atomic bombs that will destroy the human species.

c. Which leaders does Russell say were able to mix knowledge and wisdom soundly?

→ Russell says the leaders such as Queen Elizabeth I of England, Henry IV of France, and Abraham Lincoln were able to successfully mix knowledge and wisdom. Both Queen Elizabeth I and Henry IV remained clear of their time's faults, and by doing so, they were both benevolent and surely not unsuccessful. Similarly, Abraham Lincoln led a tremendous battle while never deviating from the path of wisdom.

d. Why is wisdom needed not only in public ways, but in private life equally?

→ Wisdom is not only needed in public ways but it is equally needed in private life too. In deciding what goals to follow and overcoming personal prejudice, wisdom is needed. We may fail to choose our life's goal and achieve success as a result of our lack of wisdom.

e. What, according to Russell, is the true aim of education?

→ According to Russell, the true aim of education is to establish wisdom in people. Wisdom is what allows us to put our knowledge to good use in the real world without causing harm to others. To be good citizens, people must have both knowledge and wisdom.

f. Can wisdom be taught? If so, how?

→ Yes, Wisdom can be taught. Wisdom teaching should include a greater intellectual component than moral teaching. In the course of imparting knowledge, the devastating consequences of hatred and narrow-mindedness to people who feel them can be mentioned incidentally. For example, while explaining the composition of an atom, the devastating consequences of its misuse, such as the creation of atomic weapons, must also be taught.

G Why does the world need more wisdom in the future?

→ The world needs more wisdom in the future. When we look at the current state of knowledge in various fields, it is clear that knowledge will continue to develop in the future. Most individuals misuse knowledge in the absence of wisdom, resulting in a variety of bad consequences, and this fact will continue in the future if knowledge is not blended with wisdom. Only wisdom enables people to make wise use of their acquired knowledge. More wisdom is required for a brighter future.

Reference to the Context

a. According to Russell, "The pursuit of knowledge may become harmful unless it is combined with wisdom." Justify this statement.

→ According to Russell, "The pursuit of knowledge may become harmful unless it is combined with wisdom." Bertrand Russell's essay "Knowledge and Wisdom" discusses the importance of integrating

knowledge and wisdom. He discusses the numerous paths to wisdom and how knowledge without wisdom can be dangerous.

Russell emphasizes the value of comprehensiveness while also stating that comprehensiveness does not equal wisdom. Hegel's philosophy was extensive, yet it lacked knowledge and was prejudiced. Hegel wrote with excellent historical knowledge, but he misled the Germans that they were the most powerful race in the world, leading to war. As a result, knowledge and sentiments must be combined. Men with knowledge but no emotions are lacking in wisdom. Wisdom is required in both public and private life.

b. What, according to Russell, is the essence of wisdom? And how can one acquire the very essence?

→ Russell emphasizes that the essence of wisdom is to free oneself from the confines of the physical and emotional worlds and to gaze beyond them. He believes that pursuing certain goals that are impossible to reach is a bad idea. He also points out that being free of personal prejudice makes one's thoughts and feelings less personal, which leads to knowledge.

Knowledge does not automatically lead to wisdom. Wisdom, according to Russell, is the practical application and use of knowledge to generate value. Learning and actual experience, rather than memory, can be used by one to acquire the very essence of wisdom.

Reference beyond the text

a. Why is wisdom necessary in education? Discuss.

→ Wisdom is what makes our minds open and unbiased. Our thoughts and feelings grow less personal as we gain wisdom. It encourages us to make appropriate use of our knowledge. It enables us to put our knowledge to good use for humanity. We love even our enemies when we have wisdom, we have no ego, and we don't have any prejudices. Wisdom is an element of human life that complements education/knowledge. If one balances these two aspects correctly, he or she becomes a perfect being.

Education's objective is to not only convey knowledge but also to produce excellent citizens. People who lack wisdom may misuse their gained information, and wisdom does not come naturally; it must be taught. Developing wisdom in students has to be one of the educational goals, and it has to be taught in schools. With practical examples, it must be planted and nurtured in one's mind.

b. How can you become wise? Do you think what you are doing in college contributes to wisdom?

→ Wisdom is a difficult concept to define, but we all recognize it when we see it. In a crisis, intelligent people maintain their calm. They are aware of their own limitations, explore alternate viewpoints, and keep in mind that the world is constantly changing.

4. Humility

Yuval Noah Harari

Summary:

Yuval Noah Harari, a well-known essayist from Jerusalem, wrote the essay Humility. In this essay, he displays humility by debunking humanity's illusions of superiority and mastery. Morality, art, spirituality, and creativity, he says, are universal human talents encoded in our DNA. The author displays the virtue of humility in this essay, which may be characterised as "a recognition of the real limits of our techno-social knowledge and ability," by debunking humanity's illusions of superiority and mastery. According to Harari, humility is a trait that most societies lack. Most individuals feel that they are at the centre of the universe and that their culture is the foundation of human history.

Greeks think that history started with Homer, Sophocles, and Plato and that pivotal ideas and innovations were born in Athens, Sparta, Alexandria, or Constantinople. Some Indians think that ancient sages in the Indian subcontinent devised aeroplanes and nuclear bombs long before Confucius or Plato, let alone Einstein and the Wright brothers.

The Jews feel that monotheism should be credited to them and that they are a prominent group in the world — one of the top three faiths. However, there are only 15 million Jews, and there is no reason to believe that they are more significant than the Hindu faith, which has considerably more adherents. Each group considers itself to be the centre of the world, as well as the creator of the most significant ideologies and accomplishments.

However, no group is genuinely unique; some version of their ideology and ideas existed before them. The faiths that survived were the most aggressive — they managed to convert the greatest amount of people to their beliefs. For example, the Biblical phrase "love thy neighbour as thyself," which Jews claim as their own, had previously occurred in China.

Similarly, monotheism has its origins in Egypt and was not initially Jewish. Monotheism has led to global catastrophe, and no one should be happy about having developed it. A few centuries after its creation, Christianity prohibited all faiths save the Jewish religion, although many Jews were still persecuted, whereas Islam now considers all history previous to Mohammed to be meaningless.

Many outstanding concepts, according to Chinese nationalists, originated in their culture. The Jews believe that they are God's chosen people and that gentiles are not on pace with them in terms of importance. While some sages have advocated for religious tolerance, the historical trend has always been to persecute those who hold opposing views. Ironically, this is the very self-centeredness that most faiths warn against.

Understanding the text

a. Describe the claim of the Chinese nationalists about human society.

Answer: Chinese nationalists claim that history really began with the Yellow Emperor and the Xia and Shang dynasties and that whatever Westerners, Muslims or Indians achieved is but a pale copy of original Chinese breakthroughs.

b. What do pious Muslims believe about human society?

Answer: Pious Muslims believe that all history prior to the Prophet Muhammad is largely irrelevant, and they consider all history after the revelation of the Quran to revolve around the Muslim ummah.

c. What did the Aztecs firmly believe about the universe?

Answer: The Aztecs firmly believed that without the sacrifices they performed each year, the sun would not rise and the entire universe would disintegrate.

d. What, according to the essay are the universal human abilities?

Answer: According to the essay, morality, art, spirituality, and creativity are universal human abilities.

e. How are the basic yoga postures derived from the shape of letters of Hebrew alphabet?

Answer: All the basic postures of Yoga are derived from the shape of letters of Hebrew alphabet. The Trikonasanna posture imitates the shape of Hebrew letter 'aleph', Tuladandasana imitates the letter 'daled' etc.

Reference to the Context

a. How do Hindu nationalists refute the Chinese claim that human history really began with the Yellow Emperor and the Xia Dynasties? Who do you agree with and why?

Hindu nationalists refute the Chinese claim by saying that aeroplanes and nuclear bombs were invented by ancient sages in the Indian sub-continent long before Confucius, Plato, Einstein and Wright brothers. I agree with the Hindu nationalists because Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world.

b. The author has dealt with a controversial debate on history. Why do you think history has been a major contested issue in the present world?

Due to egoism, most people think they are the centre of the world and their culture is superior to all other cultures. They think their history is the oldest one and everything derived/originated from their culture. History has been a major contested issue in the present world due to egoism. The author wants to debunk humanity's illusion of superiority and mastery.

Reference beyond the Text

a. Write a short essay on The Conflicting History of Human Civilization.

→ The Conflicting History of Human Civilization: An Essay

When we discuss the History of Human Civilisation, we never stop claiming that the civilization to which we belong is the first and most significant. We are shrouded in the cloak of supremacy and dominion over our own race. Our nature is to desire to be at the centre of the universe. The same ego may be found in humans from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Maya, India, China, Rome, Greece, and Persia. This is true of Abrahamic and Indian religions.

According to many Greeks, history started at Athens, Sparta, Alexandria, or Constantinople. This notion is refuted by the Chinese, who accept that history began under the reigns of the Yellow Emperor, the Xia, and the Shan Dynasties. They also believe that Western, Muslim, and Indian innovations are pale imitations of Chinese inventions. Hindus assert that all current scientific breakthroughs may be traced back to their civilisation. Ancient sages of the Indian subcontinents devised rockets, missiles, and atomic theories. Muslims, on the other hand, believe that the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran were the first.

Turkish, Iranian, and Egyptian nationalists contend that their countries were the fountainhead and keepers of Islam's purity before Muhammad and the Quran. The British, French, Germans, Americans, Russians, and Japanese all claim to have accomplished remarkable feats and to have liberated humanity from barbaric and immoral ignorance. The Aztecs are confident that their sacrifice is the cause of the prevention of the universe's dissolution. Even Jews take credit for some of the world's most notable innovations. Even Abraham is credited with inventing yoga poses. Yoga positions were developed from the Hebrew alphabet. Even they believe that the study of sacred writings by Jewish rabbis is the primary reason for the universe's annihilation.

In reality, all of these claims are wrong. Such assertions are the result of egoism and racism. Rather, these religions or civilizations were the first to colonise the world and domesticate plants and animals. To attribute to them a more recent location and period is nothing more than a gross egotism. Morality, art, spirituality, and creativity are universal human traits that are encoded in our DNA. We dislike criticising our own people, culture, religion, or habits. Instead, we glorify them. We are lacking in modesty. This is the primary source of conflict between human civilizations.

b. The author claims, "Since it is more polite to criticize one's own people than to criticize foreigners." Do you agree to his claim? Give your reasons.

→ Harari claims in his essay "Humility" that it is more polite to criticise one's own people than foreigners. I agree with his statement since criticising outsiders cause tension. People are extremely preoccupied with their own history and civilization. They do not like to hear somebody from another faith or group criticise their own religion or community. We accept without question what is stated or published about our culture, religion, and civilization. What fools believe that the existence of the cosmos is dependent on human sacrifice and the study of sacred writings. No one knows how long this universe has been, and it is just egotism to claim that human sacrifice and the reading of religious text save the cosmos from being demolished. If ancient sages had invented missiles and rockets, humans may have landed on the moon thousands of years ago. If we oppose such things and we are foreigners, it will lead to a conflict between two groups of people. If we wish to fix ourselves, we must first identify the flaws in our culture.

5. Human Rights and the Age of Inequality

Samuel Moyn

MAIN SUMMARY

This essay "Human Rights and the Age of Inequality" has been written by an American writer Samuel Moyn. Here in this essay, Samuel Moyn deals with the drastic mismatch between the egalitarian crisis and the human rights remedy that demands not a substitute but a supplement. He points out that the human rights regime and movement are simply not equipped to challenge global inequalities.

The writer begins his essay with a parable where he has presented an example of Croesus (the last king of Lydia (reigned 560–546)). According to the writer, Croesus was a very wealthy king who considered himself the happiest of mortals. He wanted his citizens should be happy and free from all kinds of suffering. But he had a problem, he did not want to invest his money to eradicate the sufferings of his people. He had collected a lot of wealth for himself but after being defeated, his whole possession, as well as wealth, was controlled by the Persian king Cyrus the Great and his army.

Later, the writer links this situation of Croesus with the modern world where inequality exists and available means and resources are unequally distributed. The writer says that every year 10th December is celebrated as Human Rights Day, but no step has been taken for equal access to rights and property between rich and poor in the world. There is only one solution to all these kinds of obstacles as distributive equality but he feels that this is almost impossible in practical life or reality.

The writer mentions writing the history of human rights with that of political economy. Here, there is the involvement of two big stages- The first was the heroic age of the national welfare states after World War II. The second was the political economy ascended beyond the nation during the 1940s. Franklin Roosevelt issued his famous call for a “Second Bill of Rights” that included socio-economic security in his State of the Union but it missed three most important facts: the entry of a provincial US into the North Atlantic consensus; the promise of freedom from desire; And imagining it everywhere in the world.

Human rights suffered greatly after the 1940s as it followed partisanship and divided the world into two groups, referring to the democratic nations led by the US and the communist nations led by the

USSR, which resulted in the Cold War. Similarly, the disintegration of the world during the post-war era could not bring about the desired development and human rights among nations as these states favoured 'national welfare' instead of supporting egalitarian human rights.

Samuel Moyn reflects on the issue of whether or not another human rights movement is necessary and then exemplifies the truth and reality described in Herodotus' chronicles that deal with the need for a redistribution of global socioeconomic justice under pressure from the rich to the poor.

Although human rights activists argue that human rights documents claim and assure equal freedoms and rights to human beings, in reality, this does not apply in current real-life situations. Unless this current economy and socio-political structure exist, man will not have basic and useful freedoms and true rights. Thus, a fair share of the distribution of wealth and property from the rich to the poor, redistribution of means and resources, law-making and enforcement of the fair distribution of wealth by the government and egalitarian society requires large-scale and radical movements. However, all of these are impractical and inappropriate and very difficult to happen in reality.

Above all, our common destiny is like a world of Croesus, where the rich enjoy happiness, freedom and everything to the maximum level like the colonists in the British Raj, while the poor live in a world of illusion with their floating equality and Independence.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. What is the first human rights declaration adopted by the United Nations?

→ The first human rights declaration adopted by the United Nations is mobilization for economic and social rights.

b. When is Human Rights Day observed?

→ Human Rights Day is observed on 10th December every year.

c. What is the goal of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

→ The goal of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to provide a list of the most basic entitlements or key values like fairness, dignity, equality and respect that humans deserve thanks to being human itself. Furthermore, its aim is to assert the “ foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the in the world.”

d. What are two big stages that involve writing the history of human rights in relation to that of political economy?

→ The two big stages that involve writing the history of human rights in relation to that of political economy are:

The heroic age of national welfare after World War II.

The bitter enemies of the new cold war era in 1948.

e. What are the facts that have been missed in Roosevelt’s call for a “second Bill of Rights”?

→ The facts that have been missed in Roosevelt’s call for a “second Bill of Rights” are:

First, it marked a characteristically provincial America’s Late and ginger entry into an already foreordained North Atlantic consensus.

Second, his highest promise was not a floor of protection for the masses but the end of “special privileges for the few” - a ceiling on inequality.

Lastly, Roosevelt certainly hoped it would span the globe but it was organized nationally, not internationally.

f. Write the truth expressed in Herodotus’s Histories.

→ The truth expressed in Herodotus’ Histories is that global socio-economic justice, like local socio-economic justice, would require redistribution under pressure from the rich to the poor by novel forms of legal activism.

g. Why is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights important to you?

→ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is important to me as it works in favour of all human beings for their rights, justice, equality, equity by removing partiality, injustice, inequality, discrimination, and so on from society.

Reference to the Context

a. Does the essay give ways on how to stigmatize inequality? Explain.

→ The essay “Human Rights and the Age of Inequality” don’t give some specific ways on how to stigmatize inequality but it talks about the stigmatization of inequality. Most of all, history suggests that they are the wrong kind of agent; not fearful enough to provoke redistribution. If inequality grows like this, opponents will arise some days. Therefore, it is better to maintain equality and justice in society. By

forming new sort of human rights movement for the sake of the common people, social equality and liberation can be justified. Proper supervision and monitoring, support of stakeholders, enacting strict laws, removing partiality and maintain justice and equality etc. are necessary for the humanitarian behalf of the all human beings. Inequality is believed to be as a stigma for the society as it creates tussle and conflicts among the people so proper balance for it is required.

b. Is another human rights movement necessary? Why?

→ Yes, another human rights movement is necessary as the essayist finds Human Rights is functioning under political suppression constrained in human affairs. He wishes to see another Human rights movement in the coming days due to following reasons:

People who are in powerful positions found violating the laws.

Inequality has been contained in human affairs.

Nepotism and favouritism is still in practice.

Law is to be given top priority.

Political and social hegemony is still prevalent in the world.

Laws and rights are only documented rather it is not in practice.

There is need of rights and justice for all human beings whether they are rich or poor, belong to upper class or lower class.

Reference beyond the text

a. What are the challenges in maintaining human rights in Nepal?

→ Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone. International law, including treaties, contain the provisions which give human rights legal effect.

Human rights was established in the year 2000 as a statutory body under the Human Rights Commission Act 1997 (2053 BS) in Nepal. The interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 (2063 BS) made the NHRC a constitutional body.

The main challenging factors in maintaining human rights in Nepal are as follows:

Poverty (particularly in rural areas)

Education disparities

Gender inequality

Health issues

Child rights violations

Misuse of power

Nepotism, corruption, bribery, illiteracy and ignorance of people

Priority for the personal benefits or favour

Lack of proper mechanism to systematize policies

Lack of proper strategies to implement the rules of laws etc.

UNIT FOUR: ONE ACT PLAYS

1. A Matter of Husbands

Ferenc Molnar

Summary

'A Matter of Husbands' is a one act play written by Ferenc Molnar. He is widely regarded as Hungary's most celebrated and controversial playwright. There are three main characters in the play. They are Earnest Young Woman (Alfred's wife), Sara (Famous Actress) and Alfred (Lawyer, husband of Earnest Young Woman). It is a very twisted one act play which depicts the story of Earnest Young Woman. She is married to a lawyer who knows Famous Woman.

This play sheds the light on the roles of actors on the stage and in real life and how much they are capable of keeping us in an illusion. In the beginning of the play, the Earnest Young Woman is shown on the stage impatiently waiting for the famous actress. The Famous Actress is called 'Sara'. As Sara enters the stage through the curtain, Earnest Young Woman rushes to her and angrily asks her to return her husband. The Famous Actress boldly denies that she has stolen her husband. She says she knows him because once the contract for a case has been given to him. She asks Earnest Young Woman that what makes her believe that Alfred is in love with her. Earnest Young Woman tells her that her husband sends her flowers and writes love letter.

After hearing this, the actress blushes and continues to deny receiving any flowers or notes from him. In order to make Earnest Young Woman believe that she and her husband have a misunderstanding, she now claims that something strange happened. Famous Woman convinces Earnest Young Woman that her husband is playing with her in an attempt to make her jealous and gain her attention and love back. Then, the

innocent young lady realizes her mistake and apologizes. Famous Actress calls Alfred from her personal bedroom after the eager young lady exits the stage. In this way, the play ends.

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. What favour does Earnest Young Woman ask from The Famous Actress?

Answer: Earnest Young Woman is a simple and straightforward lady who asks a favour of returning her husband from Famous Actress because she loves her husband and her husband is in deep love with her.

b. What according to The Earnest Young Woman, are the indications that her husband has fallen in love with Famous Actress?

Answer: According to the Earnest Young Woman, her husband sends flowers to Famous Actress. She comes to know about it from a florist. He also writes love letter to her which is found by her when he has forgotten to take it with him.

c. Is Earnest Young Woman convinced by the argument of Famous Actress? How?

Answer: From the play we come to know that there is basic conversation between Earnest Young Woman and Famous Actress. It is found that Earnest Young Woman is fully convinced by argument of Famous Actress. She tells her that her husband has shown love affair to her so that she gets jealous and regains love from her. She also adds that many actresses accept the proposals like her husband for the reunion of the family. She is convinced by the argument. She is also hopeful to get her husband back.

d. Where is the Earnest Young Woman's husband hiding himself as they are talking about him?

Answer: In the play, Alfred, the Earnest Young Woman's husband has been hiding in the boudoir and he appears at the end of the play when the Famous Actress calls him to come out. Throughout the whole play the Earnest Young Woman's husband has been hiding in the famous Actress bedroom.

e. When do you feel that Famous Actress is really good at acting?

Answer: Until the end of the play, it is full of suspense. I feel the Famous Actress is really good at acting when she tells the Earnest Young Woman that her husband has pretended to love to her or to show the love affairs so that Earnest Young Woman gets jealous and regains love from Famous Actress.

f. How do we come to know that Famous Actress and the husband of Earnest Young Woman are in love?

Answer: At the end of the play, we come to know that Famous Actress and the husband of Earnest Young Woman are in love. When Alfred is called to come out by the Famous Actress, he comes out of the boudoir of Famous Actress. From the situation it's clear that they are in love.

g. Write down the plot of the play in a paragraph.

Answer: A Matter of Husbands is a play written by Ferenc Molnar. He is the most celebrated and controversial play wright. This is the play of suspense. The Earnest Young Woman comes to the Famous Actress and asks her to give her husband back. She thinks that her husband is in deep love with Famous Actress. She appears there very angrily and asks the Famous actress to return her husband because she complains that her husband is in love affair with her. She has found the evidences as love letters and flowers. The famous Actress replies her that he does so to get more affection and love from his wife. Earnest Young Woman believes the story of the Famous Actress. She fools Earnest Young Woman by saying that a misunderstanding may have arrived between her and her husband. Then, the Earnest Young woman innocently realizes her misdeed and begs sorry with her. Earnest Young Woman leaves the stage and the famous Actress calls Alfred to come out of her boudoir.

Reference to the context

a. Sketch the character of Famous Actress.

Answer: The Famous Actress is a young, renowned, and beautiful actress who is envied by the ordinary woman. On the outside, she looks innocent and harmless but in reality, she is cunning and wicked. Her deception may be apparent in the way she

tells a lady that her spouse is cheating on her with someone else. She also lives an immoral life as seen in the conclusion of the story. It is revealed that Alfred is in her bedroom which proves that they have immoral and unethical relations.

b. Shed light on the difference between an ordinary woman and an actress.

Answer: In the story, "A Matter of Husband", the ordinary woman is portrayed as a simple-minded and timid person who was easily manipulated by the actress's fabricated story or false story. She comes to the Famous Actress in tears completely sure that her husband is having love affair with her. The Famous Actress makes a story to her about her husband. According to her, her husband is trying to regain love by doing things to get her jealous. Without asking questions, the ordinary woman believes her story and she is convinced too. At the end, it is revealed that her husband is in the actress's room. This shows that the actress is cunning while the ordinary woman is timid.

c. According to Famous Actress, men associated with theatre use the theatre actresses to make their estranged wives jealous so as to woo them back. Do you agree with her argument? Why? Why not?

Answer: No, I don't agree with her argument that the men associated with theatre mostly use the actresses of theatre to make their estranged wives jealous so as to woo them back. Theatre performers have an ordinary, simple-minded and timid wife who can be easily deceived by the false story. In this play, Alfred's wife is so simple minded who is easily deceived by the cunning actress. Her husband also gets chance to take advantage to stay in the room of the Famous Actress.

d. How does Famous Actress make a fool of Earnest Young Woman?

Answer: Famous Actress makes a fool of Earnest Young Woman by saying that her husband wants to get love from her. She makes Earnest Young Woman believe that he wants to gain love from her so he is playing such a trick to make jealous. As a result, the Earnest Young woman innocently realizes her misunderstanding and apologizes to her.

e. The conversation between the two women takes place on the stage of the theatre. What role does the theatre house as a part of setting play in A Matter for Husband?

Answer: The theatre house is suitable for the setting of the play. It has appropriate environment for the two women to take part in the conversation. When the curtain rises the Earnest Young Woman discovers the edge of a gilt chair. It is plain she has been sitting there a long time. At last the Famous Actress enters through the curtained door at the right which leads to her boudoir. The context of private room inappropriate to share private issues.

f. What do you think about the ending of the play?

Answer: The play 'A Matter of Husbands' is totally perfect. It has illusive and twisty ending. The last scene of the play is most remarkable and touchy. In this play it is clearly shown that skillful people always take advantage from simple minded innocent people. At the end of the play the young woman becomes very happy about her husband because her husband wants to get much love from her according to the Famous Actress. In the play, the Famous Actress is able to cheat her easily. The Famous Actress and the husband of Earnest Young woman live together without any obstacle. The ending of the play is romantic but full of irony.

From the ending of the play 'A Matter of Husbands', we can think that innocent people are always suffered by cunning people because they are often sincere by hearts but the cunning people always take advantage from their innocence.

2. Facing Death

August Strindberg

About the Play

This one-play "Facing Death" has been written by a Swedish writer, playwright, and painter Johan August Strindberg (1849-1912). This play "Facing Death" has presented the story of Monsieur Durand, a former railroad worker and widower in financial ruin.

Durand has three daughters— Adèle, Annette, and Thérèse- no prospects for their futures.

Even though he has tried to provide for his children, even letting out his house to lodgers, every attempt he has made was met with scorn and derision.

But Monsieur Durand has a plan to ensure his daughters' financial futures, even if it means he must face his own death. A prime example of European dramatic naturalism. Facing Death is the story of a father's love for his children, even when it means sacrificing everything.

In Facing Death, Strindberg dramatizes a heroic sacrifice made by a bankrupt man for the sake of his daughters. .

MAIN PLOT OF THE PLAY

This play has presented the main character as Mr. Durand who is a former railroad employee, widower and pensioner. Here in this play, he has been presented as a financially ruined person. Mr. Durand is spending his life living along with his three daughters. His three daughters are: **Adele (27), Annette (24) and Therese (24 years)**

The relationship between father and three daughters is not good. They are completely bankrupt. They have been facing a financial crisis for the last ten years. They have turned their home into a lodge for the rest of their lives. Adele works in the kitchen and Mr. Durand engages himself in other kinds of works such as serving guests, cleaning, delivering and bringing food items etc.

In the lodge, Mr. Durand's two daughters only try to seek others' attention. They don't help in other tasks in the lodge except playing, singing and flirting with the customers.

The entire Durand family has been living and spending their lives borrowing money from others for years. The family is dealing with financial hardships. With bills piling up, Durand is trying to figure out how to provide for his three daughters after their mother's death.

Mr. Durand has to pay several bills. He has to pay everyone like the baker, the butcher and the grocer. Their work boy, Pierre, comes up empty-handed when he